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The Place of Spoken Grammar in the Teaching and Learning of Speaking

The Case of Second Year Students at the University of Constantine 1

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DEDICATION

To my precious parents

To my brother and sisters: Nouredine, Dalel and Radia

To my sister-like cousins: Ibtissem and Imène

To my best friends: Nora and Nadia

To everyone who has contributed to my education

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ABSTRACT

In the light of fast-developing technology which is encouraging spontaneous global communication, conversational skills have become an inestimable asset. McCarthy and Carter (1995, 2002) argue that natural conversation calls for the use of certain interactive, interpersonal aspects which only spoken grammar (the grammar of conversation) can offer. However, they point out, almost all accounts of English grammar have been based on the written standard version of the language. The present research sets out to get insight into the place of spoken grammar in the teaching and learning of speaking at the Department of Letters and English, University of Constantine 1. More precisely, consideration is given to the issue of whether and to what extent spoken grammar is used by the students as well as the issue of the usefulness of teaching a selected range of spoken grammar aspects in order to make the students' conversational English more natural. Another equally significant aspect of this study is to check whether spoken grammar is taught, the way it is presented and the teachers' views about the viability of incorporating it into the Oral Expression syllabus. We hypothesise that if the students under study receive instruction of a selected range of spoken grammar aspects, their conversational English is likely to be more natural. We also hypothesise that the Oral Expression teachers who are convinced of the importance of teaching the intrinsic aspects of spoken grammar would refer less to standard grammar in the teaching of conversation. The first hypothesis is checked by means of a pre-test post-test Control Experimental group design, whereas the second hypothesis is tested through a Teachers' Questionnaire. The findings obtained allow to validate the first hypothesis and partly confirm the second one. The majority of the students have been found unaware of most of the aspects of spoken grammar, and the treatment provided (instruction of a selected range of spoken grammar aspects) has proved to have a positive impact on the students' conversational output. The results also reveal that more than half the teachers do not teach the most salient aspects of spoken grammar, but tend to refer mainly to the aspects of standard grammar in the teaching of conversation, notwithstanding their awareness of the usefulness of integrating aspects of spoken grammar into the syllabus. On the basis of these findings, recommendations are suggested to Oral Expression syllabus designers and teachers in order to assign adequate importance to the teaching of spoken grammar.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CG: Control Group

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

ESL: English as a Second Language

Exp.G: Experimental Group

FL: Foreign Language

FLA: Foreign Language Acquisition

I-I-I: Illustration Interaction Induction

L1: First Language

LMD: Licence Master Doctorate

N: Number of Students or Teachers

OE: Oral Expression

PPP: Presentation Practice Production

Q: Question

SL: Second Language

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

TL: Target Language

vs.: Versus

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INTRODUCTION

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1. Statement of the Problem

McCarthy and Carter (1995, 2002) point out that the history of the description of the English grammar properties has been largely a history of the description of grammar as it has occurred in written standard language. This situation, they explain, is a result of the popular misconception that spoken language has a corrosive influence on grammatical norms. Crystal (2003) notes that spoken grammar (the grammar of conversation) is commonly thought of as “incorrect” and “inferior” to standard grammar because it does not “conform to the rules” of written standard language. However, recent interest in spoken grammar has shifted grammarians’ and discourse analysts’ attention to the significant interpersonal and interactive meanings conveyed by the aspects of spoken grammar in conversational settings.

From our experience as a teacher of Oral Expression at the Department of Letters and English, University of Constantine 1, we have observed that in the teaching of speaking, the grammar presented to the students has been based, to a high extent, on samples from written standard language. The students seem to have the aspects of standard grammar as the only choice for interaction in all kinds of spoken contexts: the formal, semi-formal and informal ones. This situation accounts for the students’ unnatural conversational output. In other words, the learners who are exposed to only standard grammar are more likely to develop conversational English which is rather bookish. It is pedagogically undesirable to produce students of English who can only “speak like a book,” i.e. students whose spoken English is modelled on an almost exclusively written or formal (standard) version of the language. The present situation has led us to wonder whether spoken grammar is adequately taken account of in the teaching and learning of speaking at the Department of Letters and English, University of Constantine 1. This questioning entails reference to various relevant concerns:

- How much of spoken grammar is, and should be, introduced in the Oral Expression class?
- Is standard grammar the only point of reference in the teaching of speaking?
- Are the structures described in standard grammar the only structures that the students should be expected to produce when they speak English? In other words, should the aspects of standard grammar be the only choice for interaction put at the students' disposal?
- Which type of grammar, spoken or standard, do the students under study employ in conversations?
- Would the teaching of spoken grammar be viable in making the students' conversational English more natural?
- Should the Oral Expression teachers present the aspects of spoken grammar alongside the aspects of standard grammar or without reference to them?
- Should the teachers be selective in terms of the aspects of spoken grammar that are to be presented to the students? In other words, are all the aspects of spoken grammar potentially-teachable?
- What views do the teachers under investigation hold about the integration of spoken grammar into the Oral Expression syllabus?

2. Aims of the Study

This study aims at investigating the place of spoken grammar in the teaching and learning of speaking at the Department of Letters and English, University of Constantine 1. We aim, in particular, at examining the students' use of spoken grammar and testing the impact of teaching a selected range of spoken grammar aspects on the learners'

conversational output. This work also intends to gain insight into whether spoken grammar is taught, the way it is presented (the methodology) and the teachers' views about the usefulness of integrating aspects of spoken grammar into the teaching of speaking.

3. Hypotheses

In the light of the present research concerns, two hypotheses have been elaborated: the first one pertains to the students, while the second one to the teachers. We hypothesise that if the students under study receive instruction of a selected range of spoken grammar aspects, their conversational English is likely to be more natural. We also hypothesise that the Oral Expression teachers who are convinced of the importance of teaching the intrinsic aspects of spoken grammar would refer less to standard grammar in the teaching of conversation.

4. Means of Research and Procedure

In order to check the first hypothesis, we have opted for an experimental design, more specifically, a pre-test post-test Control Experimental group design. Two different groups of students receive different learning opportunities, so that their oral performances can be compared. The Control Group is taught conversation in the usual way, with reference to standard grammar. The Experimental Group is provided with instruction of a selected range of spoken grammar aspects. The instructional period is meant to raise the awareness of the Experimental Group of the various elements of spoken grammar, to sensitise the students to the distinctive properties of spoken grammar and the differences between it and standard grammar. The pre-test is administered to find out whether the students are aware of spoken grammar or refer mainly to standard grammar in their conversations. The post-test intends to check the effectiveness of the manipulated independent variable (instruction of the spoken grammar aspects) on the learners' conversational output.

To test the second hypothesis, a Teachers' Questionnaire is administered to the Oral Expression teachers. It serves to elicit information about whether these teachers present spoken grammar and how they teach it (the methods and techniques followed in their instruction). This questionnaire also attempts to elicit the teachers' views about the viability of incorporating a selected set of spoken grammar aspects into the Oral Expression syllabus.

5. Structure of the Thesis

The present thesis is made up of six chapters: the first three chapters comprise the literature survey, and the last three ones the practical part. Chapter One, "The Speaking Skill," deals with the various elements of speaking and describes its two major types – transactional and interactional. Besides, it gives some account of how to teach this skill. It shows how to build learners' awareness of speaking genres and provides a range of speaking activities that teachers could implement in the classroom in order to promote students' oral production. In addition, this chapter highlights a few approaches as well as criteria of assessing the speaking skill.

Chapter Two, "Correlation between Standard Grammar and Spoken Grammar," is divided into two main sections. The first one presents various definitions of standard grammar and draws a distinction between its three major types: prescriptive, descriptive and pedagogic. It also gives an account of the branches of standard grammar: morphology and syntax, and a three-dimensional framework: form, meaning and use. The second section provides a definition of spoken grammar and a description of its most prominent aspects. More specifically, it throws light on the nature of spoken grammar, as opposed to the nature of standard grammar, with a special focus on the interpersonal and interactive aspects of spoken grammar.

Chapter Three, “Teaching Spoken Grammar,” describes a few approaches to teaching spoken grammar and puts forward some principles for the selection of materials used for presenting this kind of grammar. It describes, in particular, McCarthy’s and Carter’s (2002) pedagogical spoken grammar model, based on ten criteria, for integrating spoken grammar teaching into speaking skill curricula.

Chapter Four, “Students’ Use of the Spoken Grammar Aspects,” is devoted to the experimental design. The latter intends to measure the impact of teaching the spoken grammar aspects on the students’ conversational English. Description of the sample, test and instruction is provided. Moreover, the analysis and interpretation of the results obtained from the experiment under the pre-test and post-test conditions are presented.

Chapter Five, “Teachers’ Methodology and Views about the Spoken Grammar Aspects,” is concerned with the Teachers’ Questionnaire. Light is cast on whether and how the Oral Expression teachers present the spoken grammar aspects, as well as their views about the usefulness of integrating such aspects into the Oral Expression syllabus. It provides information about the sample, describes the questionnaire, then supplies an analysis and interpretation of the questionnaire feedback.

The final chapter, “Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations,” based on the outcomes of the previous chapters, outlines the implications of the present research and offers recommendations for Oral Expression syllabus designers and teachers. It provides insights into the importance of teaching spoken grammar and sheds light on some basic principles of pedagogical spoken grammar. It also puts forward some recommendations about the level at which the students’ attention should be drawn to spoken grammar, and supplies a few insights that may pave the way for further research.

CHAPTER ONE

THE SPEAKING SKILL

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Introduction

Speaking is a means through which much language could be learned. It is conducive for learning the other skills (listening, reading and writing) and language components (vocabulary, grammar and phonology). Therefore, it deserves to be adequately paid close attention and assigned sufficient weight in the second language (SL) and foreign language (FL) curriculum.

1.1 Characteristics of Speaking

Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves various elements. Its types and meaning are determined by the context in which it occurs, including purpose(s) for speaking (Burns and Joyce, 1997).

1.1.1 Elements of Speaking

Language researchers acknowledge the lack of definitive decision about what oral proficiency encompasses. However, acquisition of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation alone does not ensure for learners the ability to speak efficiently. According to Valdés and Figueroa (1994: 34), oral proficiency “goes beyond simplistic views of good pronunciation, ‘correct’ grammar, and even mastery of rules of politeness.” Thornbury (2005: iv) argues that “there is a lot more to speaking than the ability to form grammatically correct sentences and then to pronounce them,” for this is mere vocalisation of grammar. He lists various kinds of knowledge, or skills, that proficient speakers draw on when speaking: the linguistic competence, the socio-linguistic aspects and mental processing.

1.1.1.1 Linguistic Competence

If SL/FL students aim at achieving a proficient level in speaking, they will need primarily to have good command of the basic language components: vocabulary, grammar

and phonology. In terms of vocabulary, native speakers employ over 2.500 words to cover 95% of their needs (Thornbury, 2005). SL and FL learners can get by on much fewer, especially for the purposes of casual conversation. For more specialised purposes, such as business negotiations or academic speaking, students will need more vocabulary. It is hard to know exactly which words learners will need, but the most useful criterion for selection is frequency. According to Thornbury (2005), a working knowledge of the 1.500 most frequent words in English would most probably serve the learner to express his/her most basic needs. He argues that even the top 200 most common words will be helpful to the student since they include all the modal auxiliary verbs, pronouns, common prepositions, the full range of spoken discourse markers, common sequencing and linking words, common ways of hedging, and so forth. Most learners' dictionaries highlight high frequency words and indicate their relative frequency in speech and writing.

Grammar knowledge for speaking purposes consists largely of grammar systems that favour rapid, real-time speech production. Since spontaneous speech is produced in clause-length units, rather than sentence-length units, a sentence grammar will be of limited usefulness for speaking. However, in the teaching of speaking to FL learners, the main focus has always been sentence grammar. Learners are taught to manipulate relatively lengthy and complex constructions that are more typical of written than spoken language. For example, Thornbury (2005) explains, the conditional "*would*" is traditionally first taught as an element of the second and third conditional constructions, which consist of an *if*-clause and a *would*-clause (as in "*If I had time, I would study harder*" and "*If I'd had time, I would have studied harder*"), rather than being taught as an element of *would*-clauses on their own (as in "*I would never eat horse meat*" and "*I wouldn't have called him what you did*"). But, he argues, analyses of corpora of spoken English show that *would*-clauses occur four times more often without an associated *if*-clause than with one. Likewise, FL learners are usually taught grammar aspects without a clear distinction being

made between spoken and written grammar. There is a great deal of overlap between the two, but there are certain structures that are much less frequent in speech than writing such as reported speech and subordinate clauses. On the other hand, some aspects of spoken syntax, such as heads, tails and ellipsis (see Chapter Two, Sub-section 2.2.2 Aspects of Spoken Grammar, p.71), get little or no attention in many English language teaching (ELT) courses. The grammar of writing and formal speech (standard grammar) and the grammar of conversation (spoken grammar) will be tackled in detail in the two subsequent chapters.

With respect to phonology, accurate pronunciation is essential for FL learners because it affects the intelligibility of what is said. In the past, instruction of pronunciation usually focused on the articulation of consonants and vowels; however, in recent years, the focus has shifted to include a broader emphasis on suprasegmental features such as stress and intonation (Goodwin, 2001). Efficient speakers of English tend to change the pitch and stress of particular parts of utterances and vary volume and speed, especially in face-to-face interaction. The use of such expressive devices contributes to the ability to convey meanings. They allow the extra expression of emotions and intensity. Learners should be able to deploy at least some of such devices if they are to be effective communicators (Harmer, 2001). Thornbury (2005) points out that most adult learners are affected, to varying degrees, by the influence of their first language (L1) pronunciation when speaking a SL/FL, and this is not a problem so long as intelligibility is not threatened. However, what might be intelligible to one listener is not necessarily intelligible to another. Native speakers, for example, frequently identify the non-native-like use of stress, rhythm and intonation as being a greater impediment to intelligibility and a stronger marker of accent than the way individual vowel and consonant sounds are pronounced. This is particularly acute when lack of fluency divides speech into very short turns, as in the following example (Thornbury, 2005: 37), where a Japanese speaker is discussing her plan to show pictures of modern Japan to US school children:

... not only WORDS ↗(4) I can SHOW ↗(4) the (4) PICTURES ↗(6) HELPED ↗(8)
students to un- HELP ↗(5) students (2) UNDERSTAND ↗ the (4)

Japanese CULTURE ➤

Note: Stressed words are printed in capital letters, and pause lengths are shown in brackets (in seconds).

By speaking in such short bursts, with each word given almost equal emphasis, the main point of the discourse is obscured because every word seems to be singled out as worthy of attention. The main cause of communication breakdown when non-native speakers are talking to each other seems to be mispronunciation. The areas of pronunciation which are highly crucial for intelligibility, he highlights, include certain “core” consonant sounds, the contrast between long and short vowels (as in *heat* and *hit*), consonant clusters occurring at the beginning of words such as “*pr*” in *product*, and sentence stress, especially contrastive stress (as in “She’s my COUSIN, not my sister”).

1.1.1.2 Socio-linguistic Aspects

Thornbury (2005) reports that fluent and accurate spoken English is not simply a function of a wide-ranging knowledge of grammar, an extensive vocabulary and native-like pronunciation. It also involves socio-linguistic aspects, the most prominent ones being socio-cultural knowledge, genre knowledge, speech acts, register knowledge and conversational strategies.

The value of teaching socio-cultural knowledge, i.e. the culturally embedded rules of social behaviour, is debatable. Many of these rules are based on flimsy, often hear-say, evidence and may reinforce stereotypes. For example, Thornbury (2005: 31) explains, the notion that all the British talk mainly about the weather and say *sorry* all the time is “as well-founded as the idea that they also wear bowler hats and carry furled umbrellas.”

Moreover, for many learners, nowadays, such “rules” may be irrelevant since they will be learning English as an International Language, rather than the English used in, for instance, Birmingham or Baltimore. What is more important than learning local socio-cultural customs might be to develop intercultural competence. The latter refers to the ability to manage cross-cultural encounters irrespective of the culture of the language being used and to take into account that difference and ambiguity are inherent in communication. For example, knowing how to ask “*How do you do that here* (in the foreign country where the FL learner is)?” may be more useful than a list of “do’s and don’ts.”

Genre knowledge includes “knowing how different speech events are structured” (Thornbury, 2005: 32). This is particularly relevant to learners whose specific purposes for learning English include mastering spoken genres of a more formal type, such as giving business presentations or academic lectures. For more day-to-day communication, such as casual conversation, the genres are likely to be either easily transferable from the learner’s L1, or very easily defined that they tend to be difficult to teach in a formal manner. He points out that this does not mean that genres should be ignored or that features of language should be introduced out of their generic context. On the contrary, because genres are recognisable across cultures, they serve as a useful way of providing learners with new language in a familiar frame. The question “*Anything else?*” for example, will make more sense when it is embedded in a shopping dialogue than if it is presented in isolation. What students probably do not need, though, is to be taught the generic structure itself. Teaching a learner that s/he should greet shopkeepers when entering a store, then wait to be asked what s/he wants may be pointless. Similarly, teaching students that speakers take turns in conversation is like teaching SL/FL readers that books have pages. For more information about “genre,” especially how to teach it, see Sub-section 1.2.1 Speaking Genres, p. 18.

What learners need, more than the generic structure of the interaction, are specific ways of realising particular interactional moves, i.e. speech-act knowledge. Thornbury (2005) reports that just as learners need to know how specific discourse moves are realised, they also need to know the ways specific speech acts (also called *functions*) are typically encoded. For example, the following ways of offering advice or suggestions are common: *I'd ... (if I were you), You'd better ..., If you want my advice, you ..., You ought to ..., Why don't you ...?* On the other hand, the ways stated below are less common in informal spoken English: *I advise you to ..., My advice to you would be ..., What I suggest is ..., I have a suggestion ...,* while the following ways, though perfectly possible from a grammatical point of view, rarely occur: *Why do you not ...?, I have some advice ..., My suggestion to you would be ..., If you want my suggestion, ...*. This suggests that learners cannot necessarily guess the way that speech acts are customarily realised or the way that they are realised in spoken, as opposed to written, English. There is a good case, therefore, for explicit teaching of these forms. They are typically realised in short, memorable formulas, and therefore can be learned and stored as extended lexical items.

It is also important that learners know how to adapt the speech-act formulas for different situations (registers), according to such context variables as the status of the person they are talking to. Exposing learners to different registers of speech and directing their attention to the ways spoken language is made more or less formal is very significant. Thornbury (2005) recommends that role plays (see 1.2.2.4 Simulations and Role Plays, p. 37) may be one of the best ways of practising different sets of register variables, such as the differences that social status makes.

Harmer (2007) discusses the role of conversational strategies by stating that it is essential that students could use repair strategies when listening in interactive situations. In other words, for conversation to be successful, learners need to be able to, for example, ask for repetition using formulaic expressions. Other repair strategies include the ability to

paraphrase (*It's a kind of ..., What I mean is ..., That is ...*), to use an all-purpose phrase to get round the problem of not knowing a word (*You know, it's a what-do-you-call-it?*) and the ability to appeal for help (*What's the word for something you play a guitar with?*).

Dornyei and Thurrell (1994; cited in Harmer, 2007) highlight the viability of other types of strategies such as conversational openings (*How're you? That's a nice dog! At least some sunshine!*), interrupting (*Sorry to interrupt, but ...*), topic shift (*Oh, by the way, that reminds me ...*) and closings (*It's been nice talking to you ..., Well, I don't want to keep you from your work ..., We must get together some time*). Thornbury (2005) explains that since speaking involves interaction with one or more participants, it requires successful execution of turn-taking. Learners need to develop an understanding of how speaking turns are managed, i.e. it is vital for them to realise that talk is collaboratively constructed through the taking and yielding of turns. Stivers et al. (2009) shed light on the fact that there are many universal tendencies in turn-taking. For example, many languages have a similar distribution of question-to-answer pause times, and in many languages, if the questioner is looking at the other interlocutor waiting for the answer, the pause time of the other interlocutor tends to be shorter. Such universal patterns need not be taught. Thornbury (2005) suggests that it is of great use to draw students' attention to how turn-management moves are realised in the SL/FL through primarily the use of spoken discourse markers (see Chapter Two, Sub-section 2.2.2.6 Conversational / Spoken Discourse Markers, p. 90). Fernandez and Cairns (2010) note that in the course of speaking, learners can be regarded as successful communicators if they are alert to the devices or signs that signal when a participant has come to the end of a conversational turn. There may be a fall in pitch or a drop in loudness. Hand gestures could also signal yielding of one's turn. Furthermore, turns usually end with the completion of a grammatical constituent: a phrase, clause or sentence.

1.1.1.3 Mental Processing

Successful oral production is also dependent upon the rapid-processing skills that speaking necessitates. It is significant that learners develop the ability to process instantly both the language they are expected to produce on the spot and the information they have just been told. Effective speakers are expected to process language in their own heads and put it into coherent order so that it comes out in forms that, not only are comprehensible, but also convey the meanings that are intended. Language processing involves the retrieval of words and phrases from memory and their assembly into linguistically and socio-linguistically appropriate sequences. One of the main reasons for including speaking activities in language lessons is to help students develop habits of rapid language processing in English. Learners are also expected to process the information they are told the moment they get it. The longer it takes them to process the information, the less successful they are viewed as instant communicators (Thornbury, 2005).

1.1.2 Types of Speaking

Types of speaking are primarily determined by purpose(s) of speaking. McCarthy (1991) has identified two major types of speaking into which any piece of speech falls: transactional and interactional.

1.1.2.1 Transactional Speaking

Transactional speaking aims at “getting business done in the world, i.e. (...) producing some change in the situation that pertains” (McCarthy, 1991: 136). Examples of this category are telling someone something they need to know, affecting the purchase of something, getting somebody to do something and other world-changing aspects. This can be illustrated by the following examples.

Example 1: Finalising someone's dress arrangements

[Speaker A comes in holding his jacket.]

B: That looks very nice. Put it on and let's have a look at you.

A: I don't like the two buttons, I didn't know it had two buttons, I thought it had three.

C: Well, it's the style of the coat, Ken.

B: Nick's has only got two buttons.

C: It's a low cut.

A: All right?

B: Yeah, it goes very well with those trousers, there's a colour in the jacket that picks up the colour in the trousers.

C: The others he wears are striped, but they clashed, too much alike.

A: Two different stripes...

C: But not matching each other if you understand what I mean.

B: Yeah, yeah ... yeah.

A: It's all right then, eh?

B: It's very nice, dad, it looks very, very good.

A: I don't like the, I like three buttons, you see ...

C: Ken, it's the style of the coat!

(McCarthy, 1989; cited in McCarthy, 1991: 132)

Example 2: Making confirmation with a rail enquiries clerk over the phone

A: Good afternoon. Enquiries.

B: Hello, I'm making a journey from Ealing Broadway to Leamington Spa tomorrow morning and I don't have the new timetable. Please could you confirm that there's still a 7.25 from Ealing Broadway and an Intercity from Reading at 8.46?

A: Just a minute, please. ... Yes, that's right. Departing Ealing Broadway 7.25, arriving Reading 8.10. Then departing Reading 8.46, arriving Leamington 9.59.

B: Thanks very much.

(Hedge, 2000: 264)

1.1.2.2 Interactional Speaking

The main function of interactional speaking (also known as *interpersonal*) is “the lubrication of the social wheels, establishing roles and relationships with another person prior to transactional talk, confirming and consolidating relationships, expressing solidarity, [and the like]” (McCarthy, 1991: 136). Hedge (2000: 264) distinguishes interactional speaking from transactional speaking by explaining that “(...) [interactional speaking] involves establishing and maintaining social relations, [whereas transactional speaking] involves exchanging information in order to get a job done.” The following extracts are examples of interactional speaking.

Example 1: Chatting about someone’s holiday

A: Do you do a lot of skiing then?

B: I go each year, yes ... it’s my only chance of getting my weight down, you see, and it isn’t the exercise that does it, it’s the fact that the meals are so far apart.

A: (laughs)

C: Yeah?

B: Yes, I’m not joking ... if we eat say, right, breakfast eight, lunch one, evening meal six, perhaps a snack after that then you’re eating four times a day, but

A: You’d never get no skiing in, would you?

B: Well, in these places, you breakfast at eight, well, half past eight, ... (etc.)

(McCarthy, 1989; cited in McCarthy, 1991: 133-4)

Example 2: Chatting about Christmas in the village where the speakers live

B: No ... it was generally very quiet and the weather was ... what did it do, it just, it was quite sunny actually.

D: It was quite sunny a couple of the days.

B: Christmas Day was quite sunny we went for a walk, had a splendid walk.

D: In the morning, it rained in the afternoon.

A: British Christmases rarely change, it's a time for gorging yourself and going for walks.

B: Yeah, that's right, and you never get any snow.

C: Yes, it was very sunny Christmas Day.

B: Mm.

(McCarthy, 1989; cited in McCarthy, 1991: 134-5)

It is worth mentioning that speaking is rarely all transactional or interactional. McCarthy (1991) argues that even in settings where speaking is strictly transactional, people often engage in interactional talk. They have been observed to simply exchange chat about the weather and many unpredictable matters, as in the following examples.

Example 1: At a British chemist's shop

Customer: Can you give me a strong painkiller for an abscess, or else a suicide note?

Assistant: (laughing) Oh dear! Well, we've got ... (etc.) (McCarthy, 1991: 137)

Example 2: A university porter registering some newly arrived students at their campus accommodation

Porter: So, Foti ... and Spampinato ... (writes their names), are you Italians? I'm studying Italian Art, only part time, of course, I love it, I love Italian Art.

Student: (looking bewildered) Excuse me? (McCarthy, 1991: 137)

1.2 Teaching / Assessing Speaking

The importance and primacy of speech as a mode of communication would suggest that the teaching of speaking has to be a central force in language learning. It is of high significance that the teacher carefully plans ahead what to present his/her learners with in

the classroom and how to do so by building their awareness of speaking genres and developing a variety of speaking activities.

1.2.1 Speaking Genres

For the teaching of speaking to be successful, it is essential that teachers develop in learners the skill of determining the specific kind of speaking they are expected to do in a certain speaking situation (Scrivener, 2005). In this respect, different sub-kinds of speaking could be distinguished by applying the concept of genre.

1.2.1.1 Characteristics of Genre

Scrivener (2005: 163) defines genre as “a variety of speech (or writing) that [one] would expect to find in a particular place, with particular people, in a particular context, to achieve a particular result, using a particular channel (for example, face to face [or] by phone).” Hedge (2000: 265) points out that genre “links the purpose of a particular type of spoken discourse to its overall structure.” In everyday life, people speak in various ways, depending on who they are speaking to, where they are and the nature of the entire situation. For instance, giving a lecture in school is a completely different kind of speaking from enquiring about car insurance over the phone. Such two examples present two different genres.

Decisions about genre mainly determine the choice of grammar, words, how much one talks, how polite they are, how much they speak and how much they listen. Scrivener (2005) lists the specific choices that a genre is often characterised by as follows: style, tone, quality, manner, directness, formality, type of content and choice of words. There are generally specific recognisable rules for each genre that the speaker needs to attend to, so that his/her speaking sounds decent and appropriate. As it is the case in the mother tongue, SL and FL learners cannot knowingly choose to ignore the genre or substitute one for

another; for instance, someone would sound very clumsy if s/he gives a lecture in the style of a comedy sketch! Similarly, a FL learner who is, for example, expected to be telling an anecdote or a scary story might be regarded as “awkward” if s/he narrates the story in a manner that sounds like delivering a news report!

It is possible to identify a predictable shape to some genres, such as narrative analysis. McCarthy (1991) explains a six-part structure of an oral narrative of personal experience: abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, result and coda.

Abstract gives a short statement of what the story is going to be about (optional element).

Example: “I must tell you about an embarrassing moment yesterday.”

Orientation sets out the time, place and characters for the listener.

Example: “You know that secretary in our office, well, last week...”

Complication refers to the main events that make the story happen.

Example: “The Xerox machine caught fire!”

Evaluation reveals the story teller’s attitude by emphasising parts of the narrative.

Example: “which amazed me really!”

Result shows how the events sort themselves out.

Example: “and she got £ 2.000 compensation.”

Coda provides a bridge between the story world and the moment of telling (optional element).

Example: “and ever since, I’ve never been able to look at a mango without feeling sick.”

He notes that the above six-element framework can be useful in designing story-telling activities for learners. Anecdotes and accounts of personal experience are valuable as an initial way of getting students to speak at greater length, develop and structure their speech and practise linking the various parts.

Another example of genres which have a discernible shape is giving street directions, a common activity in the language classroom. Telling X how to get to Y’s

house or where to locate something on a map are often the basis of information-gap exercises; the latter could be of high value in generating talk. Psathas and Kozloff (1976; cited in McCarthy, 1991) specify three elements or phases that are commonly observed in the setting of direction giving: situation, information and instruction, and an ending phase.

Situation phase: establishing the starting point, the goal and the means of transportation for the person directed.

Example: “Okay, so you’re at the Market Place...right...”

Information and instruction phase: giving the main route directions.

Example: “Well...if you can see the clock tower, ...”

Ending phase: confirming that the route directions have been understood and closing the interaction.

Example: “and there you are, got that?”

Other examples of speaking given by McCarthy (1991) genres include:

- Making a phone enquiry
- Explaining medical problems to a doctor
- Greeting a passing colleague
- Telling a joke to friends in a café
- Making a job interview
- Chatting with a friend
- Giving military orders
- Negotiating a sale
- Making a business presentation
- Communicating “live” during an Internet game
- Explaining a grammatical point to a class

- Meeting people at an informal party
- Making a public speech.

It is of significance to direct students' attention to the point that some genres might need further analysis. The last genre, making a public speech, for example, could refer to a wide variety of different kinds of task, from thanking some colleagues for a birthday present to presenting a one-hour talk at a conference of 3.000 people. Such types of speaking could be specified more precisely than by simply naming a genre if learners add information about why speaking is being done, where it is being done and who is listening or interacting with the speaker.

1.2.1.2 Building Awareness of Speaking Genres

In order to build awareness of speaking genres, Scrivener (2005) suggests that teachers work on speech acts, such as the ones in Table 1, using games and practice activities.

| |
|--|
| PRONUNCIATION |
| Speaking clearly, with comprehensible sounds |
| Using fluent, connected speech with appropriate word-linking |
| Using stress and intonation to emphasise, draw attention to things, express emotions or attitudes, etc. |
| Using an appropriate pace |
| CONTEXT |
| Choosing and maintaining a suitable level of formality / informality |
| CHOOSING AND MAINTAINING A SUITABLE LEVEL OF POLITENESS |
| Being aware of appropriate topics and style for the context (e.g. a business meeting and social chit-chat) |
| Coping with a stressful speaking context (e.g. other people waiting, limited time to speak) |

| |
|---|
| Speaking spontaneously with limited / no preparation time before speaking |
| Coping with uncertainty about the language level of other people |
| ORGANISING INFORMATION |
| Structuring speech as you talk |
| Giving neither too much, nor too little information |
| Not offering irrelevant information |
| Conveying clear, accurate information |
| Clearly sign-posting to your listener(s) the structure and stages of what you say |
| INTERACTION |
| Establishing a relationship before and during communication |
| Coping with unpredictable responses |
| Turn-taking |
| LISTENING |
| Listening and responding appropriately in line with the progress of a conversation |
| Showing interest in the person speaking |
| Reaching a negotiated / compromise conclusion |
| Coping with a variety of content (facts, opinions, arguments, anecdotes, etc.) simultaneously |
| SPEAKING STRATEGIES |
| Holding the floor when you wish to continue speaking |
| Interrupting politely |
| Starting new topics or changing topics |
| LANGUAGE ITEMS |
| Fluently forming accurate structures to express required meaning |
| Knowing fixed phrases used in specific situations |
| Creating effective questions |

| |
|---|
| Having sufficient lexical resources to express meanings |
|---|

Table 1: Grid for Assessing Speech Acts
(Scrivener, 2005: 167)

For example, to build awareness of interrupting politely, the following two sample activities could be used. In the first activity, the learners work in small groups; each student takes a card with a topic word on it (for instance, “swimming”). One student, in each group, starts speaking on their given topic, while the other learners attempt to interrupt and change the topic politely to their topic. This group work has to maintain a balanced conversation. Alternatively, the teacher hands out a list of expressions for interrupting politely (for example, “by the way,...”, “Sorry to interrupt,...”), including some unlikely or incorrect expressions (for example, “Now, I want us to talk about ...”). The learners select the correct items from the list, then have a conversation using them. In the second genre-based activity, suggested by Scrivener (2005), the learners are asked to choose a few instances of genres from a list they (or the teacher) have already made:

- Giving an academic lecture
- Having a stand-up conversation at a formal party
- Discussing new sales at a business meeting
- Leaving an answer-phone message
- Buying a train ticket at the station
- Making a dentist’s appointment over the phone
- Checking in at the airport

The teacher, then, asks the students to analyse the genres they have selected using a grid such as the following one in Table 2. One or two examples may be given to the learners to help them understand how to proceed in the analysis of genres.

| Genre | Purpose | Setting | Audience | Response |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| What general kind of speaking is it? | Why is this speaking done? | Where is it done? | Who is listening? | Does the speaker get a spoken response from the listener(s)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ one-way (no response)? ▪ two-way (reciprocal communication)? ▪ multi-way (more than two communicate)? |
| 1. An academic lecture | to inform people of facts about 17 th - century British history | lecture theatre at Budapest University | group of students listening, note-taking, etc. | mainly one-way: response only in terms of posture, expression and possibly a question or comment |
| 2. A stand-up conversation at a formal party | making contacts; finding new clients | living room of a private house in Nairobi | one or more other professional people of similar social status | multi-way: a varying number of people speak |

Table 2: Genre-Analysis Grid
(Scrivener, 2005: 165)

Scrivener (2005) points out that once the teacher has explained a specific speaking task; for instance, making a business appointment over the phone, the learners may need to:

- plan how they will do the task;
- rehearse parts (or all) of it;
- hear examples of competent speakers doing the same task;
- get input from the teacher on possible structures, phrases, vocabulary, etc;
- reflect on how well they did the task after they finish;
- re-plan or revise their original ideas; and
- have a second or third chance, if possible, to do the task.

At various points, the learners may want correction and advice on how to do the task better. Scrivener (2005) suggests a basic lesson sequence including the above-listed elements. The stage marked with a “circle” (○) could come at any point in the sequence, depending on what the teacher sees appropriate for the learning/teaching situation.

a. Setting the task: the teacher tells the learners that they have to phone a business contact to make an appointment for a meeting to discuss future plans.

b. Planning the speaking: the teacher asks the learners to work in pairs to decide what the caller will say, and how the receptionist will respond. The learners should not write a whole script, but can make notes of particular phrases.

c. Rehearsing the speaking: the learners practise in pairs. The teacher listens and suggests corrections and improvements.

d. Doing the task: the teacher makes new pairs, and without further discussion, the learners “phone” each other and do the task.

e. Feedback / Review: the pairs meet and reflect on whether the task was done well. The whole class may also discuss the question, and the teacher offers notes. S/he may draw

attention to specific language items that the learners could use and specific ways of interacting appropriately to the genre.

- Exposure to examples: the teacher plays a recording of competent speakers doing the same task and asks the class to take down notes about the language these competent speakers use.

f. Adding / Correcting / Revising: the pairs reflect on how they could improve their task next time.

g. Re-doing the task: the teacher makes new pairs and asks them to do the task again.

1.2.2 Speaking Activities

There are many types of activities that the teacher can implement to promote the speaking skill in the English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom. The most outstanding types of such speaking activities are discussions, presentations, dialogues, simulations and role plays, conversations, interviews and speaking games.

1.2.2.1 Discussions

Discussions, or debates, are among the most commonly used activities in the oral skill class. Typically, the students are introduced to a topic through a reading or listening passage or a videotape, and are asked to get into pairs or groups to discuss a related topic in order to come up with a solution or response (Lazaraton, 2001). This type of activity, most appropriate for intermediate and advanced learners, requires extensive preparation on the part of the students, calls for interaction in groups and makes use of at least the following language functions: describing, explaining, giving and asking for information, persuading, arguing, agreeing and disagreeing (O'Malley and Pierce, 1996).

The main advantages of discussion could be summed up in four points (Derradji, 2005). To start with, the learners can be involved in interpreting utterances and responding in an appropriate way on the spot. Secondly, the students initiate their own language and put it to communicative use without having to repeat pre-rehearsed stretches. Thirdly, the learners exchange various opinions and broaden their knowledge in the course of give and take of information. A further advantage is that there is a scope for further communicative use of a debate session as when a group leader is required during a report-back session to recapitulate the main arguments, or when a taped discussion is played back in a different class for listening commentary.

Discussion, nonetheless, as Derradji (2005) mentions, has drawbacks. First, some topics which the learners select may be very technical to the extent that they might make the teacher feel uncomfortable. To solve this problem, he suggests, the teacher may invite, if possible, some specialists to the classroom, so that they participate in the discussion and inform the learners. The second main disadvantage of discussion, he continues to explain, is that the students may get out of the debate session without having gained new information. Some teachers may have experienced moments when there was difficulty avoiding “yes/no” or “I don’t know” responses which are likely to close down the debate. To solve this problem, Derradji (2005) further recommends, it may not be of help to consider discussion as a time filler; rather, the teacher may plan the session and ask the learners to prepare themselves beforehand for the discussion. The students may prepare, as homework, some points for and against, so that they do not run out of ideas a few minutes after the debate session has started. Lazaraton (2001) casts light on the point that the students will be more involved and motivated to participate in discussions if they are allowed to select discussion topics for themselves and evaluate their peers’ performance. This is in tune with the principle of learners taking responsibility for their own learning.

Various forms of discussion can be implemented in the classroom depending on the learners' needs and preferences. Here are a few major discussion formats at the teacher's disposal (Thornbury, 2005):

– Discussion cards: the teacher prepares in advance sets of cards (one for each subgroup), on which are written statements relating to a pre-selected topic. In their subgroups, one student takes the first card, reads it aloud, and the students discuss it for as long as they need before taking the next card. If a particular statement does not interest these students, they can move on to the next one. The object is not to discuss all the statements; the teacher should decide at what point to end the activity. The subgroups who have finished early can prepare a summary of the main points that have come up during the activity. These summaries can be used to open up the discussion to the whole class.

– Warm- up discussions: when introducing a new topic or preparing the learners to read or listen to a text, the teacher sets a few questions for pair or group discussion, followed by a report to the whole class. These discussion questions may target general knowledge about the topic or some personalised responses to the topic. For example, as a warm-up discussion activity that introduces a coursebook unit on sport, Thornbury (2005: 103) suggests the following.

On the ball

Speaking

Discuss these questions.

1. Which is your favourite sport? Why do you like it?
2. Do you play it, watch it or both?
3. What sports do you dislike? Why?
4. Which sports do you associate more with men or women? Why?

My favourite sport is squash. I love it because it's really fast – Afterwards, you feel great!

Figure 1: A Warm-up Discussion Activity
(Thornbury, 2005: 103)

– Balloon discussions: this format is based on the idea that a hot-air balloon with its passengers is dangerously overloaded, and at least one of the passengers has to be thrown out. The group members, representing famous people in history, famous living people or people in different professions, have to say why they should be saved and why someone else should be sacrificed. This works best if the students have had time to prepare what to say.

– Pyramid (or consensus) discussions: the principle of such a format is that, at first, the learners work in pairs to achieve consensus (decision) on an issue, then these pairs try to convince other pairs before forming subgroups of four, and so on, until the whole class comes to an agreement. For example, the teacher might provide the class with the activity of devising some “class rules” with regard to such aspects as classroom etiquette, discipline, duties and homework. First, the learners draft a list of about eight class rules, compare these rules in pairs and draft a new list of eight class rules these pairs agree on. This is believed to involve discussion and negotiation. Once the four-member subgroup

have their list, they join another pair, and the process begins again. Eventually, the class is divided into two halves, and the latter come together to agree on the final version.

– Panel discussions: this format is that of a television debate in which people, representing various shades of opinion on a topic, argue the case under the guidance of a chairperson. One way of organising this is to let the students first work in pairs to organise their arguments. Then, one of each pair takes their place on the panel, while the others play the audience who could ask questions once the panellists have stated their point of view. It would be more helpful if the classroom furniture is organised to represent a real panel discussion. It also works better if the learners are allowed to choose their point of view themselves rather than having to voice an opinion they may not support. In large classes, panel discussions can take place concurrently in subgroups, with the teacher monitoring them.

Discussions could work much better if the learners are equipped with a repertoire of expressions for voicing strong agreements, strong disagreements and all the shades of opinions in between. These expressions could be available on posters around the classroom and need to be regularly reviewed. Thornbury (2005: 105) suggests the following useful expressions.

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Expressing an opinion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – If you ask me, ... – (Personally,) I think ... – If you want my opinion, ... | <p>Conceding an argument:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Perhaps, you're right. – Ok, you win. – You've convinced me. |
| <p>Strong agreement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Absolutely. – I couldn't agree more. – I totally agree. | <p>Hedging:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – I take your point, but ... – Yes, but ... |

| | |
|---|---|
| – I agree. | |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Qualified agreement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – That’s partly true. – On the whole, yes. – I’d go along with that. | <p style="text-align: center;">Strong disagreement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – I don’t agree. – On the contrary ... – I totally disagree. |

Table 3: Agreement and Disagreement Expressions
(Thornbury, 2005: 105)

1.2.2.2 Presentations

Presentations, also known as “prepared talks,” “speeches” or “oral reports,” are prepared and more writing-like than conversational. However, it is more effective if the students speak from notes rather than a script. Giving them enough time to prepare their talks helps them benefit more from doing oral presentations. The students may also need a chance to rehearse their presentations. This could often be done by getting them to present to each other in pairs or small groups first before they make their speech in front of the entire class (Harmer, 2007). Presentations could be designed at all levels of proficiency. If research is required, presentations may be more appropriate for intermediate and advanced levels. The learners at beginning levels could make oral reports using realia, posters, displays or other support materials (O’Malley and Pierce, 1996).

Topics for presentations, as Lazaraton (2001) points out, vary depending on the level of the students and the focus of the class. However, giving the learners some room to determine the content of their talks is said to be more interesting. In other words, the teacher could provide the structure for the presentation, i.e. its rhetorical genre (for example, narration or description) and its time restrictions, while the students select the content. For example, asking the students to tell about an unforgettable experience they

had allows them to talk about something that is personally meaningful, while at the same time, encourages narration and description. Presentations could be, after a while, boring for the listeners, so it is a good idea to assign them some responsibilities during the presentation. This may be an excellent time to require peer evaluation of classmates' speech. Generally, one or two students could be assigned beforehand the responsibility of evaluating a certain speech, using guidelines created by the teacher or the students themselves. Such guidelines may include factors about how long to speak, the choice of the topic and the specific areas of the topic to be tackled.

Lazaraton (2001) explains that videotaping of speeches allows all evaluators (the speaker, peers and teacher) to do a more in-depth critique. The students themselves could come up with their own evaluation guidelines, use teacher-made criteria or a combination of the two. The students are usually surprised to see how they appear and sound on the tape and could often come up with their own ideas about how to improve their performances. If the presentations are audiotaped or videotaped, some language analysis activities could be used to encourage the learners to become aware of their individual problems with pronunciation, grammar and fluency. Teacher evaluation of speeches could benefit from the availability of videotapes since they allow for more sustained attention to both the overall speech and the details of performance than real-time evaluation does. Lazaraton (2001) suggests some categories of performance that may be considered for evaluation.

- Delivery: Was the volume loud enough? Was the speed appropriate? Did the speaker stay within the time limits?
- Interaction with the audience: How were the visual aspects of the presentation: eye-contact, posture, gestures and nervousness?
- Content and organisation: Was it easy to locate and understand the main event or main point of the talk? Was there an appropriate introduction and conclusion?

– Language skills and components: Were there any particular problems with fluency, grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation?

Like discussions, presentations have various formats, among which are show-and-tell, academic presentations and business presentations (Thornbury, 2005). As for the show-and-tell format, which consists of asking the learners to talk and answer questions about a specific object or image, it works well for all age groups and at all levels, except the most elementary ones. The show-and-tell format can be established as a regular feature of lessons, with the learners taking turns and knowing in advance when their turn is due. The talk itself should not take more than two or three minutes and should not be scripted, although the use of notes could be permitted. Extra time is allowed for asking questions. Topic areas may include sports, holidays, family and work. For the students who are unfamiliar with this format, it is a good idea if the teacher gives them a model of a show-and-tell activity.

The students who are studying English for academic purposes may need preparation in order to give academic presentations or present conference papers. Before practising these skills in class, Thornbury (2005) explains, it may help to discuss the formal features of such genres and identify specific language exponents associated with each stage. A checklist of features, along with useful expressions, can be displayed as a poster in the classroom and modified over time as the students take turns giving their presentations and discussing their effectiveness. The same principle of peer presentations in terms of collaborative analysis and critical feedback works effectively with business presentations. One way of reducing the pressure of solo performance is to ask the learners to work in pairs on the preparation of the presentation and to take turns in its delivery. It is vital to allow a question-and-answer session at the end since this is usually the most challenging stage of a presentation. The “audience” should be given some time at the close

of the presentation to prepare their questions. This, in turn, could be followed by a brief discussion as to the strengths and weaknesses of the presentation. Thornbury (2005) argues that the experience of standing up in front of the peers and speaking continuously for a relatively long time is an excellent preparation of the students for real-life speaking; this is especially the case if the learners also have to respond to questions spontaneously.

1.2.2.3 Dialogues

Unlike monologues (such as presentations that are not open at the end to any questions or contribution by the audience), it is of the essence of dialogues that the participants expect each other to respond. Brown (2001) explains that dialogues involve two or more speakers and could be subdivided into exchanges that promote social relationships, interpersonal or interactional, and exchanges with the purpose of conveying factual information, transactional (see Sub-section 1.1.2 Types of Speaking, p. 14). In interpersonal or transactional dialogues, participants may have a good deal of shared knowledge or background information. Therefore, the familiarity of the interlocutors will produce dialogues with more assumptions, implications and other meanings hidden between the lines. In dialogues between participants who are unfamiliar with each other, references and meanings have to be made more explicit to ensure effective comprehension. When such references are not explicit, misunderstandings may easily occur.

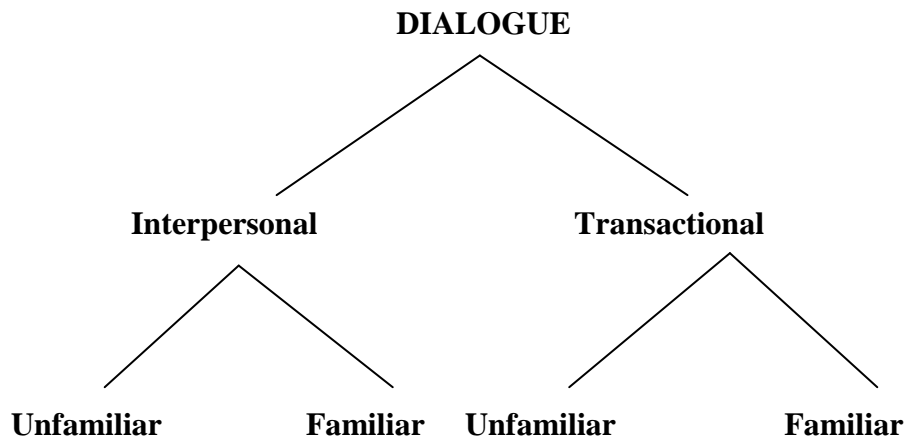


Figure 2: Dialogue Classification
 (Nunan, 1991; cited in Brown, 2001: 251)

Thornbury (2005) points out that practising dialogues has a long history in language teaching since language is essentially dialogic in its use, and any grammar structure or lexical area could be worked into a dialogue with some degree of ingenuity. Dialogue practice also provides a useful change of focus from teacher-led classroom interaction. Even in large classes with fixed furniture, setting up pairwork is not a tremendous management challenge. Dialogues can be performed, as it is often the case, between two or more students or between the teacher and a student. He explains that the dialogue which is performed by the teacher and a selected student is a useful way of demonstrating to the rest of the class how subsequent student-student pairwork is to be performed. For example, the teacher can ask a volunteer student to read aloud one of the roles of a dialogue that appears in the coursebook, while the teacher takes the other role. The teacher could also set up a situation (for example, a hotel reception), take one role himself / herself (for example, the receptionist), and, with a volunteer student, improvise a dialogue before the rest of the class does in pairs. Thornbury (2005) reports that student-student pairwork can take two forms: open or closed. Open pairwork is when two students, either adjacent to or opposite one another, perform a dialogue, while the rest of the class observes. This is a useful

transition phase from the teacher-student stage to the next stage: the closed pair stage where adjacent students perform a dialogue, while all the pairs are working at the same time. The teacher's role at this stage is to move around the class, checking whether the students are working and offering any guidance or correction where it is appropriate. When the pairs finish their dialogue, they can be asked to switch roles and do it again, change key elements in the dialogue (such as the relationship between the speakers) or attempt to do the dialogue from memory. The closed pair stage can be followed by a performance stage, when selected pairs perform the dialogue which they have been practising in front of the class. Knowing that this will happen makes them concentrate well during the closed practice stage and is an incentive to rehearse or even memorise the dialogue.

Practising and performing dialogues is an effective way of providing conditions for the assimilation of newly encountered language features. A balance needs to be found, however, between security and challenge. Thornbury (2005) explains that making the task very easy, as when the students are given unlimited time to simply read a dialogue aloud, is unlikely to motivate them to make the adjustments in the current state of their knowledge that are needed in order to integrate new knowledge. On the other hand, placing much performance pressure on the learners very soon may have the effect that they feel frustrated and avoid risk-taking that is necessary for the task to be accomplished. One way to ease pressure on the learners, he suggests, is to give them sufficient time to rehearse before asking them to perform in front of the class. Another way is not to place much pressure on their ability to remember the dialogue. He recommends some ways of easing the memory demands of dialogue practice, while at the same time, providing helpful conditions for the incorporation of new language items.

– Items on board: having isolated and drilled, from a taped dialogue, a number of expressions (for example, such communication strategy formulas as *How do you say...?*

It's one of those things that ..., etc.), the teacher writes these expressions on the board and leaves them there as the learners do a speaking activity, such as buying items in a department store. When the learners incorporate these expressions into their talk, the items could be rubbed off the board.

– Chunks on cards: the learners work in pairs to construct a dialogue, and each has a set of cards with useful expressions on them, such as *by the way* and *speaking of which*. The idea is to include these features naturally and as many as possible into the dialogue, adding the card to a discard pile each time it is used.

– Picture and word cues: to ease the memorising load, the script of the dialogue can be represented on the board either in the form of drawings or word cues. The drawings do not need to be very sophisticated; they are simply there as a memory aid. When the learners memorise parts of the dialogue, the cues can be gradually erased.

– Flow-diagram dialogues: this is similar to the previous idea (picture and word cues), but involves representing a dialogue in terms of its speech acts (functions). The learners, in pairs, perform the dialogue by selecting from memory appropriate expressions for the different speech acts. The following figure is an example of a flow diagram.

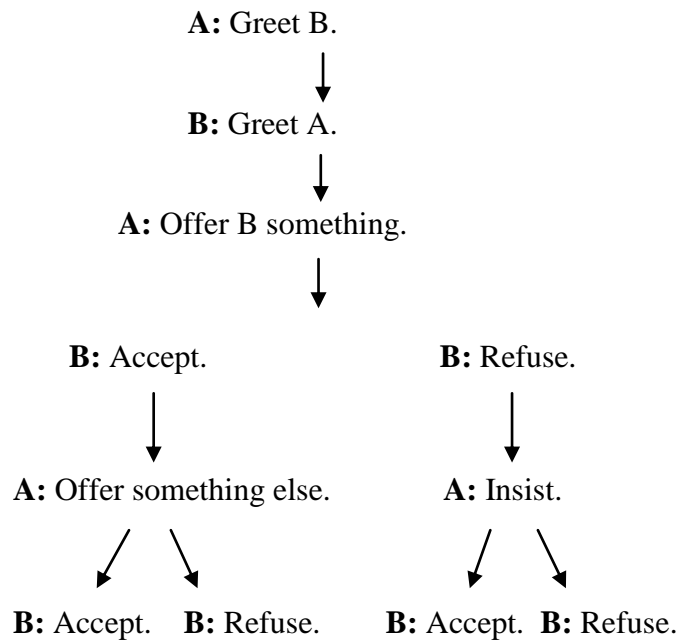


Figure 3: A Flow Diagram

(Thornbury, 2005: 75)

– Disappearing dialogue: the text of a dialogue is written on the board or projected using an overhead projector; the learners practise reading it aloud in pairs, then the teacher starts removing sections of it. Initially, these sections may simply be individual words, but gradually whole lines can be removed. By the end of the activity, the dialogue is likely to be memorised by the learners. They can, then, be challenged to perform it from memory.

1.2.2.4 Simulations and Role Plays

Looking for ways of creating more varied forms of interaction in the classroom, FL teachers have increasingly turned to the field of simulation and role playing. According to O’Malley and Pierce (1996: 85), “[s]imulations provide a context or situation in which students tend to interact in order to solve a problem or make a decision together, [while] role-plays assign distinct roles to each student and ask them to speak through these roles.” The rationale behind such dramatic techniques is that the students simulate a real-life encounter (such as a business meeting, an interview or a conversation in a shop) as if they

were doing so in the real world. The learners could act out the simulation as themselves or take on the role of a completely different character and express thoughts and feelings they do not necessarily share. When the teacher gives the students these roles, the simulation is called a role play. Accordingly, the teacher might tell a student “You’re an over-protective parent who doesn’t accept easily to give the child permission to go on a trip” or “You’re Sarah, and you’re trying to convince your cousin, Linda, to go to a party with you.”

Role playing can take the form of four categories (Mugglestone, 1977: 86):

- Category 1: acting out a role that is already performed in the L1 and needs to be performed in English; for instance, being a guest or host at a party.
- Category 2: acting out a role that is already performed in the L1, but is unlikely to be performed in English; for instance, being a husband or a wife.
- Category 3: acting out a role which the learner has not performed in his/her L1, but may need to perform in English; for instance, being a post-graduate at a British university.
- Category 4: acting out a role that has not been performed in the L1 and is unlikely to be performed in English; for instance, being a policeman.

Varying roles that the students are expected to perform has proved to yield positive results, in that it gives the learners an opportunity to practise various language forms, on the one hand, and inserts a degree of pleasure, on the other.

Thornbury (2005) notes that “drama” is the generic term that encompasses both role play and simulation. He also argues that in spite of the fact that these activities have many aspects in common, a distinction could be made between them. Role plays “involve the adoption of *another ‘persona’* [identity or personality]” (p. 98) as when a student pretends to be an employer interviewing a job applicant or a celebrity talking to a fan about his/her

plans. Information about the learners' roles could be supplied in the form of separate role cards such as the following.

PARENT

- You strongly believe that education is much more important than making money.
- You're trying to convince your child to finish his/her study first, then have any job s/he wants.

Role Card 1

CHILD

- You've found a good full-time job and decided to stop going to the university for some time.
- You're going to tell your parent the news and discuss your decision.

Role Card 2

In a simulation, on the other hand, “students ‘play’ themselves in a simulated situation” (Thornbury, 2005: 98). Such situations may include phoning a restaurant to make a reservation or being stuck in a lift. A more elaborate simulation might involve the planning and presentation of a business plan. Herbert and Sturtridge (1979) mention that simulations are generally divided into three phases: a stage for giving the participants necessary information, the problem-solving phase and the follow-up work.

Thornbury (2005) recommends three drama activity formats which are potentially highly language productive, can be adapted to different levels of proficiency, allow the learners to experience autonomy in the speaking skill, require few materials, and hence can be set up spontaneously and in most teaching contexts. The first drama activity format, namely “alibis,” is a classic activity with a game element, in that the participants try to outwit each other. This activity can be played several times without loss of interest. The basic format starts with two students being “accused” of having committed a crime, such as a robbery in an institution, between 10 and 11 A.M. The two “accused,” then, establish an alibi. The latter must account for their actions only during the period in question (any

detail before or after is irrelevant), and it is important to establish that they were together all that time. While the “accused” contrive their alibi, the rest of the class could prepare questions such as *What were you doing ...? What did you do next? Did you meet anyone? What did you say? How much did it cost? and Who paid?* The “accused” are led in, one at a time, and have to answer the questions. It helps to establish the rule that they are not allowed to claim that they do not remember. Any significant discrepancy in the answers of the “accused” means that they are unquestionably “guilty.”

In the second drama activity, “shopping around,” pairs of students visit every “shop” before making a decision about the one they should be regular customers of. The class is divided into two: one half are the customers and the other half the providers. The customers and providers are further subdivided into pairs. The situation itself could vary to suit whatever theme is appropriate; for example, the customers might be parents looking for a particular kind of school for their special needs child. The providers represent different schools; the parents first decide what features the school they are looking for should have. Meanwhile, working in pairs, each school representative devises a policy, with regard to such aspects as discipline, the curriculum, uniforms and sports. It is important, however, that the school fees are the same for each school; the mere cost should not be a deciding factor. When everyone is ready, each set of parents interview one of the schools’ representatives, then move round and interview the next school representative until all the parent pairs have interviewed all the schools’ representative pairs. The parents now are expected to be ready to make their decision as to which school they prefer, and the schools representatives could equally decide which parents they prefer. Each group reports their decision and reasons to the class.

The third recommended activity is “the enquiry.” An enquiry can be set up to gather evidence and opinions about, for instance, miscarriage of justice or a consumer’s complaint. Different interest groups are represented, and they put their case to a team of independent investigators in an open forum. The situation might be, for example, a badly

governed village. After the situation has been established, the different interest groups brainstorm their problems, while the responsible persons try to anticipate these problems and prepare counter-arguments. The panel of arbitrators, two or three students, prepares questions to ask the complainants. Then, each interest group puts the case, and time is allowed for the groups to counter each other's arguments. In the end, the arbitrators make a ruling.

Although an inarticulate student who does not play his/her part appropriately may destroy the framework of the role play or simulation, such drama techniques enjoy numerous advantages that make them worth implementing. Forrest (1992; cited in O'Malley and Pierce, 1996) encourages teachers to use simulation and role-playing in the classroom because they are authentic, involving language use in interactive contexts. They provide a format for using elements of real-life conversation such as repetitions, interruptions, hesitations, distractions, changes of topic, facial expressions and gestures. Harmer (2007) adds that simulations and role plays are fun, and thus motivating. They also allow hesitant students to be more forthright in their opinions and behaviours, without having to take responsibility for what they say the way they do when they are speaking for themselves. Furthermore, they give the learners a chance to practise a wider range of registers than are available in the classroom; for example, situations involving interactions with total strangers or requiring "face-threatening" speech acts such as complaining about the quality of food in a restaurant or refusing an invitation to a party.

1.2.2.5 Conversations

Thornbury (2005: 105) defines conversation, also referred to as "chat," as "casual talk that is primarily interpersonal." He explains that in the past, it was warned that:

the traditional 'conversation lesson' is of no value at all if the student is not ready for it (...). The student has to be first trained to use patterns in carefully graded aural / oral drills. Only this way will s/he finally learn to speak. The chat stage of the lesson, if it occurred in the first place, was simply there as 'a curtain raiser' to the main event: the controlled practice of sentence patterns (p.105).

Until recently, he reports, one London language school was still emphasising that the teacher and the student should not chat during the lesson. This school held that they should only ask and answer the questions in the coursebook because "chatting is a waste of time." Such a view is not in harmony with the finding that conversation is the most common function of speaking.

The development of conversational skills in L1 acquisition, as Thornbury (2005) notes, has been found to precede the development of language itself. Language learning evolves out of learning how to carry on conversations. In other words, conversation in a SL/FL is not the result of language learning, but an essential means through which learning occurs. Another reason why conversation is valuable lies in the fact that many SL/FL learners feel that their most urgent need is to develop conversational competence, and they regularly choose conversation as their principal objective when answering needs analysis surveys. For this reason, many language schools, in many parts of the world, offer conversation classes as a way of complementing traditional grammar-focused classes. However, such conversational classes offer a challenge to teachers and course designers since it is difficult to plan or programme something as inherently unstructured and spontaneous as casual conversation. Thornbury (2005: 106) argues that "[g]enuine conversational interactions cannot be the outcome of planned lesson agendas; they have to *emerge* – and so, by definition, cannot be planned." One way that the teacher could handle such teaching situation, he suggests, is to organise conversation classes around a set of themes. Ideally, the latter can be negotiated with the learners in advance through the use of

questionnaires or consensus (decision) debates. Theme-related texts could be used to trigger conversation, either in the whole class or subgroups. Individual students may take turns to make a short presentation on the pre-selected topic which is then followed by an open discussion. Pre-planned lesson content could take the form of teaching useful conversational formulas and routines, such as how to open and close conversations, how to interrupt, change the subject and ask for clarification. The focus may also be on the teaching of communication strategies, such as paraphrasing and the use of hesitation markers and gestures.

Thornbury (2005) puts forward three activities that can be used to incorporate conversation “lessons” into ordinary classwork: a “talking circle,” a “sentence star” and “true / false sentences.” In a “talking circle” activity, a group activity that generally takes place at the beginning of the 45-minute conversational English class, the teacher and students gather in the “talking circle” to share and discuss experiences, anecdotes, news, special events or introduce the weekly theme. Although the teacher might open the discussion by suggesting a general topic, the overriding assumption is that the “talking circle” provides a place and an audience for the students to discuss anything of interest to them. This implies that the classroom dynamic requires of the learners to be prepared to share and discuss experiences. In order to create the right conditions for such exchanges, it is often effective to start with more structured activities which incorporate an element of personalisation. In a “sentence star” activity, all the learners draw a five-pointed star on a piece of paper. The teacher asks the students to write on the tip of the first point “*can*,” on the second point “*like*,” on the third point “*have*,” on the fourth point “*used to*” and on the fifth point “*going to*.” These cues could be varied according to the level of the class and the syllabus. The learners, individually, write true sentences about themselves using each of the five words on their star and following the teacher’s example (for instance, “*I can speak Portuguese*”). In pairs or small groups, they take turns to read each others’ sentences; the

others in the group have to ask at least five questions about each of the sentences – for example, *Where did you learn Portuguese? How well can you speak it? Can you write it?* In a final open-class stage, the students could report on interesting matters they have learned about their classmates. In a “true / false sentences” activity, the teacher dictates five or more sentences to the class; some of the sentences could embed a specific grammar structure, although this is not necessary. The teacher tells the class that some of the sentences are true and some are false. The students work in pairs to try and guess which are which, then report their guesses with reasons. Next, working individually and using the dictated sentences as a model, they write down some true and false sentences about themselves and take turns to guess which sentences are true or false, in pairs or small groups. Thornbury (2005) draws attention to the point that the “sentence star” and “true / false sentences” activities can help break the classroom ice, but little or no conversation will be possible in the classroom unless teachers demonstrate their willingness to be “conversational partners.” This means that, at times, they have to relinquish their traditional pedagogic role in order to have a casual conversation with the students.

1.2.2.6 Interviews

According to Klippel (1984), the interview is a form of interaction that is generally structured so that the interviewees are given a series of questions or situations to which they have to respond. Before using an interview in the classroom, it is important that the students can use the necessary question-and-answer structures. A few sample sentences on the board may be a help for the less able students. With advanced learners, language functions like insisting and asking for confirmation (for example, *“Did you mean that ...? Do you really think that ...? Did you say ...? But, you said earlier that...”*), hesitating (for example, *“Well, let me see”*), contradicting and interrupting (for instance, *“Hold on a minute ..., Can I just butt in here?”*), could be practised during interviews.

In the FL classroom, there are three types of interview: individual, pair and group (Derradji, 2005). Individual interviews are face-to-face spoken interactions between an expert (the teacher) who conducts the interview and the student. Each student has a chance to perform individually in the FL; for instance, talking about his/her learning experience. For an individual interview to be successful, the teacher follows certain guidelines. In the first place, a useful interview requires clear determination of the purpose. Once the latter is determined, the teacher prepares some activities that aim at helping the students demonstrate their oral proficiency; for example, how to show a way for somebody on a map. Next, the teacher prepares questions for the interview. Successful interviews are conducted periodically, so that the teachers could monitor their students' progress. In doing so, the teachers will have a chance to adjust their teaching to the learners' needs or make remedial sessions, if necessary. Pair interviews involve two students, one as the interviewer and the other as the interviewee; students may exchange roles. Group interviews are retrospective, in the sense that the learners are asked about what they would do in a given situation; for example, a group of learners may be asked questions such as *How do you remember vocabulary?* and *What advice would you give to a beginning student on how to learn vocabulary?* Group interviews serve to provide a picture of trends in a classroom or reveal areas of interest where individual interviews could be used as a follow up. The information collected through interviews (whether individual, pair or group) does not refer only to the students' oral proficiency level; it also gives an idea about their preferences, styles, motivation, metacognitive awareness, learning strategies use and self-efficacy level.

Derradji (2005) suggests some essential issues to be adequately considered by the interviewer in the course of developing interview skills.

- The framework of the interview should allow the students to talk and help them listen carefully to what is being said. One way to encourage the interviewee to talk is to ask open-ended questions, such as *What do you think?* and *How do you know that?*
- It is a good idea to start with easy non-controversial questions and give enough time to the interviewee to think.
- It is also of significance not to interrupt a good story to ask for less important details. The interviewer can ask follow-up questions afterwards.
- Taking notes is more effective than using only a tape recorder because the latter might malfunction.
- Watching the interviewee’s body language enables the interviewer to notice signs of discomfort at an early stage.
- It is important to consider whether the questions being asked are very personal or painful for the interviewee to respond to.
- At times, it is a sound decision to stop for a break or make arrangements to continue another day if the interviewer notices that the interviewee is sick or very exhausted to go on.

1.2.2.7 Speaking Games

There is a variety of speaking games, all of which aim at getting the students to talk. Three particular categories are worth indicating: information-gap games, “blocking” games, and television and radio games.

According to Underhill (1987; cited in O’Malley and Pierce, 1996: 81), an information-gap is “an activity where one student is provided information that is kept from a partner.” An information-gap may provide one of the clearest indicators of the ability of

one learner to give information to another. Bygate (1987) points out that many games depend on an information-gap; for example, “Describe and draw,” where one student describes something to a partner in order to solve a puzzle or draw a picture, or “Describe and arrange,” where one student describes a structure made of match sticks or simple objects, and the other student reconstructs it without seeing the original. This could take the form of a sequence of instructions. Lynch (1996) suggests that for the students’ first experience of interactive negotiation, the teacher could make use of a jigsaw speaking activity. This is a form of ordering task, based on memory. The teacher selects or composes a text, cuts it up into single sentences and gives one to every learner in a group to memorise. Then, the teacher takes back the students’ sentences, and they have to work out the original order of the text without writing anything down. Once they have done that, they should dictate their sentences in the right order for everyone in the group to write the original text. Harmer (2007) recommends another variant of information-gap games based on the idea of burying “time capsules” containing artefacts of contemporary life. If such “capsules” were found a thousand years from now, they would give the finder an idea of what life was like today. In this sequence, the students are told that they have a box in the size of a small suitcase. They have to fill this box with the largest number of things which best exemplify life today. They do not have to worry about the cost or weight of an object, but only choose things which, together, fit into the box. The class starts discussing the kinds of material which exemplify their society. They may talk about their music, books, plants, architecture, modern inventions, photography, art, foods, cars, technology, teenage culture, traditions and norms. Once the students have had the discussion, the teacher breaks the class into pairs or small groups. In a short time, the learners make a list of everything they would like to include; no one’s suggestion is rejected at this stage. Now, the teacher gets two pairs, or small groups, to work together and share their ideas. The task is to reduce gradually the number of items on their lists, so that all the items could fit into the box.

While the students are discussing the issues that this task raises, the teacher goes round the groups, listening to what is being said and noting any points that may be worth bringing to the attention of the whole class. The teacher's role is to continuously encourage the students to speak in English and not revert to their own language. When the groups have made their choices, the entire class listens to the suggestions and comes to a decision about the class "time capsule." The teacher may want to feed in ideas or suggestions which s/he heard while going round the class. It has also to be indicated that, later, the teacher and the class could discuss any language problems that came up during this game-like activity.

In a "blocking" game, Thornbury (2005) explains, the students typically listen to, read, rehearse, then perform a dialogue (for instance, between two friends ordering a meal in a restaurant) to the point that they hardly have to listen to what their classmate is saying anymore. In order to introduce an element of unpredictability into such dialogues, one of the speakers, typically the one providing a service, can be encouraged to "block" the other one's expectations. The teacher can demonstrate by asking one of the students to take a role; for example, the customer's role in a shopping situation which has been thoroughly practised. The teacher takes the role of the shop assistant, and instead of providing the expected response (for example, "*Yes, certainly. What size do you take?*" in answer to the request "*I'd like to buy a pair of trainers*"), the teacher says "*I'm sorry, I'm new here*" or "*Have you tried our sports department?*" or "*Trainers? Don't you mean gym shoes?*" The "customer," then, has to cope with this unexpected response and any others that the "shop assistant" comes up with subsequently. The students can play the "blocking game" in pairs, exchanging roles and partners from time to time.

Games from radio and television in the UK often provide useful fluency activities, as the four examples, given by Harmer (2007), demonstrate: "Twenty Questions," "Just a Minute," "Call My Bluff" and "Fishbowl." In "Twenty Questions," the chairperson thinks

of an object and tells a team that the object is either an animal, a vegetable, mineral or a combination of two or three of them. The team's job is to find out what the object is, asking only yes/no questions, such as *Can you use it in the kitchen?* or *Is it bigger than a person?* The students get points if they guess the answer in twenty questions or fewer. In "Just a Minute," a long-running comedy contest on UK radio, each participant is expected to speak for sixty seconds on a subject s/he is given by the chairperson without hesitation, repetition or deviation. In the radio show, as in the classroom, deviation involves language mistakes as well as wandering off the topic. If another "contestant" (student) hears any of such imperfections, s/he interrupts, gets a point and carries on with the subject. The person who is speaking at the end of sixty seconds gets two points. In "Call My Bluff," two teams are involved. One team is given a word that the members of the other team are unlikely to know, finds a correct dictionary definition of the word, makes up two false ones and reads out the definitions; the other team has to guess the correct definition. In other television-inspired games, different tricks or devices are used to make fluent speaking amusing. In "Fishbowl," for example, two students speak about any topic they like, but at a pre-arranged signal, one of them reaches into a fishbowl and take out one of the many pieces of paper on which the students have previously written phrases, questions and sentences. The two students have to incorporate immediately whatever is on the piece of paper into the conversation.

1.2.3 Assessing the Speaking Skill

The speaking skill is an important part of the curriculum in SL and FL teaching, and this makes it a "significant object of assessment" as well (Luoma, 2004: 59). In order to avoid confusion and other difficulties encountered while assessing such a skill, it is important that the tester makes appropriate decisions about mainly the suitable approaches to assessing this skill and the criteria that the assessment is based on.

1.2.3.1 Approaches to Assessing Oral Proficiency

Oller and Damico (1991) distinguish three major approaches to assessing oral proficiency: the discrete-point approach, the integrative approach and the pragmatic approach. The discrete-point approach is based on the assumption that language proficiency consists of separable components of phonology, lexicon, syntax, and so forth, each of which can be further divided into distinct elements, such as phonemes, morphemes, syllables, phrase structures, words and idioms. Following the discrete-point testing model, an oral proficiency test typically employs testing formats such as phoneme discrimination tasks, where the student is supposed to figure out whether two words presented aurally are the same or different (for instance, /men/ versus (vs.) /hen/). A similar example might be a test devised to measure vocabulary that requires of the student to select the appropriate option from a set of fixed choices. Oller and Damico (1991) note that the weaknesses leading to the failure and rejection of such an approach are based on evidence such as the difficulty of limiting oral testing to a single skill (for example, listening) and a single linguistic element (for instance, vocabulary), and the difficulty of measuring oral proficiency in the absence of any social context or link to human experience. As a method of linguistic analysis, the discrete-point approach has some validity, but as a practical method for assessing language abilities, it is counter-productive.

The integrative approach to testing speaking, Oller and Damico (1991) explain, requires oral language proficiency to be assessed in a fairly rich context of discourse. This assumption is based on the belief that oral language processing or use entails the simultaneous engagement of more than one language component (for instance, grammar, vocabulary and gestures) and skill (for example, listening and speaking). Following this logic, an integrative task might require of the student to listen to a story, then re-tell it, or read the story, then summarise it orally.

The pragmatic approach to assessing oral proficiency differs from the integrative approach in one crucial way: an ostensible effort is made to link the language testing situation to the student's experience. Oller and Damico (1991) argue that normal language use is connected to people, places, events and relations that implicate the entire continuum of experience and is always constrained by time or temporal factors. Therefore, pragmatic oral language tasks are intended to be as 'real-life' or authentic as possible. This might require of the learner to engage in a listening task like an integrative task, but under the contextual and temporal conditions that generally characterise this activity. From a pragmatic perspective, FL learners do not generally listen to audio-taped stories; they more commonly listen to adults or competent readers read stories. In this sense, a story-retell listening task which uses a tape-mediated story falls short of meeting pragmatic criteria. In the pragmatic approach to story-retelling, visual input is provided; for instance, the reader's gestures, the print on the page and a number of story-linked pictures in the text. Moreover, time is managed differently, in that the learner may have opportunities to ask questions, make inferences or react toward the content of the story which forms part of the learner's experience. If the tester intends to measure the learner's proficiency in the areas of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, for example, this may be best achieved through the pragmatic approach which seems to meet the demands of educators.

On the whole, we believe that the pragmatic approach is very efficient for measuring the students' oral proficiency. It is more authentic and involving of the learners' own experiences than the discrete-point and integrative approaches. This does not imply, however, that the latter are thoroughly useless; the choice of a particular approach depends on the teaching situation and objectives which the tester intends to attain.

1.2.3.2 Criteria of Assessing Oral Proficiency

Madsen (1983: 147) writes that “[due to the difficulty in defining the speaking skill,] the testing of speaking is widely regarded as the most challenging of all language tests to prepare, administer and score.” Because of this, it is not always easy to establish criteria to assess oral proficiency. Madsen (1983) puts forward the following set of criteria of assessing oral proficiency.

- Assessment of oral communication should view competence in oral proficiency as a gestalt of several interacting dimensions: at a minimum, all assessments of oral communication should include an assessment of knowledge (comprehension of the elements, rules and dynamics of the communication process as well as awareness of what is appropriate in a communication situation), an assessment of skills (the possession of a repertoire of skills and the actual performance of such skills) and an evaluation of the learner’s attitude toward communication (for example, the value placed on oral communication and readiness to communicate).
- The method of assessment should be consistent with the dimension of oral communication being assessed: while knowledge and attitude may be assessed partly through paper and pencil instruments, the speaking skill must be assessed through actual performance in appropriate social settings; for example, speaking before an audience, undergoing an interview and participating in a group discussion.
- Assessment of oral communication should consider competence in more than one communication setting: a minimum assessment should occur in a one-to-many setting; for example, public speaking or a small group discussion, and in a one-to-one setting; for example, an interview or a conversation.

- Assessment instruments should have an acceptable level of validity (the extent to which a test measures what it is intended to measure), reliability (the extent to which a test produces consistent results when administered under similar conditions or/and scored by a different teacher), and practicality (the extent to which a test is easy to administer and score).
- Assessment instruments should describe degrees of competence, i.e. descriptions such as “competent” or “incompetent” are to be avoided. Such instruments should also attempt to diagnose the reasons why the students demonstrate or fail to demonstrate particular degrees of competence.
- Instruments for assessing oral communication should be suitable for the developmental level of the learner being assessed.
- The individuals administering assessment procedures should have received adequate training by oral communication professionals.
- Because oral communication is an interactive and social process, assessment should consider the judgment of a trained assessor as well as the impressions of other members involved in the communication act, such as the audience, and may include the self-report of the learner being assessed.

From our point of view, assessment of oral communication should focus on both conversational and formal language functions. Authentic assessment of oral proficiency should take into a careful consideration the ability of the learner to interpret and convey meaning in interactive, authentic settings.

Conclusion

Speaking is a very essential skill used for communication. It involves a variety of different aspects that make it a complex process. Producing successful speakers of English requires an appropriate understanding of the various characteristics of SL/FL speaking. It also necessitates reflective development and implementation of a range of speaking activities as well as approaches to and criteria of assessing the speaking skill.

CHAPTER TWO

CORRELATION BETWEEN STANDARD GRAMMAR AND SPOKEN GRAMMAR

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Introduction

The view that the spoken language has “less” grammar, because it does not “follow the rules” which are found in writing, often prevails in the context of teaching EFL. There are indeed many differences between the two types of communication, speaking and writing, but these differences do not suggest that the grammar of everyday speech is incorrect, of little importance or inferior to standard grammar. Rather, such differences suggest that spoken grammar has its own organisation and constructional principles which suit the nature of the conversational process, and thus distinguish it from standard grammar that is appropriate for writing and formal speech.

2.1 Standard Grammar

Over centuries, standard grammar has been assigned various definitions. Linguists have always sought to arrive at a comprehensive and definitive definition of standard grammar, including its various types and branches.

2.1.1 Definition of Standard Grammar

Standard grammar is often considered as “the rules of a language set out in a terminology which is hard to remember, with many exceptions appended to each rule” (Rivers, 1968: 56). From Ur’s (1988: 4) point of view, standard grammar is “the way a language manipulates and combines words (or bits of words) in order to form longer units of meaning.” For instance, in English, the present form of the verb *be* in the third person could be either *is* or *are*, depending on whether this verb is combined with a singular or plural subject respectively. Therefore, a sentence like *This is a book* is grammatical, while **This are a book* is judged as ungrammatical. Ur goes on to explain that units of meaning which learners construct are governed by a set of rules, and that learners can never express

themselves well, using acceptable language structures, unless they have good command of these rules.

Lock (1996: 267) sees standard grammar as “a network of interrelated systems. Each system contains a set of options from which the speaker [or writer] selects according to the meaning he or she wishes to make.” The selections which the speaker or writer makes from a number of systems are realised simultaneously by grammatical items organised into structures. Thus, for example, the clause “*He distributed seeds of the miraculous tree*” has selected a two-participant (actor + goal) action process from the transitivity system, the simple past from the tense system, the declarative from the mood system and the active from the voice system. Getting an adequate understanding of a language involves division of its interrelated systems in a way that allows to understand how each system works. In this respect, Crystal (1996: 6) considers standard grammar as “the business of taking a language to pieces, to see how it works.”

According to Thornbury (1999: 13), standard grammar is “a description of the rules for forming sentences, including an account of the meanings that these forms convey.” It is “partly the study of what forms (or structures) are possible in a language, a description of the rules that govern how a language’s sentences are formed” (p. 1). Standard grammar tells which sentences are acceptable and which are not. It attempts to explain why the following sentences “We are not at home right now” and “Right now, we are not at home” are possible combinations, while “*Not we at right home now are” and “*We is not at home right now” are not. It is true that the sounds and words of the two first sentences are the same as those of the two last ones; however, the meaning is not. The latter changes as one changes the order of words or inserts one word instead of another into a sentence. In this sense, Kennedy (2003: 1) reports that grammar is “a system that enables us to get

meaning out of sound;” for example, “The man bit the dog” does not mean the same as “The dog bit the man”, even though the sounds and words are similar.

Crystal (2004: 9) refers to standard grammar as “the study of how sentences mean.” He explains that understanding the meaning conveyed by sentences and developing the ability to express and respond to this meaning require knowledge about grammar. In other words, the more one knows about grammar, the better they will be able to understand the meaning of sentences and respond to it.

Swan (2005: 3) brings to light the fact that most dictionary definitions define standard grammar as “a set of rules for combining words into sentences.” However, he comments,

[n]ot only is this seriously incomplete as a definition (grammar does many other things besides sentence-building); it also gives no indication of the function of grammar – as if one defined a bus as a ‘large vehicle constructed on one or two levels’, without mentioning that it is used for public transport (p. 3).

In other words, the function of standard grammar is not merely construction of sentences; standard grammar is studied and used in order to achieve effective and meaningful communication.

2.1.2 Types of Standard Grammar

Linguists have drawn a distinction between three major types of grammar: prescriptive, descriptive and pedagogic.

2.1.2.1 Prescriptive Grammar

Traditional grammar reflects an approach to language known as “prescriptivism,” i.e. “the view that one variety of a language has an inherently higher value than others and ought to be the norm for the whole of the speech community” (Crystal, 2003: 194). The tradition that this grammar represents developed rapidly in the 19th century and was

strongly in evidence even in the 1960's. A distinction is often drawn between "prescriptive rules" which state usages considered to be acceptable and "proscriptive rules" which state usages to be avoided, i.e. grammatical "do's and don'ts." Crystal (2003) further notes that the "Thou Shalt Not" (You Should Not) tradition predominates, with most recommendations being phrased negatively; for instance, Do not use..., Never place..., x should not be used in... .

According to Hughes and Trudgill (1987), prescription makes possible the standardisation of languages, and thus makes communication easier between regions that speak highly different dialects. Having a target language (TL) codified, even if imperfectly, simplifies the teaching and learning of a SL/FL. If there were no limits to the variation permissible, the speech or writing of learners would inevitably diverge much more from the TL. Constraining the divergence through prescription could help make ways of speaking or writing intelligible when learners modify their TL toward a single standard or at least a narrower range of standards (for example, the American and British standards). In similar manner, Kac (1988) points out that pretending that language teaching does not entail prescription will hardly serve learners. He adds that "substantive education must include the development of knowledge about language and skill in using it, and there seems no way to do justice to these twin aims without prescriptivism of a sort" (p. 84).

As Crystal (2003) notes, there are basically two typical features of the traditional era which account for the negative reaction that can arise when someone talks about the subject of grammar. In the first place, prescriptive English grammar treated its subject in a way that was highly very difficult to understand, describing grammatical patterns through the use of an "analytical apparatus." The latter is a technique, derived from Latin grammar, which involved stating the part of speech to which a word belongs and giving certain details about it. Such technique had various names, such as "parsing," "clause analysis"

and “diagramming,” and played a very important role in traditional grammar teaching. Secondly, prescriptive grammar always focused on written language and on the elimination of what was considered to be grammatical error or “infelicity.” Grammarians insisted that only certain styles of English were worth studying: the more formal language used by the best formal speech makers and writers. Textual samples selected for analysis or commentary were typically very sophisticated, commonly taken from literary, religious or scholarly sources. Informal styles of speech were ignored or condemned as incorrect. This meant that the language which most children used and heard around them received no positive reinforcement in grammar lessons. Crystal (2003) continues to report that society tended to burden any individual or school-leaver who was unaware of grammatical rules with a sense of linguistic inferiority. This is the real source of such notions, widely held among native speakers of English, that they do not speak “correct English,” or that foreigners speak the language “better” than they do. In addition, the fact that a minority of students did manage to master the intricacies of traditional grammar, and thereby were perceived to be educated, reinforced greatly these norms and caused to impose them on anyone over whom this minority of students later found themselves to be in control. For school-children, secretaries and subordinates of all kinds, the use of split infinitives (such as *to carefully follow*) or contracted forms (such as *don't* and *let's*), for example, was one of several signs of social linguistic inadequacy, and their avoidance a mark of superiority. Prescriptive grammar draws distinctions between standard and non-standard varieties of English, and often influences language users in choosing between “good” and “bad” grammatical aspects. However, most of the time, decisions about what is “good” and “bad” are essentially arbitrary and do not often reflect any crucial principle of language or thought.

2.1.2.2 Descriptive Grammar

By the beginning of the 20th century, the extreme positions of prescriptive grammar moderated to some extent. Many prescriptive grammarians began to accept that the influence of contemporary usage could not be completely ignored and became more pragmatic in their approach. This was the very early sign of what later came to be known as “descriptivism.” Descriptive, or modern, grammar describes the grammatical constructions that native speakers of the language do use, rather than what they should use, without making any evaluative judgments about the standing of such constructions in society (Crystal, 2003).

Descriptive grammar provides a much more detailed look at languages than prescriptive grammar does (Odlin, 1994). For linguists, descriptive grammar consists of accounts of, not only syntax and morphology, but also phonology and lexis. Even when they restrict their descriptions to morphology and syntax, descriptive grammarians consider many structures, such as adverbial clauses, that prescriptive grammarians either have ignored or only briefly discussed. Descriptive grammar sometimes provides a detailed look at both contemporary usage and earlier patterns in the language. In contrast to prescriptivists, descriptive grammarians often focus on non-standard dialects. Many patterns of a dialect of Irish English have been examined, including patterns rarely used elsewhere in the English-speaking world; for example, the unusual construction involving a gerund in “*I found it horrid sour in the drinkin’ o’ it*” = “I found it sour to drink.” Odlin (1994) emphasises that descriptive grammar does not view colloquial language forms as inferior and wrong like prescriptive grammar does; rather, it considers them as worth studying since they exist and are commonly used by speakers.

For SL/FL teachers, the boundary between description and prescription is not always very straightforward as it often seems for the teachers working with native speakers

of a language. A teacher in a composition class for native speakers of English would not probably spend much time on adverbial clauses apart from drawing attention to a few matters such as dangling participles (for instance, *Bursting at the seams, the sailors repaired the hull*). The reason for having only a quick glance is that native speakers have little difficulty using most types of adverbial clauses in English. ESL/EFL teachers, on the other hand, cannot assume that their students are able to use a wide range of such clauses. Not surprisingly, textbooks and reference grammars for ESL and EFL students discuss many types of adverbial clauses, and the examples they provide would often seem self-evident to native speakers. For instance, native speakers have few problems in choosing the verb tense in an adverbial clause such as “Before Louis finishes work, he will give us a call.” In contrast, ESL and EFL textbook writers commonly inform students that the present, not the future, tense is used in “Before Louis finishes work.” Such descriptive information functions as a prescription to prevent deviations from the TL such as “*Before Louis will finish work, he will give us a call” (Odlin, 1994).

2.1.2.3 Pedagogic Grammar

Thornbury (1999: 12) defines pedagogic grammar as being concerned with “rules that make sense to the learners, while at the same time, providing them with the means and confidence to generate language with a reasonable chance of success.” Such confidence is usually inevitably achieved at the expense of the “full picture,” the whole truth about the rule. Teachers ultimately have to care for the learner’s needs, rather than those of the grammarian. Thornbury notes that while descriptive grammar rules may attempt to describe everything there is, pedagogic grammar rules are designed specifically to be of help to SL/FL teachers and students who need, as far as possible, clear and easily-digestible summaries of what is and what is not correct.

Before presenting the students with the rules, the teacher forms a clear idea about the learners' proficiency level, age and needs. This will enable him/her to select for the students the rules that are appropriate (Westney, 1994). There are no definitely set characteristics of a good pedagogic rule; however, Swan (1994; cited in Thornbury, 1999) offers a number of criteria which are the outcome of a recent critical overview of how pedagogic rules should be.

- Truth: a rule should be true, in the sense that it has to resemble the reality it is describing.
- Limitation: a rule should show clearly what the limits are on the use of a given form. For instance, if the teacher simply says that “will” is used to express the future, this rule is of little use to the students since it does not show how “will” differs from “going to, be about / due to.”
- Clarity: a rule should be clear. The teacher should simplify the terminology or avoid using it altogether when it is unnecessary.
- Simplicity: a rule should be simple. The teacher should not incorporate in a rule many sub-categories or append to it all the exceptions, if many. S/he should be aware of the fact that there is a certain limit to the students' ability to recall.
- Familiarity: as the teacher explains a new rule, s/he should use concepts already familiar to the learners. The use of new concepts or terminology to explain new rules is pointless and will be a hindrance instead of help to the students.
- Relevance: a rule should answer only the questions which the learners need to be answered.

Pedagogic grammar rules immensely inform language teaching, but if they are carelessly applied, they can sometimes lead to considerable oversimplification such as the rule which says that “some” is to be used with affirmative sentences, whereas “any” with

questions and negative statements. This rule helps the students at a beginner level to make correct sentences such as “I have *some* sweets,” “I do not have *any* money” and “Do you have *any* petrol?” However, it is not entirely true because one can also say “Would you like *some* tea?”, “I would not mind *some* juice” and “I refuse to accept *any* responsibility” (Harmer, 2001).

2.1.3 Branches of Standard Grammar

Standard grammar has usually meant sentence grammar and has been associated with a strong pedagogical emphasis on morphology and syntax. However, recent concern with language in use offers to extend the scope of standard grammar to include semantic and pragmatic dimensions. Grammatical structures do not only have a morpho-syntactic form; they are also used to express meaning (semantics) in context-appropriate use (pragmatics) (Little, 1994).

2.1.3.1 Morphology and Syntax

The two basic units of standard grammar, Huddleston (1988) reports, are the word and the sentence. One subcomponent of grammar, morphology, deals with the form of words, while the other, syntax, deals with the way words combine to form sentences. Huddleston and Pullum (2005: 6) define morphology, from Greek *morphé* “form” + *logos* “word,” as the system which “deals with the internal form of words.” In other words, it is interested in the study of the structure of words or word formation. Morphology rules indicate that, for example, the word *unacceptable* has the parts *un*, *accept* and *able*, and that these parts cannot be combined in any other order. Crystal (1995) points out that this system (morphology) exhibits changes in word form; these changes are essentially a result of derivations or inflections. The field of morphology is divided into two domains: “derivational” (or “lexical”) morphology that “studies the way in which new items of vocabulary can be built up out of combinations of elements” (Crystal, 1995: 198), as in the

case of *in-describable*, and “inflectional morphology” which “studies the way words vary in their form in order to express a grammatical contrast” (p. 198), as in the case of *horses*, where the ending marks plurality.

The term syntax, Crystal (1997: 94) defines, comes from “syntaxis,” the Greek word for “arrangement.” It is “the way in which words are arranged to show relationships of meaning within sentences;” for example, “I found an unopened bottle of juice” is admissible, but “*I found a bottle unopened of juice” is not. Most syntactic studies have focused on sentence structure, for this is where the most important grammatical relationships are expressed. Thornbury (1999) reports that the ability to recognise and produce well-formed sentences is crucial in the learning of a SL/FL. However, the meaning of the term “well-formed” is not thoroughly clear when a large number of naturally-occurring spoken sentences violate the rules of standard grammar (This point is tackled in detail in Chapter Three, Sub-section 3.2.2 Model of Spoken Grammar, p. 125).

Thornbury (1999) labels syntax and morphology as “linguistic chains” and “slots.” He considers standard grammar as “the study of linguistic chains and slots” (p. 2), i.e. the study of the way words are chained together in a particular order (syntax), and what kinds of words can slot into any one link in the chain (morphology). The relation between these two kinds of linguistic elements could be shown through the following figure.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|------|-----|-----|----|----------|
| We | are | not | at | home |
| They | are | | at | work |
| Dad | is | | in | hospital |
| I | am | | in | bed |

Figure 4: The Relation between Linguistic Chains and Slots

(Thornbury, 1999: 2)

It could be noticed, Thornbury (1999) explains, that the order of the elements on the horizontal axis is fairly fixed. Switching columns 1 and 2 tremendously affects meaning because it turns the sentence into a question; for example, *Are we not at home? Is dad in bed?* It is not possible to switch columns 2 and 3, or 4 and 5. The elements in the first column fill the subject slot, those in the second column the verb slot, and those in the fourth column are prepositions. It is noteworthy that making chains out of slot-filling items is not possible; for instance, “**We are not at home work bed*” does not sound an English sentence. He notes that the students who are good at standard grammar recognise well how sentence elements are chained and how sentence slots are filled. The way chains are ordered and slots are filled differs from one language to another. Many errors made by SL/FL learners stem from overgeneralising rules from their L1. In the following sentence “**I want that your agency return me the money,*” the learner has followed the verb “*want*” by the wrong kind of chain. Whereas, in the sentence “**I have chosen to describe Stephen Hawking, a notorious scientific of our century,*” the chain is well selected, but the words chosen to fill certain slots are not suitably inserted. The word “*notorious*” has the wrong

meaning in this sentence, and “*scientific*” is an adjective wrongly inserted into a noun slot. In brief, unless the students have good command of morphology as well as syntax rules, they will not be able to attain the ultimate goal: constructing sophisticated pieces of discourse.

2.1.3.2 Form, Meaning and Use

Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) maintain that grammar constructions should be used accurately, meaningfully and appropriately. They refer to the three dimensions of grammar as “form,” “meaning” and “use.” When dealing with “form,” one is interested in how a particular standard grammar item is constructed and how it is sequenced with other constructions in a sentence or text, i.e. the morphology and syntax of the item. With certain structures, it is also important to note the phonemic / graphemic patterns. Research has shown that focusing the learners’ attention on the linguistic form during communicative interactions is much more effective than ignoring the form or dealing with it in decontextualised grammar lessons. This means that there is an agreement, among most educators, on the need to teach grammatical form. However, they advise doing so by focusing on form within a meaning-based or communicative approach in order to avoid a return to analytic approaches in which decontextualised language forms were the object of study.

In dealing with “meaning,” Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) explain, one is interested in what a particular English grammar item means, i.e. what semantic contribution this item makes whenever it is used. Its essential meaning might be grammatical; for instance, in the following sentence “*She was walking home from school that day when she ran into a friend,*” the past progressive signals a past action in progress. The meaning of the grammar structure might also be lexical (a dictionary definition); for

example, the meaning of the phrasal verb “*run into*” used in this example is “to meet by chance.”

Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) put forward that the third dimension of standard grammar, use, deals with issues concerning the choices that one makes when using a certain grammar structure in communication. Working on the use, or pragmatic, dimension involves knowledge of the point that there are options to be exercised, and that one has to select from them the one which best suits a given context. Larsen-Freeman (2001) reports that it is hard to arrive at a definition of pragmatics distinct from semantics. Levinson (1983; cited in Larsen-Freeman, 2001) suggests that pragmatics deals with all aspects of meaning that are not dealt with by semantic theory. Since this definition is very broad for the current purposes, pragmatics is limited to mean “the study of those relations between language and context that are grammaticalized, or encoded in the structure of a language” (Levinson, 1983; cited in Larsen-Freeman, 2001: 252). Larsen-Freeman (2001) explains that the term “context” is broad. It can be social, i.e. a context created by the interlocutors, their relationship and the entire setting. It can be a linguistic discourse context, i.e. the language that precedes or follows a particular structure in the discourse or how a particular genre or register of discourse affects the use of a structure. Context can also mean the presuppositions that one has about the context. The influence of pragmatics, she states, may be determined by asking two questions:

a. When or why does a speaker or writer choose a particular grammar construction over another one that could express the same meaning or accomplish the same purpose? For instance, what factors in the social context might explain a paradigmatic choice such as why one chooses a yes-no question rather than an imperative to serve as a request for information (for example, “*Do you have the time?*” vs. “*Please, tell me the time.*”)?

b. When or why does a speaker or writer vary the form of a particular linguistic structure? For example, what linguistic discourse factors would result in a syntagmatic choice such as the indirect object being placed before the direct object to create “*Jenny gave Hank a brand-new comb*” vs. “*Jenny gave a brand-new comb to Hank*”?

On the whole, since the ultimate goal is to achieve a better match between standard grammar and communication, it is not helpful to think of grammar as a discrete set of meaningless, decontextualised structures. Nor is it helpful to consider grammar solely as rules about linguistic form, excluding the other equally essential two dimensions (meaning and use). Such three dimensions of grammar are closely interrelated, in the sense that a change in one dimension will involve a change in another one (Larsen-Freeman, 2001). The following figure is a demonstration of the interaction among form, meaning and use.

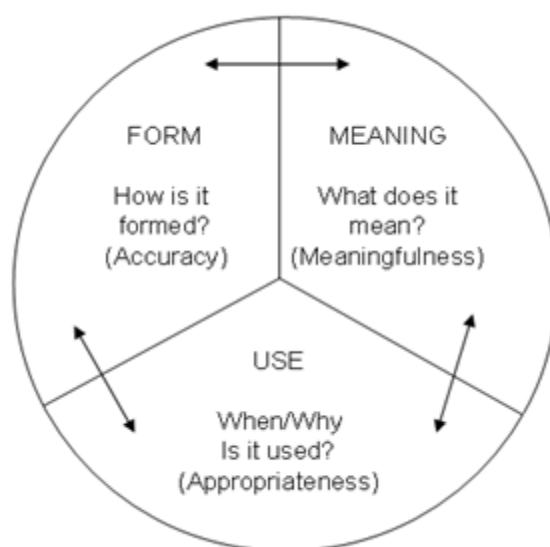


Figure 5: Three Dimensions of Grammar
(Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999: 04)

Larsen-Freeman (2001) also points out that it is often difficult to establish firm boundaries between form, meaning and use, especially between the last two ones. Nevertheless, these

boundaries have been found very useful in enabling grammarians and teachers to have a conceptual framework for analysing the features of each of the three dimensions.

2.2 Spoken Grammar

McCarthy and Carter (1995) shed light on the point that almost all accounts of English grammar have been based on the written, formal version of the language. The aspects of standard grammar have always been the central focus; however, equal consideration has to be given to the aspects of spoken grammar as there are a considerable number of conversational structures which standard grammar cannot account for.

2.2.1 Definition of Spoken Grammar

The concept of spoken grammar has been around at least since the mid-1990s, when the ELTJ (English Language Teaching Journal) published “*Spoken Grammar: What Is It and How Can We Teach It?*” by McCarthy and Carter (1995). Spoken grammar could be defined as a set of “grammatical items restricted to or particularly common in spoken English and some types of writing that mimic the spoken style” (Paterson, 2011: 1). Although it is claimed that widespread interest in spoken grammar is recent, the pioneering work of grammarians such as Palmer and Blandford (1969; cited in McCarthy and Carter, 2002): *A Grammar of Spoken English* (3rd edition) should not be dismissed. These grammarians were ahead of their time in seeing many of the insights of the grammar of speech. Early spoken grammars, however, McCarthy and Carter (2002) explain, did not have the benefits of large-scale computerised corpora; this is why this area of language is usually described as “recent.”

McCarthy and Carter (1995) point out that the history of the description of the properties of English grammar has been largely a history of the description of English grammar as it has occurred in the written standard language. This situation has historical

parallels in lexicography, as when Johnson (1755; cited in McCarthy and Carter, 1995) excluded entries from his *Dictionary of the English Language* which were not attested in written literary sources, on the grounds that they constituted ephemeral vulgarisms. Such a view of language explains, to some extent, why at least in L1 education, writing and reading carry greater prestige than speaking.

Popular conceptions of spoken language are often that it is “corrupt,” and that its influence on grammatical norms is extremely negative. “Correct” English grammar is believed to be what is codified in standard grammar of English, yet what is codified in the latter “does not tell the whole story [about the nature of spoken language]” (McCarthy and Carter, 1995: 207). In other words, there are many interpersonal, interactive aspects in the grammar of everyday speech (see Sub-section 2.2.2 Aspects of Spoken Grammar, p. 71) that standard, written-language-based grammar seems not to have addressed. Having taken into account the distinct nature of the conversational process and the insufficiency and inappropriateness of written, formal-language-based corpora in the formulation of rules of the grammar of conversation, researchers have begun to collect data from spoken language, suggesting a socially embedded grammar. In the latter, forms are acceptable if they are communicable, adequate in context and commonly used by their real speakers (we have purposefully chosen to use the term “real” instead of “native” for considerations mentioned in Chapter Three, Sub-section 3.2.2.10 Native and Non-native Users, p. 152). The information gained has been processed to develop spoken grammar, designed not to replace standard grammar, but to address the naturally-occurring grammatical phenomena of conversation that standard grammar neglects or considers as ungrammatical. The purpose behind what has been said, McCarthy and Carter (1995, 2002) explain, is not to criticise the existing grammar of English (standard grammar that is regularly based on written-language-based examples and a proscriptive approach to “correct” English), but to

shed light on the point that like standard grammar, spoken grammar deserves grammarians' and corpus analysts' attention and analysis.

It is theoretically possible to have short conversations where each utterance consists of only a single word or short phrase, as in this example (Thornbury, 2005: 20):

A: Coffee?

B: Thanks.

A: Milk?

B: Please.

A: Sugar?

B: No, thanks.

In this instance, Thornbury (2005) explains, context factors, including lack of formality, make the use of complex language unnecessary. But, to sustain a conversation like this one over a variety of topics with a number of speakers would be virtually impossible. The effect would be like "baby talk." In order to generate a much more sophisticated range of meanings, the resources of grammar need to be considered. This does not mean, however, that the grammar of speech (spoken grammar) is identical to the grammar of written texts (standard grammar). Crystal (2003) states that there are a number of differences between speech and writing, and some of the most important differences have to do with the notion of a sentence. As he puts it: "*Do we speak in sentences?*" The answer is that we do, but the kind of sentence organisation found in speech is rather different from the one found in writing, as the example below shows (Crystal, 2003: 214). As this example is a transcript of speech, and the aim is to observe its organisation, there are no capital letters used. Major pauses are signalled by the symbol " – " and units of rhythm by " / ".

We had our breakfast in the kitchen / – and then we sort of did what we liked / and er got ready to go out / we usually went out quite soon after that / – erm the children were always up / at the crack of dawn / with the farmer / – and they went into the milking sheds / and

helped him feed the pigs / and all this / you know we didn't see the children/ – and er then we used to go out/ we – we had super weather/ – absolutely super / – and so we went to a beach / usually for er but by about four o'clock it we were hot and we had to come off the beach / – so we'd generally go for a tea somewhere / just in case supper was delayed you know / and then we'd get back / and the children would go straight back on to the farm / and have ponies / their own children had ponies / and they'd come up and put them on the ponies' backs / and er – and the milking it was milking time / and really we were committed to getting back for milking time /

Crystal (2003) explains that when writing, one usually has time to make notes, plan ahead, pause, reflect, change his/her mind, start again, revise, proofread and generally polish the language until s/he has reached a level which satisfies him/her. The reader sees only the finished product. But, in everyday conversation, there is no time for all this to happen. Speakers do not have the opportunity to plan what they want to say, and thus they have to allow for false starts, interruptions, second thoughts, words on the tip of the tongue, repetitions and a set of other disturbances which take place while the speaker is in full flow. Thornbury (2005: 20) reports that “the demands of producing speech in real-time with minimal planning opportunities places considerable constraints on the kind of complexity [of utterances] that speakers can achieve.” A sentence like the last one (between quotation marks), he explains, is much more typical of written language than spontaneous spoken language. Had it been spoken, it would have sounded like the following: “*Speaking, you're doing it in real-time, you don't have much planning time, so it tends to be less complex than ... or rather it's a different kind of complexity, than, say, writing*” (Thornbury, 2005: 20).

Crystal (2003) mentions that extracts of informal spoken conversation look strange, and sometimes incomprehensible, in print because it is not possible to show all the melody, stress and tone of voice which made the speaker sound perfectly natural in context, but it does show how spoken grammar differs from standard (written) grammar. Punctuating the

above-mentioned transcript of speech is not easy, as demonstrated by the following second version of the transcript, where an attempt is made to cut out hesitations and false starts and to identify possible sentences. In the first version of the transcript, the overuse of the coordinating conjunction “*and*,” in particular, makes it difficult to figure out where one sentence ends and the next one begins. The seriousness of this problem might clearly be realised if one tries to note down his/her own impression about where the sentences end, then compare his/her decisions with the ones shown below. Most probably, there will be several discrepancies.

– *We had our breakfast in the kitchen, and then we did what we liked, and got ready to go out.*

– *We usually went out quite soon after that.*

– *The children were always up at the crack of dawn with the farmer, and they went into the milking sheds and helped him feed the pigs.*

– *We didn't see the children.*

– *And then we used to go out.*

– *We had super weather, absolutely super.*

– *And so we went to a beach, but by about four o'clock we were hot and we had to come off the beach.*

– *So we'd generally go for a tea somewhere, just in case supper was delayed.*

– *And then we'd get back, and the children would go straight back on to the farm, and have ponies.*

– *Their own children had ponies, and they'd come up and put them on the ponies' backs.*

– *And it was milking time, and really we were committed to getting back for milking time.*

Thornbury (2005) reports that the distinct nature of spoken grammar is reflected through the aspects that native speakers of English use in their everyday speech. Some aspects of spoken grammar that distinguish it from standard, written-language-based grammar exist in the form of **rules**, such as the use of question tags and the three-part

division of utterances into a “body” plus optional “head” and “tail” slots. Other aspects are less rules than **tendencies**; for example, the preference for direct rather than reported speech, and the inclination to use vague language structures rather than precise ones. Moreover, a few aspects seem to be neither rules, nor tendencies, but rather mere audible effects of real-time processing difficulties, namely **performance effects**, such as repetitions, hesitations and false starts.

2.2.2 Aspects of Spoken Grammar

Up to now, linguists and discourse analysts have not yet arrived at a comprehensive coverage of the aspects of spoken grammar. However, although each of the works that address the issue of spoken grammar has focused on specific aspects of spoken grammar and not mentioned others, a common belief unites these works: spoken grammar aspects have uniquely special qualities that distinguish them from written (standard) aspects (McCarthy and Carter, 2002). Native speakers of English, McCarthy and Carter (1995) bring to light, tend to make grammatical choices between the aspects of standard grammar and the ones of spoken grammar according to the context in which language is used: spoken or written, formal or informal. The choice of the aspects of spoken grammar reflects the interpersonal, interactive nature of the speaker’s conversations. The most salient aspects of spoken grammar are conversational ellipsis, heads, tails, question tags, informal reported speech, conversational/ spoken discourse markers, vague language, and other aspects of spoken grammar (contractions, response/ reply questions, statements as questions and vocative use).

2.2.2.1 Conversational Ellipsis

Complete sentences are not always used in speech, especially if the meaning is already clear; for example, a speaker might say “*Any chance of a lift?*” instead of “*Is there any chance of a lift in your car?*” This process, Carter, Hughes and McCarthy (2000)

explain, is known as “ellipsis,” a common grammatical aspect where words are left out without destroying the meaning. Ellipsis occurs in writing where it usually functions **textually** to avoid repetition. For example, in the sentence “*We ran for the bus but missed it,*” it is clear that “*we*” is the subject of both clauses and does not need to be repeated. Likewise, in the sentence “*The chair was broken and the table too,*” it is unnecessary to repeat the verb “*was broken.*” In speaking, however, ellipsis is mainly **situational**, affecting people and things in the immediate situation, and frequently involves the omission of specific words or phrases that would not be left out if they were in a written, formal text. It is pervasive in spoken discourse and more frequently used in informal situations, especially in conversations where the speakers know each other well and in talks that are relaxed and friendly. Very often, the meaning is clear from the context, and speakers do not need to be very explicit. The following example, from McCarthy and Carter (1995: 208-9), illustrates the genre of language-in-action, i.e. language used interactively while an action or a task is being completed.

[Speakers are preparing for a party.]

A: Now I think you’d better start the rice.

B: Yeah ... what you got there.

[4 seconds]

B: Will it all fit in the one?

A: No you’ll have to do two separate ones.

C: Right ... what next?

[17 seconds]

C: **Foreign body in there?**

B: It’s the raisins.

C: Oh, is it? Oh, it’s rice with raisins, is it?

B: No, no, no, it’s not supposed to be [laughs] erm

C: There must be a raisin for it being in there.

D: D' you want a biscuit?

C: Erm ...

D: Biscuit?

C: Er, yeah.

[9 seconds]

D: All right.

C: Yeah.

[10 seconds]

D: Didn't know you used boiling water.

B: Pardon.

D: Didn't know you used boiling water.

B: Don't have to, but it's, erm ... they reckon, it's erm [inaudible].

The most salient spoken grammar feature in this example, McCarthy and Carter (1995) explain, is ellipsis, as in "*Didn't know you used boiling water*" and "*Don't have to,*" in which subjects are ellipped. Ellipsis involving predicates and auxiliaries is also noticed, as in "*Biscuit?*" and "*Foreign body in there?*" It would be, therefore, wrong to assume that such ellipped structures are not well formed, or that they should be made full as follows: "*I didn't know you used...*," "*I don't have to,*" "*Do you want a biscuit?*" and "*Is there a foreign body in there?*" The full forms are not more or less correct than the ellipped ones; the full versions are only likely to be used in more formal contexts than informal ones, such as conversations.

Carter, Hughes and McCarthy (2000) distinguish between two major types of ellipsis, one that occurs at the beginning of the clause and one that occurs later in it. The first type (that occurs at the beginning of the clause) involves the omission of the subject or both the subject and verb. McCarthy and Carter (1995) bring to light the point that standard grammar does account for subject and verb ellipsis, but describes such phenomenon as being of minor or secondary importance. It should be mentioned that the conversational

subject ellipsis involved in structures such as “*Don’t know if I can do that*” is different from the textual subject ellipsis involved in structures such as “*Jean danced and sang.*” Standard grammar assigns primary importance to textual subject ellipsis where subjects in co-ordinated clauses, which are already mentioned elsewhere in the text, are omitted from structures such as the previous one (*Jean danced and sang*). In such a structure, it is taken for granted that *Jean* is the subject of both clauses. Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1985) are among the grammarians who describe the recoverability of entries in conversational (situational) ellipsis as a “lesser” kind of recoverability. However, in spoken data, such type of ellipsis seems to be of major significance, as McCarthy and Carter (1995) assert. It is also not random, as argued by Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992), in that it commonly occurs in fixed phrases and lexical formulae and routines such as “*Sounds good,*” “*Absolutely right*” and “*Good job.*” In similar manner, McCarthy and Carter (1995) argue that such phenomena are not random as long as they occur in certain genres, but not in others such as narratives where ellipsis is not a significant aspect and sound choice. One reason for this is that the “language-in-action” genre involves participants in using language to refer to actions in an easy and unproblematic way because they are happening before their eyes. There is, therefore, no need for elaboration; much knowledge is shared, and many referents can be mutually taken for granted. In narratives, on the other hand, the characters and events are displaced in time and space, which calls for more explicit references as the following example shows.

[Speaker A is telling the others a ghost story about a man who has a premonition of death on the ship “Hood”.]

A: You saying about that chap with the newspaper, that, one of Dad’s many stories of how he escaped death [laughs] during his long life was one, erm, it wasn’t the *Hood*, although he was on the *Hood*, but they were lined up one day for details into, you know ...

B: Yeah.

A: wherever they were going and they needed so many men to go on to this particular boat.

C: Mum, what ...

A: And they worked their way through the line, they called them out and Dymock was amongst them.

C: Mum, Mum, can I just say, this boat was a really good boat to get on to, wasn't it? It was one of the best.

A: Oh, yes, I mean they were all eager to get ...

B: Yeah.

A: to get on it, they were really looking forward to being the chosen ones and he was one of the ones who was called up ...

B: Yeah.

A: And he was getting ready to go and the Chief Petty Officer came back and said, oh, no, it's a mistake.

C: We've got one extra.

A: Dymock, Dymock, er you're not needed and he was a bit disappointed and he went back, carried on what he was doing and the boat sailed out and was torpedoed and ...

C: By a German ship.

B: Oh, yes.

D: Everyone, everyone died.

C: Anyway, all hands lost but legs saved. [**All:** (laugh)]

B: Well, sailors were always getting legless, weren't they, anyway? [**All:** (laugh)]

A: Finding their sea legs.

B: Yeah.

(McCarthy and Carter, 1995: 209-10)

It would be unusual, McCarthy and Carter (1995) explain, to find much ellipsis because the speaker (the narrator) wants the listeners to concentrate on the story. Telling a story usually involves giving listeners new information; therefore, much use of ellipsis is likely to hinder the intelligibility of the story. Carter, Hughes and McCarthy (2000: 163) put forward the

following norms concerning the use of conversational ellipsis that occurs at the beginning of the clause.

– In informal situations, the speaker can often leave out the subject “I” at the beginning of what s/he says; for example, “Didn’t phone yesterday.” This is especially common with mental verbs like *hope*, *think*, *expect*, *believe* and *guess*; for instance, “Hope you’re ok?”, “Think that’s true” and “Guess she is ill.”

– Subjects and auxiliary verbs can also be left out. Sometimes, they are left out together: “Fine now?” and “Finished?”

– Sometimes, the determiner and the dummy subject “*there*” (is/are) can also be left out: “Any tea left?” (not necessarily “Is there any tea left?”)

– Ellipsis also occurs commonly with verbs such as *see* and *hear* in questions and answers. In questions, “*Have you*” and “*Do you*” can be dropped with these verbs: “Seen Matt lately?” and “Hear this noise?”

– Ellipsis often occurs at the beginning of common evaluative expressions or comments such as “(I) Don’t know,” “(It) Sounds nice,” “(I’ll) Be seeing you” and “(It’s a) Pity we’ve missed it.”

– In questions that start with “Do you want...?” and “Would you like...?”, “Do you” and “Would you” can be dropped: “Some juice?” and “More cream on it?”

– As a conversation develops, ellipsis is more likely to occur. When people know what the topic is and who is speaking, it is not always necessary to make repetition, as in “I like the place, (it’s) very happy there, (I) must say” and “I sat on a bench there and honestly, (I’ve) never seen so many people.”

It should be mentioned that each of the above-mentioned items, articles, determiners, possessives, auxiliary verbs, personal pronouns and the dummy subject “*there*,” which can be left out at the beginning of an utterance, can only be omitted when the item is the subject of the sentence, as further illustrated by the following examples taken from Carter, Hughes and McCarthy (2000: 164).

- Wind’s strong, isn’t it?
- I can’t stand up in *the* wind!
- *I can’t stand up in wind!
- Pub’s closed.
- Coming to *the* pub?
- *Coming to pub?

The second type of ellipsis, which occurs later in the clause, involves the omission of (a) certain item(s) that come(s) after the verb. Carter, Hughes and McCarthy (2000: 168-70) suggest the following norms concerning the use of conversational ellipsis that occurs later in the clause.

- When one replies to a question, s/he does not need to repeat the main verb: “**A:** Can you swim? **B:** Yes, I can ~~swim~~.”, “**A:** Does he like fruit? **B:** No, he does not ~~like it/fruit~~.” In such cases, the subject cannot be omitted: “*Yes, can.”, “*No, does not.”
- If modal verbs (such as *must*, *can*, *will* and *may*) are used in the perfect tense with “*have*” or with the main verb “*be*,” these verbs are repeated. One reason why speakers repeat them is that there can be confusion between the present perfect and future uses of modals:

A: Have you rung Betty?

B: *No, but Julia might. (might phone in the future)

B: No, but Julia might *have*. (might have rung her already)

– When using ellipsis with the verbs *love*, *hate*, *hope*, *ask* and *want* plus another verb in the *to*-form, the word “*to*” is commonly repeated in the answers. This also applies to the common expressions “would like to” and “would love to”:

A: Do you want to come with me tonight?

B: Yes, I'd love to.

A: Okay, I'll pick you up at eight, then.

B: Okay, but only if you really *want to*. You don't *have to*. I could get a taxi.

However, when these verbs and expressions are used in questions, the full form is usually needed, unless the meaning is obvious or has been established previously in the conversation; for instance, “Would you like to (share a taxi)?”

– The exchange below takes place at a post-office counter between a customer and the post office clerk. It is a further illustration of ellipsis which occurs later in the clause.

Customer: Can I have a second class stamp, please?

Clerk: **You can.**

Customer: Thank you.

Clerk: **There we are** [gives stamp] and one penny. [gives change]

Customer: Mm. Last of the big spenders, eh? (It is a jokey idiomatic expression, generally applied to someone who is very careful with their money.)

Clerk: Thank you.

Customer: **I bought a new book of ten first class** when I was in town today and I've left them at home in my shopping bag.

Clerk: **Have you?** Oh, dear.

(Carter, Hughes and McCarthy, 2000: 170)

In this example, Carter, Hughes and McCarthy (2000) emphasise again that because the context is well-established, the speakers do not have to be fully explicit about everything

they say. For example, the clerk does not say “*Here is your stamp,*” but “*There we are,*” a very common expression when someone is handing something to someone else. Equally, when the customer explains the fact that she has left the stamps behind, she just says: “*I bought a book of ten first class*” and does not have to add the word “*stamps*” because this is already assumed knowledge.

2.2.2.2 Heads

Pre-posing, or fronting, is mainly common in spoken English in the form of pre-posed elements, called “heads.” Heads do not usually occur in written English because they are informal forms. They help listeners comprehend better by highlighting key information for them at the beginning of an utterance, as shown in the following examples from Carter, Hughes and McCarthy (2000: 153-7).

- *London,* it’s not very safe at night.
- *This friend of ours,* his son’s just gone to university.
- *His cousin in London, her boyfriend,* his parents bought him a Mercedes for his birthday.
- Well, *that house,* if you live in that house you may go nuts.
- *I didn’t tell you, did I? That time on the way back from Hong Kong,* well, we were just about to land in Bahrain when ...

These examples, McCarthy and Carter (2002) explain, show that the highlighted items can provide content for the subject (the first example), an attribute of the subject (the second example), an attribute of the object (the third example), can merely flag up an entity and repeat it in the upcoming clause (the fourth example), or can simply provide a broad topical framework, not necessarily repeated in any subsequent element (the last example).

There are basically two types of heads: typical heads and heads which provide a broad topical framework for what comes later in the utterance. Carter, Hughes and McCarthy (2000: 156) highlight the following norms concerning the use of typical heads.

– Speakers use a wide variety of heads, ranging from a singular proper noun; for example, “*John*, he’s nice” to an extended relative clause, such as in “*The man from Leeds we met on holiday*, his sister lives just around.”

– The head aspect does not have to be the same as the following subject: “*The chap in Cardiff I bought the car from*, his brother was saying they’re going to close down the school.”

– Sometimes, another topic or subject is created from the fronting unit: “*Madge, one of the secretaries at work*, her daughter got married last week.”

– Most heads refer to subjects in the following clause: “*That teacher*, he seems cool.” However, it is possible for them to refer to other items; for example, objects: “*Those shoes with low heels*, I really like *them*,” complements: “*Very strong* they are” or relative clauses: “*Who bought the car* I don’t know.”

– Heads are different from *wh*-constructions because they repeat an element which occurs in the clause, rather than just moving it to the beginning of the clause within a different structure:

“The results are interesting.”

“*What’re interesting* are the results.” (*wh*-clause)

“*The results, they’re interesting.*” (head)

The following examples taken from Carter, Hughes and McCarthy (2000: 154) illustrate the second type of heads, which provides a broad topical framework, not

necessarily repeated in any subsequent part of the clause, as it is the case with typical heads. The head element can be a more general class of items or a broader event than the item it refers to later in the utterance. It can also serve as a frame for jokes, sayings and narratives, highlighting the main characters or setting, or even giving a summary of a key point. Heads work like “titles for chapters to a book,” framing what is to follow and orientating the listener.

– [Joan is teaching her daughter, Janice, how to make a cake.]

Joan: Okay, one more time, **eggs, flour, water and sugar**, break the eggs and whip the mixture then...

Janice: Put it in the pan and heat it up.

Joan: Gentle heat, don't forget.

– [Conversation in a changing room before taking a swim]

Andy: **Ancient Chinese proverb**, if you're warm enough when you start, you'll be too hot when you've finished.

Bill: Good one that.

– [Two brothers are talking in a pub with a group of friends.]

Mark: Well, **the time I nearly crashed the car**, I was driving late one night...

Tom: You'd forgotten to turn your lights on.

Mark: Yes, and I just didn't see the car in front.

– [Two students, Gary and Jeff, are in a college common room.]

Gary: Right, **Englishman, Irishman and a Scotsman**, the Englishman, he says...

Jeff: I've heard this before.

Gary: Let me finish...

Carter, Hughes and McCarthy (2000) explain that each of the four heads, in these examples, is related, in some way, to the next part of the utterance:

- “*Eggs, flour, water and sugar*” introduces all the ingredients before talking about what to do with each of them.
- “*Ancient Chinese proverb*” introduces the proverb.
- “*The time I nearly crashed the car*” introduces the event to be described.
- “*Englishman, Irishman and a Scotsman*” introduces the three characters in the joke that will be told.

The amount of information fronted depends on how much the speaker thinks the listener already knows. The fronting process links new information to what is already known; for example, “*Carol’s friend in Tokyo, her sister, her son* is coming to stay with us next week.” The speaker and listener know Carol and know or have already spoken about the fact that she has a friend in Tokyo. Although the final element in the sequence (the son) is the relevant information (he will be arriving soon), putting “*her son*” at the beginning of the utterance would not be a good choice in speech: “*The son of the sister of the friend of Carol who lives in Tokyo* is coming to stay with us next week.” This structure is grammatically correct, but speakers might find it rather difficult to speak, and listeners to comprehend because the word “*son*” is very distant from the main verb “*is coming*.” This kind of embedding is not preferable in conversation; it is rather typical of written and formal spoken styles. Heads have been documented in a variety of languages, not only English, and it is clear that such choices reflect concern on the part of the speaker to bring the listener(s) into the appropriate frame for understanding the upcoming clause (Carter, Hughes and McCarthy, 2000).

2.2.2.3 Tails

As there is a slot at the beginning of clauses for inserting “orientating” structures (heads), there is also a slot at the end of clauses for particular grammatical aspects – “tails,” or post-posed elements. The latter, Carter, Hughes and McCarthy (2000) report, enable the speaker to amplify or extend what s/he has just said. Native speakers prefer to use the tail pattern, rather than the subject-verb-object pattern, when they are having conversations. Because tails are informal language forms, speakers tend to avoid using them in formal contexts such as formal business presentations and interviews. They are used in informal writing only, such as personal letters, postcards and popular journalism. They often involve repeating a noun, pronoun or demonstrative from an earlier part of the clause, as the following examples taken from Carter, Hughes and McCarthy (2000: 147-8) show.

- He was very helpful, *Max*.
- It’s very nice, *that road up through Skipton to the Dales*.
- It affects a lot of people, *migraine does*.
- **A:** What’re you going to have?
B: I can’t decide.
A: I’m going to have a burger with chilli sauce, *I am*.
B: It’s a speciality here, *chilli sauce is*, isn’t it?
– I’m a bit lacking in confidence, *I am*.

Tails usually occur in statements where the speaker is evaluating matters, saying something positive or negative about someone or something. Therefore, they can be found in utterances which include words like *exciting*, *very nice*, *great* and *too much*. Tails are also used in connection with names of people and places and allow the speaker to express his/her attitude towards them. In other words, they are grammatical choices made by the

speaker to serve the interpersonal nature of his/her spoken communication: these elements allow the expression of the speaker's affect, personal attitude or evaluative stance towards the topic. Furthermore, like heads, tails are used in narratives for the sake of emphasis and highlighting or evaluating key moments in them. However, if such grammatical elements are used throughout a narrative or every conversational utterance, it would be unusual because one normally does not stress everything s/he says (Carter, Hughes and McCarthy, 2000).

Carter, Hughes and McCarthy (2000: 149) list a number of norms related to the position and order of tails in utterances.

- In a tail, the noun can either follow or precede the verb; for example, “He was very helpful, *Max was*” or “He was very helpful, *was Max*,” and “She still hasn't finished, *Maria hasn't*” or “She still hasn't finished, *hasn't Maria*.”
- When a pronoun comes first in a clause and the tail is formed with a noun, the noun normally makes the comment stronger: “*He* was a great leader, *Gandhi was*.”
- Sometimes, the tail involves a whole noun phrase as in “It never occurred to me, *the danger I was in*.” The same sentence can be given a more formal, less spoken tone by putting such a tail as the subject of the sentence in place of it: “The danger I was in never occurred to me.”
- The noun can also be used as a tail on its own: “He was very helpful, *Max*” and “It's an exciting place, *Hong Kong*.”
- When pronouns occur in tails, the word order of the preceding phrase is repeated, otherwise the sentence may be heard as a question. Thus, one normally says: “You're stupid, *you are*,” not “You're stupid, *are you?*”, and “It would take about half an hour, *it would*,” not “It would take about half an hour, *would it?*”

– When the tail repeats a verb which is not an auxiliary (*to be* or *to have*) or a modal (*can*, *will*, *must*, etc.), the verb “*do*” is used: “She *sings* very well, *she does*” and “They *complain* all the time, *they do*.” Speakers never say: “*She’s a very good tennis player, Hiroko *does*,” “*Those musicians’ve always *been* amazing, they *have done*” or “*Paul *can’t* make it, he *doesn’t*.”

– Tails always agree with the phrase to which they refer: “It’s *not* a good drink, that *isn’t*” and “She’ll *never* pass the exam, *won’t* Tony.” Negative adverbs such as “hardly” and “scarcely” normally keep a negative tail, as in “He *scarcely* speaks, he *doesn’t*.”

2.2.2.4 Question Tags

The speaker uses question tags to make a direct appeal for the listener’s agreement or consent. Therefore, they have a primarily interpersonal function. The speaker also uses question tags to develop a point in exchanges with other people, as in the following example (Carter, Hughes and McCarthy, 2000: 151).

[Tony is explaining how all the family became ill with colds. Jimmy is his son, and Jenny his wife.]

Tony: ’Cos Jimmy’s a very busy person, *isn’t he*? [He laughs.]

Jenny: [nods]

Tony: Young Jimmy is, mm. But, er, we started getting colds then, *didn’t we*?

Carter, Hughes and McCarthy (2000) explain that in this exchange, as Tony is speaking, he is observing what his wife is doing and using the alternative clause structures to ask and answer his own questions with his wife’s support. McCarthy and Carter (1995) highlight the fact that question tags constitute an essential aspect of spoken grammar in use that is selected by native speakers of English as appropriate to the more intimate contexts of

interaction. In such contexts, meanings are not simply stated, but are the subject of negotiation and re-negotiation.

Thornbury (2005) indicates that there is clear evidence concerning the use of question tags across speaking turns, and this evidence does not consistently conform to the kinds of rules established for their use in standard descriptive grammar of English. Tags are almost non-existent in written language, apart from fiction, informal letters and other types of informal writing, but are extremely common in speech, especially the informal type, comprising a quarter of all questions. Moreover, Carter, Hughes and McCarthy (2000) note that in a question tag, the auxiliary verb always comes before the noun, and the verb is made negative or positive in opposition to the rest of the clause; for instance, “She *doesn't*, *does* she?” and “She *does*, *doesn't* she?”

2.2.2.5 Informal Reported Speech

Carter, Hughes and McCarthy (2000) report that native speakers of English exhibit a preference for direct speech, a good way of creating a very vivid and dramatic picture of the events being reported, rather than reported speech. McCarthy (1998) explains that hardly any stretch of conversational data is free of reports of speech. It is hard to conceive of achieving any intermediate level of competence in a FL without needing to know how the speakers of that language make speech reports. Language coursebooks are often the main source of information about how to report speech. Yet, there is evidence to suggest that many textbooks give an impoverished and inadequate coverage of what really happens in everyday speech probably because of an over-reliance on written, standard-language-based data and lack of observation of everyday language.

Indirect speech makes events less dramatic, as illustrated by a comparison between the last underlined direct reports in the following example and their indirect versions below.

– *Direct speech version*

[Mary is talking to her friend Danny about something that happened when she was on holiday with her friend Dulcie.]

Mary: So, we'd been wandering round in the morning, doing the usual thing, came back and had lunch and I **said**, "What would you like to do this afternoon, Dulcie?" She **said**, "Oh, Mary, let's go to bingo." Now, bingo is never my cup of tea [*Danny*: No!] but seeing that I was supposed to be with her I'd to fall in with her. [*Danny* laughs] "All right then, Dulcie, where do we go now, to bingo?" "I don't know," she **said**, "but we'll find out." So we walked along and we saw this hall and she **said**, "I think that's it." So I saw a lot of people and I **said**, "I don't know Dulcie, it doesn't look like a bingo hall." So she **said**, "Well, go in the queue," she **said**, "and find out what's happening." So I go back to Dulcie and she **says**, "All right Mary, will the bingo be starting soon? I can't see any chairs and tables." "No," I **said**, "We're in the wrong place."

(Carter, Hughes and McCarthy, 2000: 140)

– *Indirect speech version*

She asked me to go in the queue and find out what was happening. I went back to Dulcie, and she asked me if the bingo would be starting soon and told me that she couldn't see any chairs and tables. I answered in the negative and told her that we were in the wrong place.

As seen in the preceding example of direct speech, Carter, Hughes and McCarthy (2000) note, native speakers often tend to use the verb "say" for direct reporting of questions in conversations. They do not use "ask," as seen in the previous example of indirect speech. "Say" is also used for the answer; the verbs "answer" or "reply" would have sounded rather formal and written-like in a spoken informal exchange like the previous direct speech version. "Say" can be used at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of a direct speech and can cover most types of direct speech reporting. Other verbs such as "exclaim," "cry," "utter (a loud shriek)" and "shout" are very seldom used in conversations, but are

much more common in written dialogues, as the following examples (Carter, Hughes and McCarthy, 2000: 142) demonstrate.

[Two utterances from the classic novel *Ivanhoe*, by Sir Walter Scott]

– “Who is down?” *cried* Rebecca.

– “Front-de-Boeuf!” *exclaimed* Ivanhoe.

In addition, speakers seem not to invert the verb and subject (“said she”) in their talk because this inversion is a common aspect in written texts, as the two examples above show. Moreover, although the verb “ask” is not usually used in direct speech, it is frequent in indirect speech and is usually used with the passive (including the passive with “get”) + the *to*-form of the verb. The following are a few representative instances (Carter, Hughes and McCarthy, 2000: 143).

– [The speaker is talking about a difficult job he has in the health service.]

I *was asked to* do this job and I didn’t have any choice.

– [A teacher is talking about teaching.]

Oh, you know, I’ve *been asked to* do some GCSE English next term (GCSE stands for “General Certificate of Secondary Education,” an exam taken by 16-year-olds in the UK).

– [Someone is talking about a difficult task at work.]

And I *got asked to* do it ’cos they wanted, you know, a good presentation.

The reporting verb “ask” is also frequent in indirect speech with who/what/when/where/why/how-clauses to report questions, as illustrated in the following examples (Carter, Hughes and McCarthy, 2000: 144).

– I phoned up the hospital and *asked who* I should address the letter to.

– Well, you don’t interfere, do you, so I *asked* him *what* the arrangements were.

– I *asked* him *how* to get there, but it sounds a bit complicated.

In informal narratives, speakers can often switch from the past to the present tense when reporting speech directly, as in the following utterances (Carter, Hughes and McCarthy, 2000: 140).

So she **said**, “Well, go in the queue,” she **said**, “and find out what’s happening.” So I go back to Dulcie and she **says**, “All right Mary, will the bingo be starting soon? I can’t see any chairs and tables.” “No,” I **said**, “We’re in the wrong place.”

Carter, Hughes and McCarthy (2000) explain that the present tense, as used in the underlined utterances in the previous example, emphasises the speaker’s words more than the past tense. In other words, it is the interpersonal consideration, rather than the pastness of the event that determines the use of the present tense in this particular context. Furthermore, McCarthy and Carter (1995) state that when reporting someone’s speech indirectly in conversations, the tense of the verbs that come after the reporting verb does not have to change. So, speakers tend to say:

– I mean I was saying to Mum earlier that I’**m** actually **thinking**...

– Yes, Pauline and Tony were telling me you **have** to get a taxi... (McCarthy and Carter, 1995: 211)

rather than “(...) that I **was** actually **thinking**...” and “(...) that I **had** to get a taxi,” which conform to the rules of writing and formal speech (the rules of standard grammar). It has also been observed that in informal reported speech, speakers tend to use the past continuous tense of the reporting verb if they want to concentrate on the content of the topic, rather than the words. The speakers in the following conversational exchanges (Carter, Hughes and McCarthy, 2000: 141) are de-focusing from the actual words uttered by the original speakers and focusing instead on the content.

– [Tom is telling a piece of news to a neighbour.]

Tom: Brian *was saying* the village hall nearly caught fire last night.

– [Dick has just heard a piece of news from his daughter.]

Dick: Caroline *was saying* that five mortar bombs have been discovered at Heathrow Airport.

– [John is commenting on how quickly companies respond to job applications.]

John: My son is with the Electricity Board and he *was telling* me that they have this sort of procedure as well. They have to reply initially within, well I can't remember the number of days.

McCarthy (1998) draws attention to the fact that linguists and grammarians have mostly ignored the uncontroversial, very natural-sounding usage of the past continuous tense of the reporting verb. He also mentions two exceptions to the neglect of the *-ing* form (past continuous) reporting verb. Leech (*Meaning and the English Verb*, 1987; cited in McCarthy, 1998) gives *-ing* form examples of indirect reports with the verbs *read*, *tell* and *say*, but dismisses them as colloquial “exceptions” to the general rules of progressive aspect. Eastwood (*Oxford Guide to English Grammar*, 1994; cited in McCarthy, 1998) mentions examples of the verbs “*ask*” (in the past and present continuous tenses) and “*wonder*” (in the present continuous tense) in his pedagogic grammar, in a section on reported speech, but does not comment on the tense / aspect choice.

Yule, Mathis and Hopkins (1992) state that standard descriptive grammar, based as it is on written and other literary sources, does not record the usage of the past continuous tense of the reporting verb, illustrating such function with almost exclusive reference to a simple past tense form such as “*said*” or “*told*” (as in “Brian *said* to the village hall that...” and “...he *told* me that they have this sort of procedure...”). McCarthy and Carter (1995) declare that it is difficult to account precisely for this core aspect of reporting verbs in the

continuous form, but its provenance in informal spoken data suggests that it provides speakers with a grammatical choice which has less to do with tense in the strict sense of the past, present, and future time frames. This aspect enables speakers to give more emphasis to the overall content of the message than the authority, certainty or precise words with which it was uttered. The recurrence of such a feature (the past continuous tense of the reporting verb) in informal talk may also suggest a lack of definiteness which is, in turn, a common feature of interpersonal spoken grammar.

McCarthy (1998) points out that the CANCODE corpus confirms the common-sense intuition that speech reporting is exceedingly common in everyday language. It also demonstrates that the ways speakers effect reports are many and varied. These ways immensely overlap with the ways which fiction writers recreate in their stories and journalists use to report the words of politicians and other newsworthy figures. But, spoken data also exhibit choices which are rarely, if ever, found in written-text reports. What is most striking is that conversational resources for reporting are much richer than is suggested by standard-grammar-based accounts of the structure of direct and indirect speech.

2.2.2.6 Conversational / Spoken Discourse Markers

Carter, Hughes and McCarthy (2000: 175) define conversational, or spoken, discourse markers as “words or phrases which help [one] to structure and monitor a stretch of (...) spoken language.” They classify such markers into two categories: markers which focus on the listener, such as **yeah, mm, I see, you see, you know, I don’t know, right** and **okay**, and markers which focus on the speaker, such as **I mean, I think, so, well, like, ’cos, anyway, still** and **basically**. The spoken discourse markers which focus on the listener help to check that the latter follows what is being said and/or make sure that the speaker does not sound very certain or dogmatic to the listener. The markers “yeah,” “mm”

and “I see” check that the listener understands the speaker, and that both share the same viewpoint. Similarly, “you see” (or simply “see?”) and “you know” are employed to check that the speaker and listener share the same knowledge. However, when using “you know,” it is assumed that the speaker does know something, whereas “you see” implies that the listener does not know something. The marker “I don’t know” is sensitive to the listener(s): it is used to make sure that the speaker does not sound very certain or dogmatic. It has another interactive, interpersonal function: softening the speaker’s opinions. When “right” and “okay” occur at the beginning of utterances, they usually indicate for the listener(s) a boundary between one part of a conversation or one topic and another. In the following exchanges, a number of conversational discourse markers which focus on the listener are highlighted.

– [This conversation was recorded in a post office. Reg is a post-office clerk; Jennifer is a customer. The book they refer to is a book of stamps which can be bought monthly to pay for a television licence fee.]

Reg: They’re doing it, they used to do it in book form years ago and I think they’re starting again.

Jennifer: **I see.**

Reg: So, you, **you know**...

Jennifer: She’s probably not going to be in her own home for a year. **Right**, we just want to do it for a month at a time, to see how she goes, **right**...

Reg: She can always change the address, **you see**, at a post office where she goes to.

Jennifer: **Yeah.**

Reg: If she does take a yearly one out, **you know**.

Jennifer: **Right, okay**, and the other thing I need is this...

(Carter, Hughes and McCarthy, 2000: 175-6)

– [This conversation involves a group of people discussing their beliefs.]

Helen: (...) But, it's complicated as well, because when I have, **you know**, when I do go out with those friends and just talk to them...I try to just, sort of, hope my life isn't affected, **you know**, by my faith in that sense...

Raj: But is that because of your faith, or because you've got a bit of a conscience?

Liam: **Mm**.

Helen: **I see, I don't know**, I think it is my faith because it comes from that feeling of doing wrong.

Moira: Isn't our faith, isn't our conscience affected by our faith?

Raj: **Yeah**, but...

Helen: No, no, I'm not trying not to generalise in that sense... **See?** We all know that...

(Carter, Hughes and McCarthy, 2000: 176)

The spoken discourse markers which focus on the speaker, **I mean, I think, so, well, like, 'cos, anyway, still** and **basically**, help him/her to structure what s/he is saying. Carter, Hughes and McCarthy (2000) note that the markers "I mean," "I think" and "so" often indicate that further comments or more details will follow. "Well" can be used to indicate that the speaker has started speaking. "Like" serves to introduce examples; it signals that the clause which follows is a suggested example. "'Cos," an informal spoken contracted form of "because," is employed to justify a previous statement. In the following example, the previously mentioned markers (*I mean, I think, so, well, like* and *'cos*) are illustrated.

[A married couple are planning a summer holiday with the help of a friend.]

Jan: (...) You know, **like**, if you got the earliest train in the morning and then just got the last train back at night ...

Sue: The only thing is, when I opened that up at Brugge, first thing it said in it was "Don't

stay in Brugge,” – no, it says, “Don’t stay in Brugge ’cos it’s dear.”

Jan: Is it?

Dave: Yeah.

Sue: Yeah, it does say that ...

Dave: **Well**, maybe then we could do that, go to the Hook of Holland, go to Amsterdam, ’cos Delft isn’t far from Amsterdam, is it?

Jan: I thought Delft was miles from Amsterdam.

Sue: Don’t think so.

Dave: **Well, I mean**, it’s only..., Holland’s only small, **so**, it’s not a big place ...

Sue: [Reading from a guide book] Its museums are named as one attraction...**I think** they hold some of the country’s finest collections of Flemish ...

Dave: You see, I’d never get her into a museum to look at art.

(Carter, Hughes and McCarthy, 2000: 178)

Moreover, the marker “anyway” is particularly common in bringing the conversation back to its main line, after a diversion or an interruption to another topic; for example,

... I’m not that stupid. **Anyway**, what I was saying was, when I first typed it up it was like normal spacing and normal character size and I’d done nine pages (Carter, Hughes and McCarthy, 2000: 232).

This marker also helps the speaker move from one stage to another one in spoken narratives, as in:

... she went back to her seat and stood up and sort of started again. **Anyway**, when I got off the bus the teacher came to me and he said, “Thank you for that” (Carter, Hughes and McCarthy, 2000: 232).

A further function of “anyway” is indicating that the speaker is ready to close the topic or whole conversation; for instance,

But, *anyway*, we'll continue this discussion when we get into the regulations. I must run 'cos I have to teach a lecture (Carter, Hughes and McCarthy, 2000: 232).

“Still,” as a discourse marker (not an adverb), has a meaning similar to the more formal marker “on the other hand” or “nevertheless;” for example,

I worked in cinemas, but I was out of work at 51 because the cinemas closed. But *still*, who isn't out of work today? (Carter, Hughes and McCarthy, 2000: 232)

“Basically” is more frequent in spoken than written language and is used with the meaning of “What I am simply saying is...;” for instance,

Basically, you get to the top of the stairs and there's, er ... just this counter and there should be one member of the staff standing there on their own (Carter, Hughes and McCarthy, 2000: 232).

Carter, Hughes and McCarthy (2000: 179) draw attention to the fact that whole clauses such as “I was saying” and “I was thinking” can function as spoken discourse markers; for example,

– Dad, maybe ... I guess we were wrong, er, **I was saying**, we can give her a second chance and see. What do you think?

– I don't think he can ... **I was thinking**, what if he just can't make it?

They also mention that spoken discourse markers can cluster together, as in:

– **Yeah, right ... I was thinking**, when are you going to start handling reprints?

– **Well, I mean** in some ways, **you know, I think** you should make the difference.

Any exchange of spoken language loses its chatty, involving tone if conversational discourse markers are removed or replaced by more formal markers, such as *consequently*,

moreover, on the other hand, in conclusion, alternatively and the whole phrase “*you appreciate what I am saying.*” These discourse markers are common in and suitable for formal written language (such as academic essays that the students are usually required to produce and formal letters addressed to someone in authority) as well as formal spoken settings (such as formal speeches, formal business presentations and broadcast talk). Carter, Hughes and McCarthy (2000: 180) explain, through the following examples, how book-like and inappropriately formal the way some of the above-listed discourse markers (consequently, moreover, in conclusion, alternatively, and you appreciate what I am saying) sound in conversational contexts.

– The whole room was in a mess after the party. Consequently, I had to clear it up.

The whole room was in a mess after the party. **So**, I had to clear it up.

– He fell out of a first floor window, though he did not hurt himself. Moreover, he was drunk.

He fell out of a first floor window, though he didn't hurt himself. **What's more** he was drunk.

– In conclusion, I am meeting Jack at six o'clock tonight.

So, I'm meeting Jack at six o'clock tonight.

– Alternatively, it is important to book early for the New Year celebrations.

But, it's important to book early for the New Year celebrations.

– You appreciate what I am saying, I am sure.

You know what I mean, I'm sure.

The formal markers have been replaced with less formal, more conversational ones (the italicised versions) in order to make the utterances sound more natural and less writing-like.

Carter, Hughes and McCarthy (2000) have observed that discourse markers which are only spoken (not shared by both modes of language), such as “anyway,” “what's more”

and “mind you,” do appear sometimes in written texts. When they do, the text becomes more conversational and informal. Such exclusively spoken markers can be found in personal letters, popular journalism and advertisements, as shown in the examples below.

– [An extract from a letter between two sisters.]

... I think I still like that, but I don't want to get too tied down. **Anyway**, I'll try and ring you on Sunday and we can talk some more. I can also hear all your news then too (Carter, Hughes and McCarthy, 2000: 232).

– [This text (Carter, Hughes and McCarthy, 2000: 177) is an extract from an advertisement for Subaru cars. The latter is intended to persuade couples to buy two cars in order to make sure that neither loses out and that their life together stays happy. *The Justy* is the name of one of the cars.]

Gripping stuff, Subaru four-wheels drive.
The world and his wife's favourite, in fact. With one and
a half million four-wheel drives to prove it.
Mind you, it only takes two to make a perfect marriage.
The Justy for one. The world's first 1.2 4WD supermini.
A poetic little mover. 3 valves per cylinder. 5-speed box. 3 or 5 doors.
From only £6,198 **what's more.**

In the previous example, a casual and more involving tone usually serves the purpose of the advertiser. The discourse marker “mind you” is restricted to spoken language, with a slightly different meaning from “on the other hand.” It also signals “it is important to say” or “we should not forget that...,” which are rather more formal. The casual marker “what's more” is a more appropriate grammatical choice in this context (advertisement) than “moreover” or “furthermore.”

2.2.2.7 Vague Language

McCarthy (1998) reports that vague language, also referred to as vagueness elements, is very extensive in conversations. When one interacts with others, there are times when it is necessary to give exact and precise information (for example, departure times for trains), but there are occasions where it would not be appropriate to be precise as it may sound unduly authoritative and assertive. In most informal contexts, most speakers prefer to convey information which is softened in some way by vague language, although such vagueness is often wrongly considered by standard grammar as a sign of “careless thinking” or “sloppy expression.” Examples of vague language include structures such as the ones highlighted below (the first two are taken from McCarthy, 1998: 181; the last two from Paterson, 2011: 1).

- Can you get me a sandwich **or something**?
- Have they got mineral water **or anything** like that?
- A: More coffee?
B: No, thanks. I’ve got **a bit of** a stomach ache.
- My Dad’s buying **a sort of** artist’s studio.

Thornbury (2005) explains that speakers do not use vagueness expressions only to fill pauses, but also to reduce the assertiveness of statements. This is a way of fulfilling Grice’s “maxim of quality”: “Make your contribution one that is true” (p. 21). It is also a way of reducing the “face-threatening” potential of an assertion, of being less “bold.” Writing, however, typically requires greater precision or may use other means such as modality, to reduce the assertiveness of statements; for instance, the use of the modal “may” in this sentence.

Channell (1994) carried out a study of vague language, confirming its widespread occurrence in speech. The vagueness element “thing,” for example, has been found very

recurrent in spoken discourse and can substitute for a wide range of names of objects, processes, entities and even persons and animals, as in:

- You must be starving, you poor **things**.
- My cat's very ill, poor old **thing**.

The vagueness element “stuff” has approximately the same meaning as “thing(s),” as in the following examples (*Oxford Advanced*, 2010: 1538).

- They sell stationery and **stuff** like that.
- What's all that sticky **stuff** on the carpet?

However, these two vagueness words cannot be always interchangeable, as in “*You silly **stuff**, you thought I was her” (meaning “You silly **thing**”).

McCarthy (1998) emphasises that despite their vagueness, the elements of vague language rarely cause problems for listeners and pass unnoticed. They seem to make an important contribution to the natural, informal tenor of speech. The listener would be considered uncooperative and irritating if s/he constantly demanded clarification of vagueness elements.

2.2.2.8 Other Aspects of Spoken Grammar

The aspects tackled in the above sub-sections are not the only aspects that native speakers of English tend to use in conversations in order to convey interpersonal, interactive meanings. There are other choices offered by the grammar of speech, among which are “contractions”, “response / reply questions,” “statements as questions” and “vocative use”.

- **Contractions**

In spoken English, native speakers tend to use contractions, also called “short” or “contracted forms,” such as “I’m,” “you’ve” and “didn’t,” rather than full forms (“I am,” “you have” and “did not”). Contractions contribute to the natural tenor of speech. Murphy (2004: 297) suggests the following list of contractions alongside a few rules about how these forms are used.

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|
| 'm = am | I'm | | | | | | |
| 's = is <i>or</i> has | | he's | she's | it's | | | |
| 're = are | | | | | you're | we're | they're |
| 've = have | I've | | | | you've | we've | they've |
| 'll = will | I'll | he'll | she'll | | you'll | we'll | they'll |
| 'd = would <i>or</i> had | I'd | he'd | she'd | | you'd | we'd | they'd |

– Some of these contracted forms, especially 's, are used after question words (who, what, where, when, why) and after “that,” “there” and “here;” for example,

Who's that woman over there? (= Who is)

What's happened? (= What has)

Do you think there'll be many people at the party? (= there will)

– Contractions are also used after nouns, as in:

Catherine and Jane're going out tonight. (= Catherine and Jane are)

My best friend's just got married. (= My best friend has)

– The contractions 'm, 's, 're, 've, 'll and 'd cannot be employed at the end of an utterance because the verb is stressed in this position; for instance,

A: Are you tired?

B: Yes, I **am**. (*Not* “Yes, I'm.”)

A: We can have a long rest after we find out where he **is**. (*Not* “where he’s”)

– The negative contracted form for “**is**” can be “s/he/it **isn’t**” or “s/he/it’s **not**.” Similarly, there are two possible negative contracted forms for “**are**”: “you/we/they **aren’t**” or “you/we/they’re **not**.” What follows is a list of negative contracted forms (Murphy, 2004: 297).

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| isn’t (= is not) | don’t (= do not) | haven’t (= have not) |
| aren’t (= are not) | doesn’t (= does not) | hasn’t (= has not) |
| wasn’t (= was not) | didn’t (= did not) | hadn’t (= had not) |
| weren’t (= were not) | | |
| can’t (= cannot) | couldn’t (= could not) | mustn’t (= must not) |
| won’t (= will not) | wouldn’t (= would not) | needn’t (= need not) |
| shan’t (= shall not) | shouldn’t (= should not) | daren’t (= dare not) |

- **Response / Reply Questions**

They are questions used in response to what someone has said. They do not require answers, but express emotions or personal attitudes in response to what has been said; for example (Paterson, 2011: 3):

– [Friends talking about yesterday’s incident]

A: I rang the police last night.

B: You did what?

– [A brother and sister talking on the phone]

A: I went to France to see her.

B: You went where?

A: I had to talk to her, I had to.

– [Business partners discussing a problem]

A: I talked to them, and they promised to help us.

B: **Are you kidding?**

A: It was the only way.

- **Statements as Questions**

They are statements which sound as questions, but are formed with no inversion of the subject and verb, i.e. the order of words in such questions is similar to that in statements.

They convey information in a more satisfactory manner than regular questions do.

Examples of such statements include the following (Paterson, 2011: 1):

– [Students in a residence hall]

A: I've done all my e-mails.

B: **So you're ready to go?**

– [Friends talking about an invitation to a party]

A: He didn't invite me, but if he had, I don't know, erm...

B: **You would have gone?**

A: Listen, I know you don't get on well, but no one would miss a party like this.

– [Colleagues working on a project]

A: We need to convince them as a first step.

B: **You think you can handle that?**

A: Well, it's worth trying, I guess.

- **Vocative Use**

Vocative use, or "vocative forms," indicates that somebody or something is being directly addressed by the speaker. Such forms involve the listener(s) in the conversational process

through the use of their **names**, **adjectives** or **pronouns** that directly address them, as shown in the following examples (Paterson, 2011: 4).

– [Mike is calling Steve to help him fix the remote control.]

Mike: **Steve**, come and see this!

Steve: What is it, **Mike**?

– [Parents giving permission to their daughter to go to a party]

Father: You can go, **darling**, but don't be late.

Daughter: OK, **Dad**.

Mother: **Honey**, enjoy it and be careful.

– [Classmates talking about the unsatisfactory results of their school project]

A: If you just had finished that last part ...

B: Hey, **you**, it's not my fault! I did my best.

A: I'm just saying we could have done better if we'd finished that part.

Conclusion

So far, it has been argued that there is no type of grammar, standard or spoken, that is more correct than the other. Each type is an indispensable system that reflects and fosters the generation and expression of meanings for its particular type of language. Therefore, the grammar of conversation, like standard grammar, is worthy of grammarians' and corpus analysts' attention and adequate examination on a larger scale of data.

CHAPTER THREE
TEACHING SPOKEN GRAMMAR

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Introduction

Since the advent of spoken corpora, descriptions of spoken grammar have become more detailed and comprehensive. These insights, however, have been relatively slow to filter through to ELT practice. Although the design and implementation of spoken grammar are among the most challenging areas in the practice of language teaching today, it is possible to implement the model of spoken grammar in the classroom.

3.1 Approaches and Materials of Teaching Spoken Grammar

The question of how spoken grammar should be taught has been subordinated to the question of whether it should be taught in the first place. Thornbury (1999) points out that the case against teaching spoken grammar reveals that spoken English, including its grammar, often exhibits strong regional and idiomatic aspects that may cause comprehension problems to especially EFL learners. At the other extreme, there are linguists and grammarians, such as McCarthy and Carter (1995), who strongly advocate the teaching of spoken grammar, maintaining that corpora built on formal written (standard) language are highly insufficient when formulating general rules about grammar. Although there seems to have been little progress on the question of how spoken grammar should be taught, the following are a few approaches recommended for implementation in the classroom: the Native-speaker Spoken Grammar Approach: Timmis (2005), The Register Approach: Rühlemann (2008) and The Three Stage Approach: Paterson (2011). McCarthy's and Carter's (2002) approach, namely Illustration Interaction Induction (I-I-I), will be discussed later in Sub-section 3.2.1 Background of the Model, p. 123. It is assigned a special focus for its importance to the present study: this approach is used in our experimental design (see Chapter Four, Sub-section 4.2.2 Instruction of the Spoken Grammar Aspects, p. 160).

3.1.1 The Native-speaker Spoken Grammar Approach: Timmis (2005)

Timmis (2005) outlines an approach to the teaching of spoken grammar which is not only pedagogically effective, as he claims, but also reflects current socio-linguistic concerns about using native-speaker models in the classroom. Through this approach, he argues, it is both possible and potentially useful to raise learners' awareness of native-speaker spoken grammar (and spoken language in general), develop their critical perception of it and stimulate natural spoken output, without resulting in what Modiano (2001; cited in Timmis, 2005: 117) calls "the cultural integrity of the non-native speaker." Timmis designed a unit of materials with four basic tasks: global understanding tasks, noticing tasks, language discussion tasks and cultural access tasks.

Global understanding, or gist listening, tasks have been common practice in the communicative methodology for many years. Timmis (2005) explains that learners can gain more from language work on a text if they have already got a general understanding of it. An example of a global understanding task is the following (p. 120).

Listening to understand

Listen / watch and tick the things which make Cornwall special:

- a. It is geographically isolated.
- b. They still speak a different language.
- c. They have a strong sense of community.
- d. There is a tradition for large families.

The text, he argues, should be, wherever possible, listened to more than once before asking comprehension questions. There are four reasons why he sees that it is significant for students to listen to the texts. In the first place, although teachers may not be able to or

have enough time to describe the pronunciation and tone aspects of spoken language, at least such aspects give clues as to the nature of the interaction and the relationship between the participants. Second, it is questionable whether teachers and linguists should develop materials which focus very exclusively on spoken language and do not make reference to any aspect of the SL/FL such as its culture. Third, Timmis explains that apart from any particular aspect that teachers and material designers are focusing on, ultimately and more importantly, they are fostering the skills and habits of listening and noticing. Last but not least, global (or gist) listening is one way through which teachers can ensure that texts are processed for meaning before they are analysed in terms of language form.

Noticing tasks, Timmis (2005) points out, are highly recommended for teaching spoken grammar. Noticing is “a complex process [which] involves the intake both of meaning and of form, and it takes time for learners to progress from initial recognition to the point where they can internalise the underlying rule” (Batstone, 1996: 273). There are two basic reasons why Timmis (2005) believes that noticing tasks are particularly appropriate for teaching spoken grammar or spoken language in general. First, second language acquisition (SLA) and foreign language acquisition (FLA) research has shown that pre-mature focus on production can be counter-productive. Second, for many aspects of spoken language, it is very hard to frame useful and digestible production rules. Timmis draws attention to the two main advantages of noticing tasks such as “Spot the difference tasks”: they encourage students to compare their expectations of native-speaker English and the reality of native-speaker English, and to compare what they would say with what native speakers would say.

With regard to language discussion tasks, if teachers and language analysts take into account socio-linguistic concerns, they will need tasks which encourage students to “adopt a critical, analytic perspective to the language features they have noticed” (Timmis,

2005: 121). These tasks require of learners to reflect on why speakers use certain forms, what their effect is, and whether it would be appropriate for students to produce such forms. One of the basic aims of these tasks would be to ensure that learners do not fall into the trap of what Seidlhofer (2001; cited in Timmis, 2005) has called “unilateral idiomaticity”: if students feel that they want to use spoken grammar, they should be aware of the occasions when it might impede communication. Therefore, Timmis (2005) recommends, questions such as the following ones are to be taken into consideration.

- How formal/informal do you think the dialogue is?
- How well do you think the speakers know each other?
- What do you think they would say in a more formal spoken context?
- What do you think they would use in writing?
- What would you say in a similar context in your own language?
- Would you like to use these grammatical structures of spoken language? Why?

Such questions are claimed to have a value beyond raising socio-linguistic issues: they may promote broader language awareness and produce worthwhile communication in themselves.

In relation to cultural access tasks, Timmis (2005: 119) points out that:

it would be naive and rather arrogant to assume that learners are automatically willing and able to relate to any native-speaking context. Equally, it seems to me to be unduly pessimistic to assume that learners are automatically unwilling and unable to relate to a context simply because it is a native-speaking context.

Tomlinson (2000; cited in Timmis, 2005) suggests that one way through which some native-speaking contexts can be made more accessible to learners is to relate the context to

a similar aspect of their culture. The aim of cultural access tasks, then, Timmis (2005) states, is to help learners to relate the themes of the text to their own culture, and more importantly, to universalise the issues of the text, if possible. The following example illustrates a task which is used in conjunction with a video-text; it aims at connecting the theme of the video (the advantages and disadvantages of living in Cornwall) with more general issues which are likely to be of interest to the learner (Timmis, 2005: 120).

Take a moment to think about these questions, and then discuss them with a partner:

- a. What is the difference between quality of life and standard of living?
- b. Which is more important to you, quality of life or standard of living?
- c. Do you feel proud of the area you come from? What makes it special?

(Traditions? Customs? Skills? Language? Other things?)

The unit of materials with the four basic tasks, devised by Timmis (2005), is based on a video text from the 1990 BBC Series “People and Places.” He notes that he chose this text because it is very engaging and contains a number of interesting aspects of spoken language, including spoken grammar aspects such as the ones highlighted in the following examples (Timmis, 2005: 121-2).

- Heads: for example, *All my friends down there*, we all went to school together.
- Tails: for example, They demand breakfast, *the children* ...
- Ellipsis: for example, *Business booming*, is it?
- Flexible word order: for example, This is where you were brought up, *I should think*, was it?
- Vague language: for example, That’s where the smugglers *and that* used to keep the loot.

- Different uses of “like”: for example, It’s *like* a ghost town; just to wet the lip, *like* ...
- Agreement by synonyms: for example, Chris: Lovely day, isn’t it?

Trudy: *Smashing!*

The materials were piloted by six teachers in three different institutions: Leeds Metropolitan University, Birmingham University and Innsbruck University. Around sixty learners were involved. Timmis (2005) mentions that the sampling was opportunistic, in that the teachers were his colleagues who responded to his requests for volunteer pilots and were well prepared for the teaching of spoken language. Given this in-built bias in the sample, he explains that he is not going to argue, despite the very favourable general responses to the materials, that the responses can prove the overall viability of his four-task-based approach to the teaching of native-speaker spoken grammar. However, he does think that some of the comments offer very interesting insights for consideration. The general tenor of the responses from the sixty learners involved in the study was positive. Timmis (2005: 122) summarises below the results of a questionnaire given to the students, but given the bias in the sample, he does not attach much importance to these statistics.

- 92% [of the learners] found the language tasks [described above] useful or very useful.
- 80% found the materials interesting.
- 86% agreed that they had learned something useful about spoken English.

He declares that these results are not surprising, given the learning context: the students were likely to be more willing than the average to learn as their teachers were well prepared and enthusiastic about the instruction of spoken grammar aspects and other spoken language elements. Other teachers and students, in other circumstances, may not show such readiness and willingness. He further explains that there were, however, specific comments which raised interesting issues. Since one of the aims of the materials was to get insight into the students’ expectations of native-speaker spoken language and to

encourage them to compare native-speaker spoken English with theirs, the following comments made by two learners were interesting to note (Timmis, 2005: 122-3):

– “Spoken English is difficult because you expect a complete grammar structure. It is useful to know the ellipsis and vague language and to perceive its meaning.”

– “I found this task [a noticing task which Timmis used in his materials] very interesting and was after surprised by the things I found out (words you can leave out, etc). I’ve never thought there would be a lot of differences in task 2 (translations), but there are!”

There was also reference to the relationship between SL/FL and L1 awareness, as one student wrote: “It was interesting to find out how native speakers speak to each other. I could find connection to my mother tongue, which make things (in English) clearer” (p.122). Furthermore, a number of students were struck by what they described as the “flexibility” of spoken English and said that some aspects of this “flexibility” made communication easier:

– “I have realized I don’t need to use all the words in a spoken English phrase. It is easier” (p.123).

– “You can repeat the subject twice [i.e. use heads] to emphasise the phrases and make it clearer” (p.123). Timmis (2005) reports that as it is the case with the learners’ responses, the general tenor of the responses from the six teachers under study was positive although one teacher commented that the learners found the text of limited interest and the tasks heavy. From the following comment made by a teacher, however, it could be seen that the aim of providing a culturally accessible text, in this case, was met in the way it was intended to: “I think the topic of regional identity dealt with in the video is quite accessible and relevant to international students, as they have parallel situations in their country”

(p.123). It could also be seen, he further reports, that the aim of promoting noticing was met, at least in some cases, as revealed by two teachers:

– “Very useful. Reading about this spoken grammar and discovering it are two different things. Comments [made by the learners] like ‘This sounds so bad,’ ‘I can’t speak like that’ [and] ‘It’s wrong’ were common. Coming from their unquestioned position of superior knowledge (in their eyes) of what is ‘right’ and ‘good,’ this was a real lesson for them (which I don’t think they would have accepted without the video evidence!)” (p.123).

– “Very valuable, I think, as almost none of the learners had ever been made aware of these characteristics of informal spoken English (such as ellipsis), whereas of course, they encounter this type of language on a daily basis as students in the UK” (p.123).

Timmis (2005) acknowledges, however, that two teachers questioned the exclusive focus on noticing. One felt that a handout with the relevant grammar rules was appropriate for her students in her particular context; another felt that the learners would have been more motivated if they had been given production tasks.

Timmis (2005) notes that he would not wish to extrapolate very far from his small sample of feedback data, nor would he wish to argue that his approach to teaching spoken grammar is necessarily applicable in all learning and teaching contexts. He hopes, however, that he has shown that this approach is at least potentially viable in some contexts. The advantage of this approach, he claims, is that it exploits a convenient harmony between a methodological emphasis on noticing and a socio-linguistic view that native speakers and their cultures should not be portrayed as models to imitate or aspire to. In the heated debate about the relative merits of native speakers and “expert users” as models of English (see Sub-section 3.2.2.10 Native and Non-native Users, p. 152), Timmis (2005) points out that one simple notion has been overlooked: native speakers are habitual users of English for all communicative purposes. This does not mean that they are more

articulate, impressive or persuasive users of English than non-native speakers, but it does mean that native speakers are more likely to use English habitually for certain purposes such as telling jokes, telling stories, phatic exchanges and endearments. If learners are interested in this domain of interpersonal language use, the native speaker will have much to offer them. Widdowson (1996; cited in Timmis, 2005: 124) remarks that an implicit assumption of linguists and teachers arguing for the use of authentic texts in class is that learners have to “refer to and defer to” the native speaker. However, the main argument of Timmis (2005: 124) is that, at least for some purposes, the native speaker can be “an interesting point of reference without being an object of deference.”

In developing materials for teaching spoken grammar and spoken language in general, the first basic question that the teacher asks himself / herself may be: “In what form should I introduce spoken data into the classroom?” Timmis (2005) believes that given the fact that spoken grammar aspects are crucially discourse-sensitive, it seems logical that the target spoken language aspects should be embedded in a text, rather than simply a sentence, at least for the initial encounter. If teachers decide to use a spoken text as a means for teaching spoken grammar, what kind of text should it be? In his point of view, two overriding criteria should govern the selection of texts:

- a. Does the text have the potential to engage the students’ interest?
- b. Is the text plausible as natural interaction?

He argues that in adopting the criteria of interest and plausibility, he can give room for both naturally-occurring and specially-constructed texts. As regards the criterion of interest, he acknowledges that the single, biggest challenge in teaching spoken grammar or spoken language lies in finding texts which are natural and interesting at the same time. As Cook (1998: 61) points out, a good deal of natural conversation is “impoverished, inarticulate and boring.” Timmis (2005) further notes that if teachers find a text which is

interesting and plausible as natural interaction, they will also need to make sure that it is not embedded with many difficult words or obscure cultural references. He remarks that “[t]hese criteria are quite difficult to meet, but thanks to the availability of texts on the Internet, it may be getting easier” (p.119). Moreover, he tells of his own teaching experience: while preparing some materials for Singapore, he found an interview with a singer containing a number of interesting aspects of spoken grammar alongside other aspects of spoken language. Seeger (2010) supports Timmis’ (2005) position in all respects, most notably in arguing for the point that materials should stimulate learners’ motivation without being a hindrance in terms of complexity of vocabulary and content. In her own words, “(...) Learners’ interest and plausibility in terms of naturalness are two main criteria for pedagogically sound materials, while lexis and content should not be too alien to learners, and spoken texts should be made available for listening” (Seeger, 2010: 12).

The use of purely authentic materials in the teaching of spoken grammar and spoken language has resulted in heated debates. Tatsuki (2006: 1) views authenticity as a “social construct” and interprets it as “the use of all kinds of written and spoken language in formal and informal real-life contexts.” Based on this definition, he suggests that in order to obtain authentic models for a natural spoken output, it is crucial to analyse, not only formal standard language, but also different language varieties used in different real-world situations. Some researchers, such as Brown (2001), exhibit an inclination towards highly authentic materials, seeing them as effective preparatory means for real-life, natural communication. Other researchers such as Carter, Hughes and McCarthy (1998) and Cook (1998) believe that it is not always a wise choice to present the class with purely authentic materials, although they do not claim that such materials are useless in all learning and teaching situations. They agree that the solution to the complexity of highly authentic

spoken language materials lies in the teacher's intervention in terms of "compromise" dialogues and language filtering.

3.1.2 The Register Approach: Rühlemann (2008)

Rühlemann (2008: 673) proposes the Register Approach which "acknowledges the fundamental functional diversity of language use," defining "registers" as being "related to certain situation types and distinguishable by certain linguistic features." He points out the huge discrepancy between Standard English, including its grammar, and the corpus-provided evidence for entirely different spoken grammar. He also stresses the need for reducing the role of Standard English, which is related to written registers, and introducing conversational (spoken) grammar for teaching speech. Moreover, the description of spoken language characteristics as "deviant," manifesting itself in terms like "dislocation" of words / clause elements (see Sub-section 3.2.2.4 Position of Clause Elements, p. 139) or "dysfluency" (referring to pauses, fillers and restarts) devalues naturally-occurring spoken aspects that occur very frequently in speech. Thus, Rühlemann (2008) argues, the notion of "correctness" generated is inappropriate since "[such] 'aberrant' [aspects] fulfil crucial functions in discourse and interaction, benefiting both the speaker and the recipient in multiple ways" (p.682). In connection with spoken language, in general, and spoken grammar, in particular, the notion of "correctness" should be replaced by the notion of "appropriateness," the latter depending on the register and contextual conditions of language use.

As the Register Approach rocks the foundations of conventional beliefs, it takes into account teachers' attitudes. Rühlemann (2008) draws attention to the point that while the deeply-rooted notion of "correctness" may cause teachers' reluctance towards spoken grammar and the register approach, the greater problem might be that the notion of "appropriateness" involves variation and a focus on context beyond grammatical norms.

This necessitates decision-making on the part of teachers and requires of them to deal with a more complicated workload. However, given time and appropriate training, many teachers are more likely to welcome these opportunities to help students produce more natural speech. Sharing Rühlemann's (2008) view, Seeger (2010) recommends the Register Approach and welcomes a re-consideration of the notion of "correctness." She argues that "since the Register Approach is more likely to get EFL teaching anywhere close to reflecting the linguistic richness and functional diversity of real language use, it is an excellent tool for implementing spoken grammar in the classroom, which would address learners' frustration at their inability to use 'real' English outside the classroom" (p.14). She explains that the register approach, using materials informed by spoken corpora, may enable students to become conscious of the diversity of interpersonal functions and contextual meaning in conversation, and thus make informed grammatical choices.

Despite the large body of evidence from spoken corpora, there are still few empirical data to support the effectiveness of the Register Approach in helping learners speak more naturally (Rühlemann, 2008). However, Seeger (2010) suggests, this can only be remedied by trial. Any further endeavour to explore the viability of the Register Approach will be a major contribution to the area of spoken grammar, particularly, and spoken language, in general. She adds that "stubbornly adhering to the existing ineffective alternative has no more merit, in my opinion, than implementing a new theory based on solid evidence, but needing empirical support" (Seeger, 2010: 16).

3.1.3 The Three Stage Approach: Paterson (2011)

Paterson (2011) puts forward that there is no logical reason why new aspects of language require new methodologies; spoken grammar needs the kind of attention that more traditional areas, such as prescriptive standard grammar, have received. He believes that spoken grammar should better be taught explicitly and conventionally, and that

traditional exercise types such as transformational and discrimination exercises, conversations, role plays and simulations may add a measure of security to teaching. This view is reflected in the traditional exercise types which he proposes and a three stage approach to teaching spoken grammar which he describes with practical examples of heads, direct speech, spoken discourse markers and vague language.

STAGE 1: Invented dialogues showing meaning and grammar

Example: Heads

The teacher may begin by asking the students to compare the grammatical structure and function of a pair of sentences like the following ones:

- This DVD player, is it the cheapest in the shop?
- Is this DVD player the cheapest in the shop?

The students are encouraged to spot the extra word “it” in the first question, the function of the head “This DVD player” and the usefulness of breaking the question into two parts. Afterwards, a written or recorded dialogue such as the following one can be used, and the students can be asked to note or underline further examples.

Tom: What a mess! That red bag in the corner, is it yours?

Amy: Oh, no! Someone’s left it. The girl with glasses, do you know her name? I think it’s her

bag ...

Tom: I hope she didn’t have her keys in it.

Amy: Anyway, we’d better start clearing up. Those plates on the table, are they finished?

Tom: Yeah, they’re finished. I’ll take them.

Amy: And these cups, could you take them as well?

Tom: Let’s put all the re-cycling stuff in that box, shall we?

Amy: I might get in the box myself (...)

(Paterson, 2011: 6)

Answers:

1. *That red bag in the corner*, is it yours?
2. *The girl with glasses*, do you know her name?
3. *Those plates on the table*, are they finished?
4. *And these cups*, could you take them as well?

Further work on the grammatical structure of heads can be undertaken by asking the students to rewrite the answers in more conventional syntax, for example:

That red bag in the corner, is it yours? → *Is that red bag in the corner yours?*

or to fill the gaps in the sentences below with the co-referential pronouns: she/them/that/it, as in the following exercise (Paterson, 2011: 7).

1. The new French restaurant on Park Street, does (1) look good?
2. My new trainers, I can't find (2) anywhere.
3. My mum, (3) 's always shouting at me!
4. The house opposite the cinema, is (4) where you live?

Answers:

1. it
2. them
3. she
4. that

The students are likely to realise that they can separate the subject or object of a sentence and put it at the front, for instance:

SUBJECT: *Denise*, she's the person you need to speak to.

OBJECT: *Those two old computers*, Tom's sold them, you know.

The learners may also come to realise, at a more advanced level, that sometimes the head can be a relative clause or a prepositional phrase, as in:

- The people you work with are nice. → *The people you work with*, they are nice.
- Did the woman in the corner tell you her name? → *The woman in the corner*, did she tell you her name?

Example: Incorporating Direct Speech and Spoken Discourse Markers

The teacher could introduce the students to the dynamic use of conversational discourse markers and direct speech by asking them to examine a dialogue like the one below and try to answer the two questions:

- What do you notice about the way Joe and Anne “report” yesterday’s speech?
- What do you think is the function of the words in bold character?

[Joe and Anne are talking about things that their friends said to them yesterday.]

Joe: Then Steve said, I’m from America, and I said, but you haven’t got an American accent. So he said, **listen** we don’t all speak like Tom Cruise!

Anne: That’s interesting because Mike said there are six American exchange students in our class this year.

Joe: You spoke to Mike! I thought you didn’t like him any more.

Anne: I know, but he looked ill and I said, **hey** are you OK? And he went no, I’ve got a really bad cold. I said, you’d better go home then and go to bed.

Joe: Good advice. Anyway, did you manage to speak to Kate about going to the theatre?

Anne: Sure. She said, **oh** I can't come, I'm afraid. So I said **well** Joe's already got the tickets. She said, **look** I'm really sorry but my cousins are visiting.

Joe: Don't worry. We'll find someone else. Why don't we ask this new guy Steve?

(Paterson, 2011: 8)

Answers:

1. Joe and Anne have not changed the words they heard.
2. The words in bold have two functions and may not have been used by the original speakers. First, they can signal that someone is about to use the actual words spoken; thus, they act like speech marks (“ ”). Second, they give an impression of the speaker's attitude: in the context of this dialogue, “listen” suggests that Steve was somehow impatient when he spoke; “hey” suggests that Anne was surprised to see Mike looking ill; “oh” suggests that Kate sounded sorry or probably was surprised and had forgotten; “well” suggests that Anne was critical of Kate; “look” might suggest that Kate was, in some way, defensive about her behaviour.

STAGE 2: Controlled practice for giving students time to manipulate the new language forms

Example: Heads

One could use a transformational activity like the following one (Paterson, 2011: 9).

1. Is that blue scarf Peter's? (it)

→ *That blue scarf*, is it Peter's?

2. Does the big bookshop on Cambridge Street sell French books? (it)

→ The big

3. My little brother is always borrowing my clothes. (he)

→ My little

4. I bought these three new shirts for £5 each! (them)

→ These

5. Did the man who rang this morning give you his name? (he)

→ The man

Answers:

1. Already given as a demonstration, to make sure the students have grasped what to do before they start giving the answers.

2. The big bookshop on Cambridge Street, does **it** sell French books?

3. My little brother, **he**'s always borrowing my clothes.

4. These three new shirts, I bought **them** for £5 each!

5. The man who rang this morning, did **he** give you his name?

Example: Vague Language

If the teacher decides to teach the vague language set of “and things,” “and stuff,” “and everything” and “or something,” s/he could use a simple discrimination exercise of the following type (Paterson, 2011: 10).

Mel: Have a seat. Would you like a coffee *or something?* (1) (and everything / or something)

Jo: No thanks, I've just had one. Listen, have you heard the news about Paula? She left her flat and her job (2) (and everything / and things like that), and she's going to Australia to work as a tour guide!

Mel: Really? What about her fiancé and family (3)? (or something / and stuff)

Jo: Her fiancé's not here at the moment. He's working in Scotland (4) (or something / and things like that). Maybe he can get a job in Australia too.

Mel: I suppose so. But I'm sure she hasn't even e-mailed him (5) (or anything / or something) yet.

Jo: Her mum won't be happy. She plays tennis with Paula and they go shopping together (6)! (or something / and everything)

Answers:

1. Already given
2. and everything (preferred)
3. and stuff
4. or something
5. or anything
6. and everything

At this second stage, the dialogue used in Stage 1 can be gapped or jumbled and re-used. The students can also be asked to write dialogues of their own that incorporate certain spoken grammar aspects.

STAGE 3: Freer practice

In order to check the students' natural use of spoken grammar aspects, the teacher may set up a number of speaking activities such as dialogues. The learners are expected to interact more freely and employ certain aspects of spoken grammar. The ultimate aim is to spotlight and correct the inappropriate uses of spoken grammar aspects. Below is the fifteen-point list of spoken grammar aspects that Paterson (2011: 3-4) has selected from *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*, by Biber et al. (1999; cited in Paterson, 2011) and the *Cambridge Grammar of English*, by Carter and McCarthy (2006), for teaching purposes.

1. Demonstrative Pronoun Use in Spoken English

Example: A: **This** is nice, isn't it?

B: Yes, but they've put the tables too close together. I hate **that**.

2. Discourse Markers Introducing Direct Speech

Example: Then she said, **look** I'm going home. So I said, **OK**, are you taking a taxi?

3. Ellipsis

Example 1: A: **Want** to share a taxi?

B: I'd love **to**.

Example 2: A: **More** tea?

B: No, thanks.

4. Heads

Example: A: **The broken cups**, did you throw them away?

B: Sure.

5. Interjections

Example: A: **Wow**, that's great!

B: **Oh**, good. I thought you'd like it.

6. Linking Adverbials

Example: A: **Anyway**, I missed the bus.

B: Were you late, **then**?

7. Past Continuous for Reporting Speech

Example: Meg **was saying** she's sold her car.

8. Response Questions

Example: A: I rang the police last night.

B: **You did what?**

9. Response Words

Example: A: I'll see you at lunch, then.

B: *Fine. / Great.*

10. Spoken Discourse Markers

Example: A: *Right*, shall we start?

B: *OK.*

11. Stance Adverbials

Example: A: Have you *actually* got a ticket?

B: *Of course.*

12. Statements as Questions

Example: A: I've done all my e-mails.

B: *So you're ready to go?*

13. Tails

Example: A: It's cheap, *this jacket*.

B: But are you sure it's leather?

14. Vague Language

Example: A: Did you see that *thing* on Africa last night?

B: I did.

15. Vocative Use

Example: Mike: *Steve*, come and see this!

Steve: What is it, *Mike*?

Paterson (2011) argues that using such three stages in relatively short speaking skill courses or the speaking components of longer general courses can sensitise the students to

spoken grammar. He stresses that some students are more likely to continue to incorporate aspects into their linguistic repertoire.

Paterson's model is a reflection of the conventional Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) model described by Thornbury (1999). Presentation, reflected in Paterson's Stage 1, is the phase where learners are presented with the target grammatical structure(s) (such as heads) in decontextualised sentences or dialogues. The practice stage, Paterson's Stage 2, is aimed at achieving accuracy, in that it gives students more time to manipulate the grammatical element(s). The production stage, reflected in Paterson's Stage 3, has the ultimate aim of achieving fluency. This stage is complementary to Stage 2 since accuracy alone is not enough to ensure mastery of a SL/FL. At this stage, students have more freedom to practise the grammatical aspects, but this freedom does not suggest that there is no restructuring of learners' production. The teacher's intervention at this stage is more limited than it is at the first and second stages. This kind of organisation (Presentation → Practice → Production) is typical of many published ELT courses. It has a logic that is appealing both to teachers and learners. It also reflects the way that other skills, such as playing tennis or using a computer, are learned, i.e. knowledge becomes a skill through successive stages of practice. Moreover, this model allows the teacher to control the content and pace of the lesson, which, for new teachers in particular, helps them cope with the unpredictability of classroom atmosphere. It provides "a convenient template onto which any number of lessons can be mapped" (Thornbury, 1999: 128). The PPP paradigm, he notes, has been criticised because of some of the assumptions it makes about language and language teaching. It assumes, for example, that language is best learned gradually, one point of grammar at a time, and that the teacher, by choosing what point of grammar to focus on, can influence the process. Research suggests, however, that language acquisition is more complex, less linear and less amenable to teacher intervention. The PPP model also assumes that accuracy precedes fluency. However, he continues to argue, all

learners go through a long stage of making mistakes; meanwhile, they may be perfectly capable of conveying their intended meanings fluently. As in L1 learning, accuracy seems to be acquired relatively late: “a kind of fine-tuning of a system which is already up-and-running” (Thornbury, 1999: 129). Delaying communication until accuracy is achieved may be counter-productive. It seems that it is by means of communication, rather than preparation for communication, that the learner’s language system establishes itself and develops.

3.2 A Pedagogical Spoken Grammar Model: McCarthy and Carter (2002)

Having identified the key discrepancies between the traditional teaching of spoken English and the features of their spoken corpus, McCarthy and Carter (2002) have developed a model of spoken grammar to be integrated into speaking skill curricula.

3.2.1 Background of the Model

McCarthy and Carter (2002) acknowledge the inadequacy of the traditional standard, written-language-based approach to teaching spoken communication and specify that communicative approaches to the teaching of a SL or a FL have to include aspects of spoken grammar. In their own words:

Language pedagogy that claims to support the teaching and learning of speaking skills does itself a disservice if it ignores what [linguists] know about the spoken language. (...) There can be very faint hope for a natural spoken output on the part of language learners if the input is stubbornly rooted in models that owe their origin and shape to the written language (p. 51).

The model they suggest incorporates instruction of spoken grammar into a curriculum designed to develop learners’ speaking skill which is essential for communicating in real life. They argue that if learners are to operate flexibly and more naturally in a wider variety of spoken and written contexts, they need to be equipped with more grammatical choices,

i.e. be taught the structures of spoken grammar alongside the structures of written (standard) grammar. They state that:

[e]ven much corpus-based grammatical insight (for example, the otherwise excellent early products of the University of Birmingham COBUILD corpus project) has been heavily biased toward evidence gleaned from written sources. Therefore, we believe it is timely to consider some of the insights a spoken corpus can offer, and to attempt to relate them more globally to the overall problem of designing a pedagogical spoken grammar. We do this in the form of 10 principles that might inform any spoken grammar project, and which, we feel, give us a distinct purchase on this relatively recent area of pedagogical interest (McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 51-2).

They explain that the perception of the functions of particular structures, unrestricted by Standard English rules, enables speakers to make choices between the aspects of standard grammar and those of spoken grammar. Such perception also influences the relationship between interlocutors by making it rather formal through the use of standard grammar aspects, or interpersonal and interactive through the use of spoken grammar aspects. In other words, the aspects of spoken grammar, they claim, enable a greater degree of interpersonal and interactive language uses, uses of a language which are in harmony with the goals of most communicative language teaching (CLT) projects. Moreover, McCarthy and Carter (2002) note that such interpersonal meanings that only spoken grammar can convey are worthwhile and very suited to the nature of the conversational process which is interactive, most often interpersonal and takes place in real time, with no time for detailed planning. The conversational process suggests that the grammar of spoken language differs in many ways from the grammar of written (standard) language. For this reason, they argue, teaching standard grammar only does not ensure an efficient preparation of learners for speaking. Although in public conception spoken language “corrupts” grammar, students need to be made aware of the point that what is commonly thought of as “irregularities” or “ungrammatical” aspects are licensed and naturally-occurring structures

which can be used in spoken English, provided that the setting is not formal, such as an interview with someone in authority, an academic presentation or a formal speech.

McCarthy and Carter (2002) recommend an **I-I-I** approach to teaching spoken grammar. **Illustration** refers to examining, wherever possible, real data which is presented in terms of choices of aspects relative to context and use. In the **interaction** stage, students are involved in discourse-sensitive activities which focus on the interpersonal uses of language and the negotiation of meanings. Such activities are designed to raise students' awareness of these interpersonal, interactive properties through observation and class discussion. **Induction** takes the awareness-raising a stage further by encouraging learners to draw conclusions about the interpersonal functions of different grammatical options and to develop a capacity for noticing such aspects as they move through the different stages of language learning. McCarthy and Carter (2002) believe that an inductive approach, such as the I-I-I approach, is more fruitful than the PPP approach adopted in most traditional grammar books. Traditional approaches do not aim at raising awareness, and thus need to be re-assessed. They suggest that the PPP approach needs to be extended to include procedures which involve students in higher awareness of the nature of spoken and written distinctions and a range of grammatical choices across and between these modes. In their point of view, if the three procedures (illustration, interaction and induction) are developed in tandem with a syllabus in which the language presented is not wholly constructed on sentence-based decontextualised examples, teaching spoken language using the I-I-I approach is likely to result in a more effective acquisition of fluent, accurate and natural conversational skills. Although McCarthy and Carter propose that the I-I-I approach should replace the PPP one, they do not claim this to be a final approach.

3.2.2 Model of Spoken Grammar

Based on their analysis of a large corpus of spoken data, and in response to the question “What makes the grammar of a language a spoken grammar?”, McCarthy and Carter (2002) have put forward a model of spoken grammar based on ten criteria: “the basic unit,” “phrasal complexity,” “interpersonal and textual meaning of tense, aspect and voice,” “position of clause elements,” “clause complexes,” “unpleasing anomalies,” “larger sequences,” “the comparative criterion,” “metalanguage,” and “native and non-native users.” This model integrates spoken grammar teaching into speaking skill syllabi. They declare that their ten criteria may not be the only possible ones and invite other discourse analysts and teachers to add their own eleventh or twelfth criterion. Hinkel and Fotos (2002) emphasise that the ten criteria developed by McCarthy and Carter represent a foundation for designing grammar speaking curricula in ESL and EFL alike. Each of the ten criteria, McCarthy and Carter (2002) note, are exemplified with extracts from the CANCODE spoken corpus. The corpus tape recordings were made in a variety of settings including private homes, shops, educational institutions (although informal settings), offices and other public places across the islands of Britain and Ireland.

3.2.2.1 The Basic Unit

McCarthy and Carter (2002) point out that examination of conversational transcripts raises the problem of the frequent occurrence of units that do not conform to the notion of well-formed “sentences” with “main” and “subordinate” clauses. Conversational turns often consist only of phrases (fragments), incomplete clauses or clauses that look like subordinate clauses, but which seem not to be attached to any main clause. Hockett (1986; cited in McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 52) makes the point that while discourse analysts have long ignored such phenomena, “speakers and hearers do not ignore them,” but rather use them very frequently in their speech. Such units “carry a sizeable share of the

communicative load.” The following example shows some of the kinds of units frequently encountered in a spoken corpus. The aspects considered by traditional, proscriptive grammar (standard grammar) as “problematic” are written in bold or italic characters.

Example (McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 52-3)

[Speakers are sitting at the dinner table talking about a car accident that happened to the father of one of the speakers.]

Speaker 1: I'll just take that off. **Take that off.**

Speaker 2: **All looks great.**

Speaker 3: [laughs]

Speaker 2: Mm.

Speaker 3: Mm.

Speaker 2: I think your dad was amazed, wasn't he at the damage?

Speaker 4: Mm.

Speaker 2: It's not so much the parts. It's the labour charges for...

Speaker 4: **Oh that. For a car.**

Speaker 2: Have you got hold of it?

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 2: **It was a bit erm...**

Speaker 1: Mm.

Speaker 3: Mm.

Speaker 2: **A bit.**

Speaker 3: That's right.

Speaker 2: I mean they said they'd have to take his car in for two days. And he says All it is straightening a panel. **And they're like**, 'Oh no, it's all new panel. You can't do this'.

Speaker 3: **Any erm problem.**

Speaker 2: **As soon as they hear insurance claim.** Oh, let's get it right.

Speaker 3: Yeah, yeah. **Anything to do with...**

Speaker 1: ^L **Yow.** (The symbol “^L” indicates interruption by the other speaker.)

Speaker 3: L **coach work is er ...**

Speaker 1: L Right.

Speaker 3: L **fatal, isn't it?**

Speaker 1: Now.

In this example, McCarthy and Carter (2002) have observed the following phenomena:

- Indeterminate structures (Is the second “*Take that off*” an ellipted form of “*I’ll just take that off*”? Is it an imperative? Is “*All looks great*” well formed? What is the status of “*And they’re like*”?);
- Phrasal utterances, communicatively complete in themselves (“*Oh that.*”, “*For a car.*” and “*Any problem.*”), but not sentences in the traditional sense: Subject + Verb + Object;
- Aborted or incomplete structures (“*It was a bit erm ... A bit.*”);
- “Subordinate” clauses, not obviously connected to any particular main clause (“*As soon as they hear insurance claim.*”);
- Interrupted structures with the other speaker’s contributions (“*Anything to do with ... coach work is er ... fatal isn't it?*”); and
- Words of unclear grammatical class (“*Yow*”).

A more complex question arises with joint-production grammatical units, i.e. units which are complete only when a second participant adds his/her contribution, as in the following example taken from McCarthy and Carter (2002: 54).

[Customer and a waiter in a restaurant]

Customer: Yeah. *Let's just have er...*

Waiter: *Some rice?*

Customer: Yeah.

McCarthy and Carter (2002) report that naturally-occurring phenomena such as the ones listed above raise questions about the nature of basic units and classes in spoken grammar. The solution, they suggest, seems to be to raise the status of the word, phrase and clause to the status of the independent unit (sentence). There is also a need for recognising the potential of joint-production units and downplaying the status of the sentence as the main target unit for communication. However, the fact that well-formed sentences exist side by side with a variety of other types of spoken grammar units (such as joint-production units, ellipsis and incomplete structures) raises further questions: what status does the traditional notion “Subject-Verb-Object clause” have in English conversational data? Are the “ellipted” utterances of conversation (such as “*Any erm problem?*” and “*Take that off*” in the first example, and “*Some rice?*” in the second example) just reduced and partial forms of the “real” grammar, or are the well-formed sentences of written texts elaborated versions of the economical spoken structures? Are they elaborated because they have less contextual support in writing, and thus must necessarily increase the amount of redundancy? McCarthy and Carter (2002) state that there are no simple answers to these questions, but one’s stance toward them can have major implications for what is considered as correct or acceptable and adequate in pedagogical grammar. If one accepts the integrity of such non-standard units in spoken grammar, the latter is likely to incorporate and accept them as “adequately formed” structures. They explain that the phrase “adequately formed” is preferable to “well formed” which has connotations of native-speaker intuition. When native speakers are asked to judge the grammaticality of decontextualised structures, they tend to say whether they are grammatical or ungrammatical according to written standards, the rules dictated by standard grammar. Corpus evidence is different from intuitive judgments: “[corpus evidence] is not ‘in there’ (internal, in the grammarian’s or informant’s head); rather, it is ‘out there’ (external, recorded as used and preferably supported by widespread occurrences across a number of

speakers)” (McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 55). External evidence points linguists and grammarians toward a socially embedded kind of grammar (spoken grammar), one with criteria for acceptability based on adequate communicability in real contexts and by real participants. It is evidence that cannot simply be dismissed as “ungrammatical.”

3.2.2.2 Phrasal Complexity

Pedagogical grammar generally describes the full structural complexity of any given unit, but, McCarthy and Carter (2002) argue, significant differences may exist in the distribution of certain elements in actual discourse. The noun phrase is a good case in point. Although in English there is considerable potential for accumulating adjectives and noun modifiers before the head noun, this rarely happens in everyday conversational data. If we take the noun “house” in headword position, for example, we find 1.379 occurrences of it in a 2.5-million-word sample of the CANCODE corpus.

Example (McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 55)

Speaker 1: Yeah it’s *a big house*, six bedrooms.

Speaker 2: It’s *a large house*, lovely, just right.

In this example, where attributive adjectives occur, there is an overwhelming preference for simple “determiner + one adjective + noun” configurations. The longest adjectival structure that can occur with “house” is “*detached four-bedroomed house*.” Further specification of the house is given in post-head appositional items (*six bedrooms and just right*). In a mixed written corpus sample of the same number of words, it is not difficult to find more complex adjectival configurations such as the following ones.

– Living in *a big, dirty communal house* eating rubbish... (*The Guardian*, October 13, 1991; cited

in McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 55)

– The *cozy lace-curtained* house... (*The Observer*, March 22, 1992; cited in McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 55)

These examples show that a speaker may create a structurally complex noun phrase in ordinary conversation, but s/he would probably sound at best formal and at worst pedantic and bookish. Therefore, it is highly important to recognise the difference between what “can be said” in a FL and what “is routinely said.” However, McCarthy and Carter (2002) explain, if one labels structures as “said” or “not said,” they may run the risk of returning to old days of behaviourism, describing behaviour rather than the system of language that users employ. A partial solution, they suggest, lies in how one defines grammar. A useful distinction could be made between “deterministic grammar” and “probabilistic grammar.” Deterministic grammar “addresses structural prescription” (McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 56); for example, the past-tense morpheme in English is *-ed*, rather than *-ing*, and the article “the” precedes the noun, rather than follows it. Probabilistic grammar, on the other hand, “considers what forms are most likely to be used in particular contexts, and the probabilities may be strong or weak” (McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 56). Halliday (1961: 259) sees the basic nature of language as probabilistic, and not as “always this and never that.” Itkonen (1980) distinguishes between “correct sentences” and “factually uttered sentences” and maintains that probabilistic grammar needs real data to support its statements of probability. Probabilistic grammar also needs analytical evaluation to understand well the form-function relationships in particular contexts, from which usable probabilistic statements can be constructed. McCarthy and Carter (2002) note that the issue of phrasal complexity and its different distribution in data is rather subject to the principles of probabilistic grammar, not deterministic grammar.

3.2.2.3 Interpersonal and Textual Meaning of Tense, Aspect and Voice

Linguists have long recognised the different distributions of tense and aspect forms in written and spoken data. McCarthy and Carter (2002) explain that the fact that conversations are face-to-face (or at least, in the case of phone conversations, occurring in real time with a real listener) affects grammatical choices that construct and reflect the participants' interpersonal relationships. One major feature of the real speaker-listener relationship is indirectness. Brown and Levinson (1987) consider the latter as a politeness strategy that minimises imposition and "threat to face." McCarthy and Carter (2002) argue that such a strategy (indirectness) often manifests itself in tense and aspect choices that have traditionally been proscribed in pedagogical grammar, such as the use of the present progressive form with verbs considered to be unamenable to progressive contexts: "want," "like" and "have to." Progressive forms of these verbs may indeed be rare or non-existent in written data, but are not rare in spoken data, as illustrated in the following examples where the speakers seem to be adopting an indirect or a non-assertive stance.

Example 1 (McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 58)

[A telephone inquiry to a travel agent]

Customer: Oh, hello, my husband and I **are wanting** to go to the Hook of Holland next weekend.

Example 2 (McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 58)

[Speakers in a business meeting]

Speaker 1: So, all of that. You see, when you devolve power as they did with the divisional structures, just all went off and did their own thing. And unfortunately, we're **having to** sort of come back from that and say, well is that the most cost effective, because we've got to cut our costs.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Another illustrative example of how spoken grammar reflects a range of tense and aspect choices open to speakers in order to create appropriate interpersonal meanings is “will / be going to.” McCarthy and Carter (1995) report that conversational descriptions of “*will / be going to*” often concentrate on the temporal semantics of future actions rooted in the present (*be going to*, as in “*I’m going to* sell that car”), as opposed to future actions detached from the present (*will*, as in “Next Wednesday *will* be the last lesson”). Alternatively, textbooks (such as Murphy’s *English Grammar in Use*, 1985; cited in McCarthy and Carter, 1995) usually concentrate on speech acts such as expressing “intention” (*be going to*) and “moment of decision” (*will*). In real spoken data, however, McCarthy and Carter (1995) argue, the picture is more complex, and the choice often seems to rest more on interpersonal stance than any of the considerations mentioned above. The following examples highlight the difficulty of applying the norms of written-language-based (standard) grammar to conversational exchanges.

Example 1 (McCarthy and Carter, 1995: 213)

– [The hostess is late in the evening at a party in her house.]

Hostess: [Yawns] Oh dear, **I’m going to** have to go to bed soon.

Example 2 (McCarthy and Carter, 1995: 213)

– [Emily and her friend are having lunch in a restaurant.]

Emily: [To her friend] **I’m going to** have the deep-fried mushrooms, you like mushrooms, don’t you?

[A couple of minutes later]

Emily: [To the waiter] **I’ll** have the deep-fried mushrooms with, erm, an old time burger, can I have cheese on it?

McCarthy and Carter (1995) explain that in the first previous example, evoking the notion of “intention” would not make much sense, nor would the notion of “moment of decision” if the speaker (the hostess) said “*will*” instead (which would have been very acceptable). The function of “*be going to*,” in this example, seems to do with indirectness or politeness to the speaker’s guests, stressing interpersonal and interactive implications. Similarly, in the second previous example, the notion of “moment of decision” seems to be misleading for the use of “*will*” since it is very clear that the speaker (Emily) has already definitely decided what she is going to order when she says: “I’m going to have the deep-fried mushrooms.” “*Be going to*” should be regarded as the verb of “personal engagement” on behalf of the speaker, while “*will*” is a more neutral and detached verb which is more suitable when addressing a waiter, for instance, rather than a friend. If the speaker (Emily) had softened and personalised her speech with her friend by using “I think,” the form “*will*” would have been a very good choice (“**I think I’ll** have, ...”). This interpretation explains why in the following example, given by McCarthy and Carter (1995: 213), “*will*” is used instead of “*be going to*.”

A: Before you get to Skipton now they’ve made a branch road.

B: Oh have they?

A: You **won’t** know it.

Although “You *aren’t going to* know it” is possible, it would sound very tentative and indirect on the part of Speaker A. Instead, the latter communicates very directly and assertively that Speaker B does not know it and does not need to know it. This interpersonal explanation, McCarthy and Carter (1995) add, also fits well with shifts in verb choice in informal radio and TV weather forecasts, where forecast tellers may turn neutral predictions into interpersonal evaluations, as the following examples (McCarthy and Carter, 1995: 214) illustrate.

- Temperatures **will** be below freezing, and it's **going to** be icy on those country roads, so do take care if you're driving...
- With the westerly winds, those showers **are going to** march eastwards...

The meanings created by tense and aspect choices may also be textually oriented, as argued by McCarthy and Carter (2002). Such is often the case in oral narratives, in which speakers exercise considerable freedom in tense and aspect choice for the dramatisation of events or their foregrounding and backgrounding. This does not imply that written narratives do not exercise freedom with tense and aspect choices, but, once again, the distribution of such choices is different in the written and spoken modes. In addition, the variation and rate of change from one form to another tends to be more intense in spoken narratives.

Example (McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 59)

[Speaker 1 is telling a story about how difficult it was to buy his favourite ice-cream, called “Magnum,” in a small, provincial English town.]

Speaker 1: So we're **looking** in there and we **can't find** any Magnums, so we **turn round** and he actually **interrupts** his phone call to say ‘You know what you're looking for!’ and we **said** ‘Have you got any Magnums?’

Speaker 2: Mm.

Speaker 1: And he sort of **shook** his head in a way as to say ‘No, you know we don't get such things.’ It **was** a complete rejection.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 1: And we, we a sort of **took** a step back from the thing, and there it **was labeled** Magnum.

Such variation between the past simple and the so-called historic present is not random, but coincides with important segments of the narrative, where listeners are taken in and out of

the story-world in real time, as if they were participating in the drama themselves. Once again, McCarthy and Carter (2002) assert, real spoken data draws linguists' and teachers' attention from considerations of the semantics of time frame and aspect to textual and interactive interpretations of verb-form choice.

Like tense and aspect, voice is very subtle and varied in the grammar of conversation. According to McCarthy and Carter (2002), in conversations there is a natural focus on the core *be*-passive (*The work was done well*), in contrast to the active voice (*You did the work well*). However, when looking at a large amount of conversational data, it can be noticed that the *get*-passive, much more frequent in spoken data than written data, adds a further layer of choice. McCarthy (1998) indicates that much attention has been devoted to the typical absence of explicit human agents in *get*-passive sentences as well as the interchangeability of *get*- and *be*-passives. The *get*-passive has been observed to coincide immensely with the absence of an explicit human agent, in that out of the 139 examples from the CANCODE corpus, 130 have no human agent explicitly stated. The emphasis is on the person or thing experiencing the process encoded in the verb phrase, rather than its cause or agent. He recommends that this point is highly useful for teaching. Such kind of points about the *get*-passive is different from that of structural prescription; for example, *the passive is formed with the past participle, not the base form of the verb*. Among the examples which do have stated agents are the following ones (McCarthy, 1998: 83).

- Most things got written up by *scribes*.
- The whole bus got stripped by *the Italian police*.
- He got sued by *the owners*.
- You get intimidated by *the staff* on the labour ward.
- She's going to get eaten by *the wolf*.

These agents (the italicised words), he explains, are somehow impersonal, in the sense that they do not refer to a specific person, or, in the case of the wolf (last example), non-human. The other point highlighted by McCarthy (1998) is that the debate about the interchangeability of *get-* and *be-*passives has directed attention towards the potential of “get” for focusing simultaneously on actions and their final results. Other considerations that have come into play are whether *get*-passives correspond to contexts where usually bad fortune plays a role in the event; for instance, “*He got killed*” and “*It got burnt*”. He points out that *get*-passives avoid satisfactory description (89 % of occurrences). The CANCODE corpus, he demonstrates, contains 139 *get*-passives, from which a very consistent pattern emerges: of the 139 examples, 124 refer to an “adversative” context (i.e. a state of affairs that is signalled by the conversational participants as undesirable, or at the very least, problematic). The 124 examples include verb phrases such as *got locked in/out*, *didn’t get paid*, *got killed*, *got flung about in the car*, *got sued*, *got burgled*, *got picked on*, *get criticized*, *get beaten*, *got lumbered* and *get intimidated* (McCarthy, 1998: 83). However, he highlights, in a number of the “adversative” (problematic) cases, there are circumstances that are not inherently “adversative” or undesirable.

Example 1 (McCarthy, 1998: 84)

[A customer in a village shop has just realised that the shop-keeper has remembered a neighbour’s fish order, but forgotten her order of fish for her cat. She addresses the neighbour humorously:]

Speaker: So **you got remembered** and our cat got forgotten.

Example 2 (McCarthy, 1998: 84)

[Students talking about an upcoming hectic social time-table]

Speaker 1: **I’ve got invited to the school ball** as well.

Speaker 2: Are you?

Speaker 3: Don't really fancy it.

McCarthy (1998) explains that it is the speaker's stance towards the situation that signals it as undesirable or problematic, rather than the situation in itself. In the first example, for instance, although the situation is clearly beneficial for the neighbour whose fish order was not forgotten, the speaker sees it as part of her own misfortune. Similarly, in the second example, despite the fact that Speaker 1 was invited to the school ball, he considers this situation as undesirable because his classmate (Speaker 3) was not invited. In one of the relatively few occasions, as in the following example, where the context is clearly beneficial rather than "adversative," it can still be seen through the use of the *get*-passive that the speaker overlays, in this case suggesting a downplaying of self-praise when reporting success.

Example (McCarthy, 1998: 85)

[The speakers are talking about Speaker 2's past successes as a tennis player.]

Speaker 1: And were those like junior matches or tournaments or country matches?

Speaker 2: Er, both country and er, well I played country championships and lost in the finals the first year and er **I got picked for the country** for that, and then so I played country matches pretty much the same time.

Speaker 3: Right, good.

Sussex (1982) stresses that discourse analysts and linguists have to be careful not to run the risk of over-simplifying the adversative / beneficial dichotomy discussed above. McCarthy (1998) suggests that the key to understanding the *get*-passive is to recognise that it reflects the stance of the speaker, rather than the content of the message. This type of passive is an outstanding case where discarding spoken sentences as "ungrammatical" is inadequate. He states that the *get*-passive "might indeed be a linguistic puzzle, but it is considerably [less

complicated] the moment we look upon it as [not a mere content of a message, but as] something the speaker overlays onto events to reflect his/her stance towards those events” (McCarthy, 1998: 85).

McCarthy and Carter (2002) cast light on the point that *be-* and *get-* passives form only two points on a scale of passiveness that involves other *get-* and *have-* constructions in a variety of configurations of agent and recipient roles.

Examples 1 – 5 (McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 60)

1. You see, if ever you *get yourself locked out* ...
2. Rian *got his nose pierced*, and it was so gross.
3. The tape seems to have *got stuck* ...
4. When the police came, they called a local garage and *had two recovery vehicles free my car*.
5. Our next-door neighbor’s house was broken into again, and he *had a few things stolen*.

They explain that, not only do the previous five examples reflect bad fortune or display different syntactic patterns (such as reflexive and non-reflexive objects and the presence or absence of infinitive “to”), but also display different nuances of representation: Examples 1 and 2 suggest some responsibility on the part of the recipients, Example 3 suggests indetermination between an event and a state, and Examples 4 and 5 suggest a difference in terms of volition. Spoken grammar devotes detailed attention to such complex phenomena which seem to be downplayed by written (standard) grammar.

The point to be made about spoken grammar in relation to tense, aspect and voice is that a wide range of grammatical functions is available to speakers to create and reinforce relationships and to involve or detach their listeners. The verb-phrase morphology (tense, aspect and voice) plays a key role in signalling these functions; therefore, McCarthy and

Carter (2002) recommend, it would be a disservice to learners if they are restricted by proscriptive, incomplete rules of tense, aspect and voice which are based only on written data.

3.2.2.4 Position of Clause Elements

McCarthy and Carter (2002) indicate that pedagogical grammar looks for the most effective guidelines for the user, and rules about the positions of clause elements are extremely useful. The positions of adverbials are one such area where recurrent errors by learners are marked and warned against. Although standard grammar stresses the flexibility of adverbial positioning in the clause, it gives the basic positions as final, initial and medial (between the subject and verb). Eastwood (1994; cited in McCarthy and Carter, 2002) warns against incorrect placement of adverbials between the verb and direct object; for instance, *She speaks very well English*. However, McCarthy and Carter (2002) clarify, in spoken and certain written registers, most notably journalism, this “rule” is regularly contradicted.

Example (BBC Radio 4 news, 3.8.98; cited in McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 61)

Mr. [name] said he will fight *vigorously* attempts to extradite him to Britain.

Moreover, McCarthy and Carter (2002) explain that in English conversation, there is evidence that positioning is even more flexible due to the exigencies of real-time synthesising. For instance, adverbs, as in the first and second following examples, and adverbials which may occur after question tags, as in the third example, are not normally considered amenable to final placement in written texts, but regularly occur at the end of the clause in conversations.

Examples 1 – 3 (McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 61)

1. I was worried I was going to lose it and I did, *almost*.

2. You know which one I mean, *probably*.
3. Spanish is more widely used, isn't it, *outside of Europe*?

Ordering of elements in the clause is also likely to be different in spoken and written texts because of the real-time constraints of unrehearsed spoken language and the need for clear acts of topicalisation to orientate appropriately the listener. It is not surprising, therefore, to find phenomena such as fronted objects much more frequent in conversations than written texts, as well as emphatic placement of adverbials in first position (McCarthy and Carter, 2002).

Example 1 (McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 61)

Those pipes, he said he's already disconnected; *the others*, he's going to disconnect.

Example 2 (McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 61)

The eighteenth, it starts.

Even more notable in spoken data are the occasions when content matter is placed outside the core clausal positions, in the form of what have traditionally been determined as “left-” and “right-displaced” or “left-” and “right-dislocated” elements, or what is preferably termed “pre-posed” and “post-posed” items, or “heads” and “tails.” McCarthy and Carter (2002) go on to argue that although the “left-dislocated” elements (heads), shown in the following examples, are most typically single noun phrases, they can fulfill a variety of functions outside the conversational clause structure (see Chapter Two, Sub-section 2.2.2.2 Heads, p. 78).

Examples 1 – 5 (McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 61-62)

1. *Paul*, in this job that he's got now, when he goes into the office he's never quite sure where he's going to be sent.

2. *A friend of mine*, his uncle had the taxi firm when we had the wedding.
3. *His cousin in Beccles, her boyfriend*, his parents bought him a Ford Escort for his birthday.
4. I mean typically, *an American*, you shake hands with an American, tell them your name and immediately they'll start using it.
5. Well, *this little story I was going to tell you about*, I was on holiday with an elderly friend of mine in Butlins, Barry Island, South Wales, as you know, and she asked me ...

When examining conversational clause elements, a further linguistic aspect, tails, can be noticed.

Example 1 (McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 62)

And he's quite a comic, *the fellow*, you know.

Example 2 (McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 62)

[Talking about someone who has just had the disease shingles]

It can leave you feeling very weak, it can, though, apparently, *shingles*, can't it?

In these examples, noun phrase content is left until the end. Why should this be so? Aijmer (1989; cited in McCarthy and Carter, 2002) explains that such post-posed elements (tails) have a strong evaluative function and usually occur in contexts where speakers are expressing judgments, opinions and stance (see Chapter Two, Sub-section 2.2.2.3 Tails, p. 82). Therefore, it would be wrong, McCarthy and Carter (2002) argue, to dismiss such patterns as “performance defects” or “afterthoughts.” Learners of English can use these post-posed items if they want to sound more casual, or can learn about them to improve their understanding of natural conversation. The naturalness of “left-” and “right-dislocated” phenomena (heads and tails) is highly appreciated in everyday talk. These elements pass without notice; conversational participants do not consider them wrong or

“aberrant” although they “do not correctly fit,” according to the rules of standard grammar, into the conversational bounds of the clause. Hence, the use of terminology such as “dislocation,” McCarthy and Carter (2002) note, is an issue to be tackled later, in Sub-section 3.2.2.9 Metalanguage, p. 150.

The criterion for spoken grammar which McCarthy and Carter (2002) stress at this point reveals that the aspects which occur in “unusual” word order and the ones that “do not correctly fit” into the conversational clause structure, as judged by standard grammar norms, should be given proper attention because they play key textual roles in conversations. They add that the fact that such aspects are not peculiar to English and may well be universal should not tempt grammarians and teachers to assume that they can simply be automatically assimilated by learners. The latter may need to be made explicitly aware that such patterns are admissible and very natural in a SL or FL. Exposure to written data alone or absence of reference to such aspects in pedagogical grammar can only reinforce the wrong assumption that these elements are “aberrations” or “irregularities.”

3.2.2.5 Clause Complexes

In the discussion of the first criterion (3.2.2.1 The Basic Unit, p. 126), the problem of units of description has been raised, and the issue of subordination has been mentioned. McCarthy and Carter (2002) state that it is often difficult to assign to a clause the label “subordinate;” this is particularly so with what are conventionally termed “non-restrictive *which*-clauses.” In a study of a corpus of British and American spoken texts, Tao and McCarthy (1998; cited in McCarthy and Carter, 2002) have found that the majority of such clauses have an evaluative function (expressing opinions and judgments) and occur after a pause or feedback from a listener.

Example 1 (Tao and McCarthy, 1998; cited in McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 63)

I can’t angle it to shine on the music stand, and the bulb’s gone, *which doesn’t help.*

Example 2 (Tao and McCarthy, 1998; cited in McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 63)

Speaker 1: Well actually one person has applied.

Speaker 2: Mm.

Speaker 1: *Which is great.*

In both cases, McCarthy and Carter (2002) explain, the *which*-clause seems to be like a second main clause (“which” could be substituted by “and that” in both cases, with no loss of meaning, to produce “main” clauses). Native speakers sometimes seem to recognise this fact; this is why main-subordinate “blends” occur.

Example (McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 64)

Speaker 1: Nearly a hundred quid a week. But that’s the average there, you know.

Speaker 2: Mm.

Speaker 1: *Which it’s all relative, I suppose.*

They cast light on the point that in spoken language, clause complexes need re-assessment in terms of what is to be considered “main” and what “subordinate.” According to Schleppegrell (1992), this principle applies, not only to *which*-clauses, but also most notably to clauses introduced by “*because*” (as in “*Because they’re somehow different, I think.*”), where the same indetermination between what is a “main” clause and what “subordinate” occurs.

McCarthy and Carter (2002) further note that other types of clause complexes are rare in everyday conversation, even though they might be evident in written texts. This applies to several types of combinations of main and non-finite subordinate clauses, such as the ones in the following examples.

Example 1 (Cambridge International Corpus; cited in McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 64)

Both airports were clearly identified as to country, *it being* explicitly stated that Airport x lacked both radio and tower.

Example 2 (*The Observer*, November, 26, 1992; cited in McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 64)

First *staged* at the Glasgow Citizens in 1994, and *described* by Williams as being a “comedy of death,” the play sees Everett cast brilliantly against type as the rich dying widow Flora Goforth.

These examples show that, once again, corpus evidence strongly argues for a re-examination of the types of clause complexes found in spoken and written language as well as the need for reconsidering the frequently employed labels “main” and “subordinate” clauses (McCarthy and Carter, 2002).

3.2.2.6 Unpleasing Anomalies

“Unpleasing anomalies,” McCarthy and Carter (2002) explain, refer to the fact that in examining everyday spoken data, researchers often encounter aspects that go against either their own notions of acceptability or general feelings among educated users of the language. Occasionally, irregularities do occur in spoken performance, but there is a difference between unsystematic “oddities” and recurrent, patterned usage distributed across a wide range of native speakers of the TL and contexts in a corpus designed to reflect a broad demographic and social spectrum as the CANCODE corpus is. When such patterns become very recurrent that they cannot be simply ignored, they have to be assimilated into the grammar of the language. McCarthy and Carter (2002) have already mentioned *which*-clause blends that do not conform to the standard grammar rule of non-reduplication of the subject, as in the third example seen in the previous sub-section (*Which it's all relative, I suppose*). Even more widespread are utterances that contain

double negatives. The latter, usually occurring in clauses that state comments, are very natural and common in the speech of almost all social and regional groups.

Examples 1 (McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 65)

It should fit there, 'cos it's *not* that big, I *don't* think.

Examples 2 (McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 65)

Speaker 1: We probably won't see much wildlife.

Speaker 2: *Not* without binoculars, we *won't*.

McCarthy and Carter (2002) highlight a further kind of anomalies that recurs in the corpus across a wide range of speakers: conditional clause complexes. These patterns challenge the standard grammar rule that excludes the modal verb “*have*” from the conditional clause.

Example (McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 65)

If I'd *have stopped*, I probably would have wondered what she was going to say. (instead of “*If I had stopped ...*”)

In spoken grammar, anomalies or “irregularities” that may go against the grammarian's instincts concerning correctness or acceptability should first be checked as to their distribution across speakers and contexts. McCarthy and Carter (2002) argue that when a sufficient number of examples from different native speakers of the language, in different contexts, suggest that an aspect is normal and widespread, this aspect should be incorporated into the grammar, even though it may still be deemed unacceptable in more formal spoken contexts or writing.

3.2.2.7 Larger Sequences

It is only by observing actual pieces of discourse, both spoken and written, that one can properly describe the distribution of grammatical forms in the spoken and written modes. Distinguishing the key aspects of written and spoken contexts is crucial to the understanding of their widely different distributions of grammatical patterns and meanings. It is also crucial to the prioritising of those forms and meanings in teaching (McCarthy and Carter, 2002). In a recent study, McCarthy (1998; cited in McCarthy and Carter, 2002) looked at grammatical patterns spanning several sentences or whole paragraphs in written texts and several utterances in spoken texts. Based on earlier research, such as that of Zydattiss (1986; cited in McCarthy and Carter, 2002) and Celce-Murcia (1991; cited in McCarthy and Carter, 2002), McCarthy's work examined how sequential patterns of tense and aspect varied between spoken and written texts. In some cases, such as the following example, the patterns were found the same in both modes, as with the "*used to-plus-would*" sequence, where, in both written and spoken texts, initial "used to" provides a contextual frame for the interpretation of subsequent uses of "would" as "past habitual."

Example (McCarthy, 1998; cited in McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 66)

[Speakers 1 and 2 are describing how they took part in a customer survey that involved a remote computer automatically ringing their home telephone to collect data in the middle of the night.]

Speaker 1: They *used to*, you know, ring up early hours of the morning, well you *would*, the phone *wouldn't* ring, they'*d* ring that computer.

Speaker 2: And they'*d* read it.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 2: And it'*d* go through the phone.

In some other cases, however, it has been found that certain grammar forms are commonly and particularly used in one mode, but not in the other. For example, the future pattern “be to” (as in *You **are to be** at the airport at eight-thirty*) is typical to literary texts, as McCarthy (1998) notes, and is, thus, extremely rare in everyday conversation, excluding formal contexts such as meetings. Many teachers tend to teach sentences such as the above italicised one, where “be to” denotes a firm fact about the future. Yet, in reality, this structure is very rare in everyday spoken language and has no significant place in a speaking-skill grammar course. He reports that in one million words of CANCODE data, only four examples of future “be to” occur, one in a university small tutorial group (Example 1) and three, one of which is repeated, in semi-formal meetings (Example 2).

Example 1 (McCarthy, 1998: 78)

[A tutor speaking in a university seminar about “Pride and Prejudice”]

... And there’s also of course the famous first sentence of *Pride and Prejudice* from which this section has received its name “It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.” That this statement is meant to have ironic qualification shown both by the rotundity of the diction and by contrast with what is said in the following sentence that the concern **is to be** not for the universe but with the neighbourhood, not with the totality of mankind but with the surrounding families. Em that’s all it says about that bit.

Example 2 (McCarthy, 1998: 79)

[A semi-formal business meeting]

Speaker 1: Oh no oh right well no but it’s taken two months to do that.

Speaker 2: Rob **is to** look at it and Ann Pascoe **to** look at it and formal comments **to be** collated and sent back to David.

Speaker 3: And one month for that.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 3: I think that's safest.

McCarthy (1998) reveals the reason for the rarity of this aspect by reporting that “be to,” in its future meaning, is a distancing form suggesting external and impersonal authority that may appear pompous or face-threatening in face-to-face speech. In the latter, speakers usually prefer to realise the same meanings with “softer” expressions such as “supposed to” or “going to.” It is not surprising, thus, that the future “be to” form is found only in a meeting and a tutorial where “authority” and “distancing” characterise the genres. In many written contexts, on the other hand, authoritative statements may be put forward without “face threat,” especially in texts denoting regulations and obligations and in journalistic reporting registers.

Example (*Daily Mirror*, July 7, 1990; cited in McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 66)

ELECTRICITY CHIEFS TO AXE 5,000

Five thousand jobs **are to** be axed by electricity generating firm National Power, it was announced yesterday. Smaller power stations **will** close but bosses pledged no compulsory redundancies over the next five years.

McCarthy (1998) continues to explain that the same functional sequence of reference to determined future events (the written form “*be to*”) seems to have as its nearest equivalents in spoken language the sequences “*going to*,” “*will*” or sometimes “*supposed to*.” Such sequences are considered by speakers as “softer” patterns, especially if they are talking face-to-face as it is the case in the following example taken from McCarthy and Carter (2002: 67).

[Speaker 1 is a health service worker informing Speaker 2 about a new “patient’s handbook” that they are producing.]

Speaker 1: I'm sort of chairing the working group, em [laughs] a document that, that it's official name **is going to** end up being something like Patient Handbook.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 1: But at the moment it, it's lovingly known as the alternative Gideon...

Speaker 2: (laughs)

Speaker 1: You'**ll** find it on the locker next to the bed or something, yeah.

Observation of larger sequences of language, such as the above-stated ones, depends on the willingness of the grammarian to take a discourse-grammar perspective, i.e. to look beyond the bounds of the sentence in written texts, and the immediate speaker turn in spoken texts. The criterion that McCarthy and Carter (2002) assert, at this point, is that certain spoken grammar aspects (such as the use of the patterns “going to” or “will” instead of the written form “be to” discussed above) can be observed across more extended stretches of text. Therefore, in order to detect such spoken grammar aspects, grammarians and discourse analysts need to take a discursal perspective that goes beyond the sentence or immediate utterance to establish the degree of overlap in such aspects, in written and spoken language.

3.2.2.8 The Comparative Criterion

McCarthy and Carter (2002) mention that this criterion follows directly from the previous sub-section (3.2.2.7 Larger Sequences). So far, in all the previous six sub-sections, it has been argued that spoken grammar is, in many crucial ways, very different from written (standard) grammar; however, there seems to be many overlaps between the two types of grammar. Consequently, it would be a disservice to learners to have them think that huge differences exist in the distribution of every grammatical item in spoken grammar and written grammar. What is needed is a thorough examination of a spoken

corpus side by side with a balanced written one in order that relevant differences as well as similarities can be revealed and incorporated into the grammar of the language wherever necessary. An example of this might be a comparison of conjunctions as they occur in a spoken corpus and a written one. A pedagogical grammar entry might resemble the following one (McCarthy and Carter, 2002: 68).

- Some conjunctions are particularly associated with written or spoken registers and particular positions in those registers. For example, “on the contrary” is very rare in informal conversation, whereas it is more common in written English and usually occurs in front position or, much less frequently, in mid-position:

*He had no private understanding with Mr. X. **On the contrary**, he knew very little of him.*

- “On the other hand” occurs frequently in both spoken and written language. But, the concessive adverb “then again,” always in front position, is much more frequent in spoken and written language:

*If it had been at the bottom of a councillor’s street, then I don’t think it would ever have been built. But **then again**, that goes on all the time.*

- Other conjunctions that are more common in written than spoken language include “accordingly,” “moreover,” “furthermore,” “therefore,” “as a consequence” and “in the event.”
- Other conjunctions which are encountered more commonly in spoken than written language include “what’s more,” “as I say,” “because of that” and “in the end.”

The comparative criterion is, thus, a practical one designed to lessen the load and learning fears for the student confronting spoken grammar for the first time.

A final point needs to be made in relation to written corpora: it is relatively easy to incorporate newspapers and other journalistic texts into a corpus mainly because of ease of availability and access on the Internet. However, an efficient written corpus should be as widely sourced as possible to include the kinds of texts people read as a matter of daily routine, not just quality newspapers. This would include mass mailings, tabloid news, magazines, Web pages, E-mails, signs, notices and advertisements. Some of these types of written discourse have evolved or are evolving more toward spoken styles; the traditional conventions of standard grammar are not highly represented in such text types. Research with such a balanced corpus might yield a better picture of the scale of usage that exists between formal, literary and technical texts, at the one extreme, and casual conversational texts, at the other (McCarthy and Carter, 2002).

3.2.2.9 Metalanguage

McCarthy and Carter (2002) acknowledge the inadequacy of the metalanguage used throughout the discussion of their criteria. In their own words,

(...) [W]e have struggled, in some places more visibly than others, with a metalanguage that has not always been up to the task of describing the phenomena we would wish to embrace in spoken grammar. This has been particularly noticeable in the discussion on units and on subordinate and main clauses, where we have often used scare quotes to hide our unease with the terminology (p. 69).

The prevalence of quotation marks around the unfamiliar terminology, such as left-/right-dislocated or misplaced, subordinate, main, sentence, and irregularities, is not only because the labels themselves are rarely dealt with by grammarians, but above all, they explain, because much of the terminology itself is locked in a written, sentence-based perspective on language. A metalanguage inherited from written-language-based (standard) grammar brings with it its own metaphors and assumptions which can often create inconsistencies

when applied to spoken data. This metalanguage has been more apparent in the sub-section that discusses “left-” and “right-dislocated” elements (3.2.2.4 Position of Clause Elements, p. 139). McCarthy and Carter (2002) express their dissatisfaction with the notion of “dislocation” or “displacement,” arguing that it suggests either that something has been moved, or that it is not in its right place. There is no evidence in real contexts that any aspect is in an abnormal position, or that real language users have any problems with such forms when they occur. Moreover, they claim that the terms “left-” and “right-” are equally unsatisfactory, arguing that they are page-driven: other major world writing systems compose their pages vertically, such as the Chinese writing system, or from right to left, such as the Arabic writing system. They also argue that such labels are very inappropriate to spoken language which has no “left” or “right,” but only “now,” “before” and “next.” In this respect, the labels “pre” and “post-posing,” as used by Hallidayan grammarians, are less misleading. McCarthy and Carter (2002: 69) reveal that they are “at a loss to find a better term [than ‘left-/right-dislocated’] to describe the phenomena,” yet they suggest “heads” (or “topics”) and “tails,” respectively, as more appropriate labels or metaphors. Furthermore, they point out that the problem of classification of certain structures such as “*As soon as they hear insurance claim*”, a “subordinate” clause, not obviously connected to any particular main clause (see Sub-section 3.2.2.1 The Basic Unit, Example on p. 127), has led some linguists to propose abandoning the notion of “subordination” altogether when describing spoken grammar. Miller (1995) casts light on the point that linguists advocate substituting the “clause” as a more viable basic unit for spoken language than the “sentence.”

McCarthy and Carter (2002) see that it is highly significant to evolve a shared metalanguage among the applied linguistic profession that can adequately give form to linguists’ understandings of the grammar of everyday speech. There should be a careful

reflection on the metalanguage to be used and an attempt to devise one that can communicate the special characteristics of the grammar of speech.

3.2.2.10 Native and Non-native Users

The final criterion relates to the notion of authority in grammatical description. McCarthy and Carter (2002) shed light on the issue of who is to be the voice of authority with regard to spoken grammar? They note that the question arises because societies have always referred to their most highly literate members (usually great writers) in the quest for the establishment of standards of correctness in the grammar of writing, whereas no such obvious authorities exist for the grammar of conversation. Equally, whereas in writing, language users tend to strive toward standard norms within any linguistic community, in informal speech variety is common (in the case of Britain, for example, there are northern and west-country styles of speaking, along with many others). Variety in this case also includes phonological variation, and this can affect grammatical items as much as lexical ones; for example, the various British pronunciations of the negative form of “I am”: /aɪ a:nt/, /aɪ elnt/, /aɪ aemnt/. The evidence of a spoken corpus is as reliable as the design of the corpus; thus, great care is required in order to ensure that any entry in spoken grammar is represented in a wide range of speakers of any broad-based linguistic community.

In the case of widely used languages such as English, Chinese or Spanish, a further question is raised by McCarthy and Carter (2002): should the spoken grammar of a language be that of the speakers of the original, “colonising” language or its present-day users? This issue, they note, is particularly acute in the case of English which has taken over as a lingua franca in numerous domains across the world. It is no longer controversial to speculate that native speakers of English form a minority in comparison to the total number of daily users of English. There are extreme and less extreme answers to the question asked. One extreme answer, McCarthy and Carter (2002) suggest, is to say that

one norm is required, and that that norm should originate from the dominant “colonising” community. In the case of English, this norm would be the British, American or Australian variety. This answer appears to be offensive to many highly proficient or near-native users of English in communities where robust local varieties have evolved; for instance, Malaysian English. Another extreme answer, they put forward, is to say that spoken grammar should be as varied as its users; however, practical and theoretical problems might emerge. This would require a massive collection of data beyond the resources of most organisations. In addition, it is theoretically very difficult to determine the boundaries of varieties. It is hard to delimit the boundaries of one variety such as British spoken English, let alone a wide range of varieties. Compromise solutions, they recommend, include targeting those nations where a language such as English has official status and is in daily use. But, such a solution excludes millions of business and professional users of English who speak English as a lingua franca, for instance, not as a language with official status. The most realistic solution, at least for the present, McCarthy and Carter (2002) further suggest, seems to be to have a variety of spoken corpora: some country-based, some more regionally or globally based, some native-speaker and some non-native, which could be cross-compared to establish a core set of grammatical aspects in wide international usage.

Shifting the balance away from the native speakers of “colonising” communities, McCarthy and Carter (2002) explain, has important implications for the status of the native speaker. A corpus of non-native speaker speech contains a wide range of speakers of varying degrees of proficiency, and so does any corpus of native-speaker speech. Therefore, it becomes more difficult to decide who the most “expert” users of a language like English are since many non-native users are more proficient communicators than many native speakers. At this point, McCarthy and Carter (2002) state, the focus is altered toward the issue of expert users of a language who are viewed as models, regardless of

their status as native or non-native speakers (see 3.1.1 The Native-speaker Spoken Grammar Approach: Timmis (2005), p. 110, for further information on the point of expert users).

The tenth criterion leaves us with more questions than answers, but this does not make it less important than the other criteria. The point to be made here is that spoken language raises more questions about the authority of its users than does written language. Furthermore, since languages have increasingly become international lingua francas, the question of variation seems to be very significant (McCarthy and Carter, 2002).

Conclusion

It is only recently that spoken grammar has been closely studied, and arguments have been advanced in favour of teaching it. Spoken grammar facilitates students' efforts by helping them approximate a natural spoken output. It serves to enrich students' communicative competence by providing them with interpersonal and interactive grammatical elements that contribute to the natural tenor of speech. Therefore, it is very crucial to start selecting and teaching aspects of spoken grammar if the aim is to help students become better communicators, with more natural conversational English.

CHAPTER FOUR

STUDENTS' USE OF THE SPOKEN GRAMMAR ASPECTS

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Introduction

In this part of the study, where the central focus is on the students, we shall examine the following major questions: are the learners under investigation aware of spoken grammar? Do they tend to use mainly standard grammar in their informal speaking? What are the aspects of spoken grammar which the students are aware of most and the aspects they are aware of least? Would the learners' conversational English be more natural if they are taught the aspects of spoken grammar? The answers to these questions will pave the way for testing our first hypothesis: if the students under study receive instruction of a selected range of spoken grammar aspects, their conversational English is likely to be more natural.

4.1 The Sample

The sample of the present study was derived from a population of 770 second-year LMD (Licence Master Doctorate) students of English, at the University of Constantine 1, during the academic year 2011 – 2012. LMD is an academic system which started at the University of Constantine 1 in 2004 – 2005. It is organised into three stages of education: the "Licence" stage lasts three years leading to the first university degree, followed by a two-year instruction for the "Master" degree, and a three-year training for the "Doctorate" degree. Our sample is a total of 68 students, constituting two groups with an average of 34 students each. One group was randomly enrolled as the Control Group (CG) and one as the Experimental Group (Exp.G). As it is the case in group organisation in our institution, the students were randomly assigned to groups by the administration, in a sense that the student who came first was enrolled first. This procedure serves to prevent "contamination" of results, the possibility that a certain factor other than the provided treatment has brought about the differences in the results.

As regards the level of the students in the sample, we wish we could have gained insight into the conversational English of more advanced learners, preferably Master students or third-year students who are expected, being in their final year, to have learned how to speak in English or at least achieved better oral proficiency compared to second-year students. However, we could not do so because we could not choose the level of the students in the academic year 2011 – 2012, but had to teach the level assigned by the administration.

4.2 Procedure

The present study consists of three fundamental stages: the pre-test, instruction and the post-test. The pre-test was administered at the beginning of the academic year 2011 – 2012. Instruction directly followed the pre-test which was spaced away from the post-test of four weeks.

4.2.1 Description of the Test

To tap into the students' awareness of spoken grammar prior to and after instruction, the CG and the Exp.G were subjected to a pre-test and a post-test, during which their oral performances were recorded by means of a tape recorder (we made sure not to let the students know that their oral performances were being recorded in order not to exert pressure on them). The students were initially divided into pairs in advance. They were required to perform a role play or a simulation; the choice of this particular activity type is based on the consideration that it involves language use in various interpersonal, interactive contexts and provides a format for employing aspects of real-life (authentic) conversation. This type of speaking activities is also said to be more interesting and motivating for especially reticent students, in that it gives them the opportunity to take on the role of a thoroughly different character and express thoughts and feelings they do not necessarily share (see Chapter One, Sub-section 1.2.2.4 Simulations and Role Plays, p. 40,

for more details about the advantages of this activity type). Each pair in the two groups (the CG and the Exp.G) was expected to choose a topic from a variety of 20 topics, referring to 03 themes, suggested by the researcher-teacher (see Appendix I: Topics of the Role Plays, p. 276).

– **Theme 1: Family Relationship**

- **Topic 1:** Child and Parent: Permission to Go to a Birthday Party
- **Topic 2:** Child and Parent: Permission to Go on a Trip
- **Topic 3:** Child and Parent: Convincing Your Parent about Having a Job
- **Topic 4:** Child and Parent: Choosing a University Specialty
- **Topic 5:** Siblings: Blaming Your Sibling for Messing Your Apartment
- **Topic 6:** Siblings: Preparing a Dish / Cake with Your Sister's Help
- **Topic 7:** Siblings: Remembering Last Summer's Incident
- **Topic 8:** Cousins: Preparing for a Wedding Party

– **Theme 2: University Relationship**

- **Topic 9:** Students: At the University
- **Topic 10:** Students: The University Conditions
- **Topic 11:** Classmates: Sharing Memories with a Former Classmate
- **Topic 12:** Roommates: Refusing Politely a Roommate
- **Topic 13:** Roommates: The New Roommates

– **Theme 3: Social Relationship**

- **Topic 14:** Friends: Complaining about Being Late
- **Topic 15:** Friends: Shopping with a Friend
- **Topic 16:** Friends: Refusing an Invitation from a Friend

- **Topic 17:** Friends: Discussing TV Programmes with a Friend
- **Topic 18:** Neighbours: The New Neighbours
- **Topic 19:** Neighbours: Missing a Neighbour's Party
- **Topic 20:** Neighbours: Looking after a Neighbour's Apartment

All the topics of the role plays are language-productive and involve exclusively informal situations which perfectly suit the interpersonal, interactive nature of spoken grammar. In addition, we chose to make use of role cards on the basis of the fact that this technique is time-saving and more appealing for the students. In other words, it would have taken a great deal of time and been boring if we had dictated each pair their topic or written it on the board. The role cards displayed a number of prompts (cues), so as to help provoke the students' thoughts during the preparation phase and act as reminders during the performance phase. What follows are two model role cards used in our test.

Topic 2: Child and Parent: Permission to Go on a Trip

Role Card 1: CHILD

- You're going on a trip with friends.
- You're trying to get your parent's permission by reassuring him/her that everything will be fine: telling him/her the place you're going to, the names of friends, how long you're going to stay there, the place you'll be staying in, etc.

Topic 2: Child and Parent: Permission to Go on a Trip

Role Card 2: PARENT

- You're an over-protective parent.
- Your child has asked your permission to go on a trip with friends.
- You don't accept easily until s/he gives you the details about the trip: the place s/he's going to, the names of friends, how long s/he's going to stay there, the place s/he'll be staying in, etc.

To avoid “contamination” of responses (the possibility that a certain undesirable factor interferes with, and thus brings about the differences in the responses), each pair performed the role play in isolation of the other pairs. It was also important to give each pair a different topic, or at least a different topic from the topics of the four (or more) pairs who performed previously. A further step worth taking was giving each pair their role cards when they were due to perform, so as not to give them a chance to appeal for the other pairs’ help. All the pairs were given ten minutes to get prepared and ten minutes to perform their role plays. In order to make the test less time-consuming, we were receiving in the classroom two pairs at a time, one presenting at the back of the classroom and one preparing at the front.

The post-test was held four weeks after the pre-test, directly after the instructional period. All what had been done in the pre-test was replicated in the post-test, except for one step: in the post-test, we asked the two students in each pair to exchange their role cards, i.e. the student who took Role Card 1 in the pre-test was expected to take his/her partner’s Role Card 2 in the post-test, and vice versa. Having the two learners in each pair exchange their role cards helped in keeping them interested during the task; it would have sounded boring to ask them to deal with the same topics and act the very same roles they had acted four weeks ago in the pre-test.

4.2.2 Instruction of the Spoken Grammar Aspects

The CG and the Exp.G had two Oral Expression (OE) sessions of one and a half hour a week. The CG was taught conversation (informal speaking) in the usual way, with reference to standard grammar. The Exp.G was provided with instruction of a selected range of spoken grammar aspects in the scheduled hours for four weeks. The instructional period was meant to raise the awareness of the Exp.G of the various elements of spoken grammar, to sensitise the students to the distinctive properties of this kind of grammar and

the differences between it and standard grammar. The aspects of spoken grammar that were selected and taught to the students are the eleven aspects considered by McCarthy and Carter (1995, 2002), Carter, Hughes and McCarthy (2000), Timmis (2005), Carter and McCarthy (2006) and Paterson (2011) as potentially-teachable and worth being incorporated into the pedagogical grammar of spoken English (see Chapter Two, Sub-section 2.2.2 Aspects of Spoken Grammar, p. 71. The four aspects listed last in the following table are presented in 2.2.2.8 Other Aspects of Spoken Grammar). The eleven aspects were taught in seven sessions.

| Session | Headings |
|----------------|--|
| One | – Heads – Tails |
| Two | – Conversational Ellipsis – Vague Language |
| Three | – Spoken Discourse Markers – Informal Reported Speech |
| Four | – Question Tags – Contractions – Vocative Use |
| Five | – Statements as Questions – Response Questions |
| Six | Integration of the Eleven Aspects |
| Seven | Oral Production (Freer Practice) |

**Table 4: Sessions Devoted to the Instruction
of the Spoken Grammar Aspects**

In terms of the methodology followed in the instruction of the eleven spoken grammar aspects, an inductive three-stage-based approach, Illustration-Interaction-Induction, recommended by McCarthy and Carter (2002) was put into practice.

– The illustration phase refers to presenting and examining the spoken grammar aspects in real-life language contexts. In the presentation of each aspect of spoken grammar (heads, tails, conversational ellipsis, vague language, spoken discourse markers, informal reported speech, question tags, contractions, vocative use, statements as questions and response questions), we initially illustrated the target element in a number of examples (see Appendix II: Teaching the Spoken Grammar Aspects, p. 288) and encouraged the students to notice, analyse and negotiate the form, meaning and use of the spoken grammar aspect, in comparison with the standard grammar aspect. In the introduction of some aspects, such as heads, tails, vague language and some spoken discourse markers, we allowed a comparison between English and Arabic in terms of such aspects. This is consistent with the idea that awareness of spoken grammar in the L1 might prove to be a useful point for increasing awareness of spoken grammar in a FL. It was appealing for the students to mention a few similarities between English and their mother tongue and find out that the notion of spoken grammar is not restricted to English.

– In the interaction phase, we supplied the students with an activity for each aspect, the aim of which was to raise the students' awareness of the target spoken grammar aspect and give them more room for interaction and negotiation of its interpersonal, interactive implications. It is important to mention that in the teaching of four aspects of spoken grammar, namely contractions, vocative use, statements as questions and response questions, we did not use activities like the ones employed in the presentation of the other seven elements (heads, tails, conversational ellipsis, vague language, spoken discourse markers, informal reported speech and question tags). We presented these four elements in

examples, negotiated their meaning and asked the students to use them in a few utterances to make sure they grasped them. This was done on the assumption that these four aspects of spoken grammar are simple and do not require the use of activities for more interaction. Then, we presented the students with two conversational extracts embedded with the eleven taught aspects of spoken grammar in order to help the students see the integration of the various aspects in conversations. The activities implemented in the interaction phase are of the traditional type. We see that new aspects of language do not necessarily require new methodologies. The activity types are:

- transformational (the activities used for teaching heads and informal reported speech);
- utterance completion (the activities used for teaching tails, question tags and conversational ellipsis);
- discrimination (the activity used for teaching vague language); and
- highlighting (the activity used for teaching spoken discourse markers and the one used for demonstrating the integration of the eleven spoken grammar aspects in conversations).

– In the induction phase, the students were encouraged to come out with conclusions about the interpersonal, interactive nature of spoken grammar that is distinct from that of standard grammar. The ultimate aim was to enable the students to develop an ability for noticing such aspects in other contexts, as they move through the different stages of language learning.

– Having drawn conclusions, the students chose a topic of their own and performed a role play or a simulation, using various aspects of spoken grammar which they had been introduced to. Finally, the teacher reformulated, orally or by writing on the board, the students' produced language against the eleven-point range of spoken grammar aspects.

Since the spoken grammar aspects dealt with in the illustration phase (the examples) and the interaction phase (the activities) are crucially discourse-sensitive, it seems reasonable that they are embedded in authentic exchanges. Each exchange is made up of at least two utterances produced by two speakers (A and B). The two conversational exchanges, “*Deciding Where to Eat*” and “*Choosing a Dessert from the Menu*,” embedded with the eleven spoken grammar aspects, are longer than the exchanges used in the other activities. The two exchanges represent transcripts of two informal conversations from a home and restaurant settings, respectively. In both exchanges, turns by the same speaker (for example A) are numbered (A₁, A₂, A₃, etc.) for easy reference. With respect to the frequency of the spoken grammar aspects in the two exchanges, “*Deciding Where to Eat*” is embedded with 46 aspects, and “*Choosing a Dessert from the Menu*” 28. The following table shows the distribution of the spoken grammar aspects in the two conversational exchanges.

| | Aspects of Spoken Grammar | Exchange One: Deciding Where to Eat | Exchange Two: Choosing a Dessert from the Menu |
|----|----------------------------------|--|---|
| 01 | Heads | 01 | 02 |
| 02 | Tails | 02 | 02 |
| 03 | Conversational Ellipsis | 04 | 06 |
| 04 | Vague Language | 05 | 02 |
| 05 | Spoken Discourse Markers | 11 | 07 |
| 06 | Informal Reported Speech | 02 | / |
| 07 | Question Tags | 01 | 01 |
| 08 | Contractions | 15 | 06 |
| 09 | Vocative Use | 02 | 01 |
| 10 | Statements as Questions | 01 | 01 |
| 11 | Response Questions | 02 | / |
| | Total | 46 | 28 |

Table 5: Distribution of the Spoken Grammar Aspects in the Two Exchanges

Concerning the degree of authenticity of the materials employed in the two phases (illustration and interaction), a compromise of naturally-occurring and specially-constructed exchanges was achieved. In other words, we did not adopt the materials as they were, but made some adaptations by simplifying some difficult vocabulary items and dropping a few complex cultural aspects that we foresaw to be rather confusing for the students. We believe that purely authentic materials might be a major hindrance, especially in EFL contexts, in that they create comprehension problems to the students who might have to struggle with more than the language aspect(s) being learnt. On the other hand, specially-constructed materials which contain no degree of authenticity are useless in fostering the learners' natural spoken output and might not succeed in arousing their interest.

4.3 Analysis and Interpretation of the Results

The recordings of the students' role plays have been transformed into 68 transcripts (see Appendix III: Transcripts of the Pre-test Performances, p. 310 and Appendix IV: Transcripts of the Post-test Performances, p. 354). In these transcripts, the symbol “—” stands for a short pause, “——” a longer pause, and “L” interruption by the other speaker in the pair. The transcripts have been analysed in terms of the eleven aspects of spoken grammar which we taught to the Exp.G: heads, tails, conversational ellipsis, vague language, spoken discourse markers, informal reported speech, question tags, contractions, vocative use, statements as questions and response questions.

4.3.1 The Pre-test

The central aim of the pre-test is to determine whether and to what extent the students under investigation use the spoken grammar aspects in conversations. The analysis of the results obtained by the CG and the Exp.G is carried out in terms of the

percentage of use of the spoken grammar aspects by the students (17 pairs in each group) and the frequency of occurrence of the spoken grammar aspects in the students' role plays.

4.3.1.1 The Control Group

In terms of the percentage of use of the spoken grammar aspects by the 17 pairs, Table 6 shows that only a few aspects were used by a considerable part of the students.

| Aspects of Spoken Grammar | N | % |
|----------------------------------|----------|----------|
| 1. Heads | 03 | 17.65 |
| 2. Tails | 01 | 05.88 |
| 3. Conversational Ellipsis | 15 | 88.23 |
| 4. Vague Language | 04 | 23.53 |
| 5. Spoken Discourse Markers | 14 | 82.35 |
| 6. Informal Reported Speech | 01 | 05.88 |
| 7. Question Tags | 01 | 05.88 |
| 8. Contractions | 16 | 94.11 |
| 9. Vocative Use | 12 | 70.59 |
| 10. Statements as Questions | 01 | 05.88 |
| 11. Response Questions | 01 | 05.88 |

Table 6: Use of the Spoken Grammar Aspects by the Control Group in the Pre-test

Except for four aspects of spoken grammar which were used by most of the pairs (contractions: 94.11%, conversational ellipsis 88.23%, spoken discourse markers 82.35% and vocative use 70.59%), the other seven aspects were used in a very limited way. The very least used aspects were tails, informal reported speech, question tags, statements as questions and response questions (05.88%). We can say that most of the aspects of spoken grammar (tails, informal reported speech, question tags, statements as questions, response

questions, heads and vague language) seem to be unfamiliar to the vast majority of the students.

In terms of the frequency of occurrence of the eleven spoken grammar aspects in the CG's role plays, Table 7 reveals that most of the aspects were remarkably infrequent (tails, informal reported speech, question tags, response questions, statements as questions and heads).

| Aspects of Spoken Grammar | Frequency |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Heads | 03 |
| 2. Tails | 01 |
| 3. Conversational Ellipsis | 54 |
| 4. Vague Language | 09 |
| 5. Spoken Discourse Markers | 73 |
| 6. Informal Reported Speech | 01 |
| 7. Question Tags | 01 |
| 8. Contractions | 136 |
| 9. Vocative Use | 24 |
| 10. Statements as Questions | 02 |
| 11. Response Questions | 01 |

Table 7: Frequency of the Spoken Grammar Aspects in the Control Group's Role Plays in the Pre-test

– **Heads**

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 01 |
| 2 | 01 |
| 3 | 01 |
| Total | 03 |

**Table 8: Frequency of Heads in the Control Group's
Role Plays in the Pre-test**

Table 8 exhibits that each of the 03 pairs who used the head aspect in their role plays employed 01 item appropriately.

1. “But *all my friends*, they will be there.”
2. “I know that, but *Medicine*, it is with human being.”
3. “*Rimy*, this is kind of TV programmes for children, and not for you.”

The vast majority of the pairs (14) appear not to be aware of this aspect of spoken grammar which is commonly chosen by speakers of English to be used in conversations for its interpersonal, interactive function: helping listeners comprehend better by highlighting key information for them at the beginning of an utterance.

– **Tails**

The only pair who used the tail aspect did not employ it more than once: “But you can wear a short coat with a skirt, *you can*.” As it is the case with heads, almost all the students are not sensitive to tails and their interpersonal, interactive function: emphasising opinions or attitudes towards the topic.

– **Conversational Ellipsis**

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 13 |
| 2 | 08 |
| 3 | 06 |

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| 4 | 04 |
| 5 | 03 |
| 6 | 03 |
| 7 | 03 |
| 8 | 03 |
| 9 | 03 |
| 10 | 02 |
| 11 | 02 |
| 12 | 01 |
| 13 | 01 |
| 14 | 01 |
| 15 | 01 |
| Total | 54 |

Table 9: Frequency of Conversational Ellipsis in the Control Group's Role Plays in the Pre-test

Out of the 15 pairs who used conversational ellipsis, the majority (12) employed it between once and 4 times. These students appear not to have realised that ellipsis is very pervasive in spoken English, especially in informal settings like the ones the pairs were provided with for role playing. In other words, the students are not alert to the fact that ellipsis is very frequently used in speaking, where speakers usually tend not to be very explicit about all what they say since the meaning is clear from the immediate context. As has been argued in Chapter Two, Sub-section 2.2.1 Definition of Spoken Grammar, p. 68, context factors, including the type of discourse (spoken or written) and lack of formality, make the use of complex language unnecessary. Examples of the elliptical utterances produced by the 15 pairs include:

1. "OK, at 8 p.m."
2. "Like what?"
3. "Fine, and you?"
4. "Not very short."

5. “No problem.”

6. “With her father also.”

– **Vague Language**

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 06 |
| 2 | 01 |
| 3 | 01 |
| 4 | 01 |
| Total | 09 |

**Table 10: Frequency of Vague Language in the Control Group’s
Role Plays in the Pre-test**

Except for 01 pair who used 06 items of vague language, the other 03 pairs employed only 01 item. This reveals the very limited use of vague language on the part of the vast majority of the students. The vague language items embedded by the learners are “something” (occurred 06 times), “things,” “somehow” and “a little bit”.

1. “I can’t wear *something* attractive.”

2. “Not everything, but *something* which I trust to be beautiful.”

3. “That’s why I want to buy *something* very exceptional.”

4. “Nowadays, we see *something* traditional and with touch of modernity.”

5. “You must try *something* new.”

6. “You can’t stop at any time, and you’ll not have *something* sure.”

7. “And try to be self-relevant because *things* here are totally different from the secondary school.”

8. “What do you think I am *somehow* traditional?”

9. “At least you could arrange it *a little bit*.”

It seems that the majority of the pairs (13) who did not use vague language are unaware of the extensive occurrence of this aspect in informal spoken English. As seen in Chapter Two, Sub-section 2.2.2.7 Vague Language, p. 96, when one interacts with others, there are times when it is necessary to give exact and precise information (for example, departure times for trains and dead lines), but there are occasions where there is no need for precision. There are also situations where it would be inappropriate to be precise as it may sound unduly authoritative and assertive. In most informal contexts, like the ones of the students’ role plays, most speakers of English prefer to convey information which is softened, in some way, by the use of vague language.

– **Spoken Discourse Markers**

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 22 |
| 2 | 08 |
| 3 | 07 |
| 4 | 06 |
| 5 | 06 |
| 6 | 06 |
| 7 | 04 |
| 8 | 03 |
| 9 | 02 |
| 10 | 02 |
| 11 | 02 |
| 12 | 02 |
| 13 | 02 |
| 14 | 01 |
| Total | 73 |

**Table 11: Frequency of Spoken Discourse Markers in
the Control Group’s Role Plays in the Pre-test**

In spite of the fact that 14 pairs used spoken discourse markers in their role plays, most of these pairs (08) employed between 1 and 4 markers. As it is the case with the previous aspects (heads, tails, conversational ellipsis and vague language), the students most probably did not realise that spoken discourse markers are very prevalent in spoken discourse. Speakers of English tend to use a wide variety of markers to structure and monitor what is being said. The spoken discourse markers embedded by the 14 pairs are “ok,” “oh,” “yes,” “so” and “well”.

– Informal Reported Speech

The one pair who appears to be aware of how to report others’ speech informally used 01 instance of informal reported speech: “You were screaming she’s not there, she’s not here.” In their reporting of speech, this pair appropriately kept the original words and tenses used by the original speaker, i.e. used direct speech, in order to sound more dramatic.

– Question Tags

As it is the case with tails and informal reported speech, almost all the pairs (16) did not use question tags, except for 01 pair who used 01 question tag in a wrong way: “Your size is 38, **the same?*” (meaning “Your size is 38, *isn’t it?*”). It could be that the students are not aware of question tags and the importance of the interactive, interpersonal implications which they convey: making a direct appeal for the listener’s agreement or consent. Another tentative explanation is that the students might have avoided using question tags due to the difficulty they had with their form. Many learners were observed to avoid forming regular questions such as *wh*-questions, and many of them tended to form these questions in a wrong way. Question tags do not only require the inversion of the subject and verb as regular questions do, but also the use of a positive or negative verb in

opposition to the rest of the clause. The form of question tags might have been confusing for the students, and thus requires more practice for more accurate and broader use.

– Contractions

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 24 |
| 2 | 21 |
| 3 | 16 |
| 4 | 11 |
| 5 | 09 |
| 6 | 09 |
| 7 | 08 |
| 8 | 07 |
| 9 | 07 |
| 10 | 06 |
| 11 | 06 |
| 12 | 04 |
| 13 | 03 |
| 14 | 03 |
| 15 | 01 |
| 16 | 01 |
| Total | 136 |

Table 12: Frequency of Contractions in the Control Group's Role Plays in the Pre-test

Almost all the pairs (16) are aware of contractions; however, not all of them used such patterns consistently, except for 04 pairs (11 – 24 instances). This limited occurrence of contractions in the role plays brings to light the fact that these students may know that contractions are used by speakers of English, but may not realise that contracted forms are more predominant in speaking than full forms.

– Vocative Use

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 07 |
| 2 | 03 |

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| 3 | 03 |
| 4 | 02 |
| 5 | 02 |
| 6 | 01 |
| 7 | 01 |
| 8 | 01 |
| 9 | 01 |
| 10 | 01 |
| 11 | 01 |
| 12 | 01 |
| Total | 24 |

**Table 13: Frequency of Vocative Use in the Control Group's
Role Plays in the Pre-test**

Most of the pairs (12) appear to be familiar with vocative use although the greater part of them (07 pairs) used only 01 vocative form. The students' vocative use includes mainly their names or the names of the characters they were playing, in addition to other forms like "honey," "mum," "dad," "father," "son" and "daughter". The students' awareness of this aspect could be traced back to the fact that it is a very common element in many spoken languages, including Arabic.

– Statements as Questions

Approximately all the students are unaware of statements as questions. The only pair who made use of them appropriately employed 02 instances.

1. "Kenza, you know what I have just remembered?"
2. "You mean when we were supposed to take care of our neighbour's girl?"

The learners are most probably more familiar with the standard grammar rule which indicates that in question formation, the subject and verb must be inverted.

– Response Questions

Last but not least, only 01 response question occurred in the role plays of all the 17 pairs: “*Staying home?*” (in response to “For me, I want to finish the second serie without make-up exam and enjoy staying home”). The students seem not to be aware of response questions and the viability of their interpersonal, interactive function: expressing emotions or personal attitudes in response to what has been said. This is a further aspect which reveals the students’ severe lack of awareness of spoken grammar and its properties.

4.3.1.2 The Experimental Group

Concerning the percentage of use of the spoken grammar aspects by the Exp.G, the largest part of the pairs did not embed most of the aspects.

| Aspects of Spoken Grammar | N | % |
|----------------------------------|----------|----------|
| 1. Heads | 02 | 11.76 |
| 2. Tails | / | / |
| 3. Conversational Ellipsis | 14 | 82.35 |
| 4. Vague Language | 08 | 47.05 |
| 5. Spoken Discourse Markers | 16 | 94.11 |
| 6. Informal Reported Speech | / | / |
| 7. Question Tags | / | / |
| 8. Contractions | 17 | 100 |
| 9. Vocative Use | 13 | 76.47 |
| 10. Statements as Questions | 07 | 41.17 |
| 11. Response Questions | 07 | 41.17 |

Table 14: Use of the Spoken Grammar Aspects by the Experimental Group in the Pre-test

Only four aspects of spoken grammar were used by the majority of the pairs (contractions: 100%, spoken discourse markers: 94.11%, conversational ellipsis: 82.35% and vocative use: 76.47%). On the other hand, no pair made use of tails, informal reported speech and question tags in their role plays. Heads were employed by a very extremely small proportion of the students (11.76%). Additionally, the percentage of the pairs who employed statements as questions and response questions does not go beyond 41.17%. This limited use reflects the students' lack of awareness of most of the spoken grammar elements and the importance of the interpersonal, interactive meanings which they convey.

As regards the frequency of occurrence of the eleven spoken grammar aspects in the Exp.G's role plays, Table 15 indicates that some aspects were almost non-existent (heads, tails, informal reported speech and question tags). At the other extreme, some aspects were used rather frequently (contractions, spoken discourse markers, conversational ellipsis and vocative use).

| Aspects of Spoken Grammar | Frequency |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Heads | 03 |
| 2. Tails | / |
| 3. Conversational Ellipsis | 44 |
| 4. Vague Language | 11 |
| 5. Spoken Discourse Markers | 82 |
| 6. Informal Reported Speech | / |
| 7. Question Tags | / |
| 8. Contractions | 133 |
| 9. Vocative Use | 37 |
| 10. Statements as Questions | 09 |

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| 11. Response Questions | 10 |
|------------------------|----|

Table 15: Frequency of the Spoken Grammar Aspects in the Experimental Group’s Role Plays in the Pre-test

– Heads

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 02 |
| 2 | 01 |
| Total | 03 |

Table 16: Frequency of Heads in the Experimental Group’s Role Plays in the Pre-test

According to Table 16, one of the 02 pairs who seem to be aware of heads used 01 instance appropriately, while the other pair 02 instances.

1. “*This man*, he’s old man, he’s my boss, it’s the worst man in my life, I told to him that...”
2. “*The first kind*, they are very gentle and friendly with their students.”
3. “And *the other kind of teachers*, they have difficult personalities.”

Almost all the students need to be sensitised to and trained in manipulating this kind of fronting device (the head aspect).

– Tails

With regard to tails, no instance was spotted in all the role plays. It is vital for the learners to be supplied with such a grammatical choice (the tail aspect) which can serve the

interpersonal, interactive nature of their spoken communication: tails allow the expression of the speakers' affect, personal attitude or evaluative stance towards the topic.

– **Conversational Ellipsis**

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 11 |
| 2 | 05 |
| 3 | 04 |
| 4 | 03 |
| 5 | 03 |
| 6 | 03 |
| 7 | 03 |
| 8 | 02 |
| 9 | 02 |
| 10 | 02 |
| 11 | 02 |
| 12 | 02 |
| 13 | 01 |
| 14 | 01 |
| Total | 44 |

Table 17: Frequency of Conversational Ellipsis in the Experimental Group's Role Plays in the Pre-test

The majority of the pairs (11) employed conversational ellipsis between once and 3 times. Most of these students were more acquainted with the kind of ellipsis where “It’s,” “That’s” and “I’m” are left out. Instances of the students’ elliptical utterances are:

1. “Just in the kitchen.”
2. “Great to meet you.”
3. “One hundred.”
4. “Good.”
5. “Sure.”
6. “Sorry.”

7. “Fine.”

The students also used ellipsis in *wh*-questions, where they appropriately kept only the question words such as “when,” “where,” “why” and “what” and dropped the rest of the question; for example,

8. “When?”

9. “How?”

10. “With who?”

We could also notice that some of the learners who used conversational ellipsis tended to follow their elliptical utterances with complete ones although the elliptical utterances were accurately constructed, and the meaning was clear. Examples of such use include:

11. “*What about the place?* Where do you want to do your party?”

12. “*Why?* Why do you feel tired?”

This phenomenon can be accounted for by the fact that the students might have had doubts about the appropriacy of using many instances of ellipsis. Such doubts might be due to lack of reference to spoken grammar, on the one hand, and the learners’ constant exposure to standard grammar which emphasises the use of “complete” sentences (Subject Verb Object), on the other hand.

– **Vague Language**

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 03 |
| 2 | 02 |
| 3 | 01 |
| 4 | 01 |
| 5 | 01 |
| 6 | 01 |
| 7 | 01 |

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| 8 | 01 |
| Total | 11 |

Table 18: Frequency of Vague Language in the Experimental Group's Role Plays in the Pre-test

Of the 08 pairs who embedded vague language elements in their role plays, the majority (06) used only 01 element. The following utterances contain the vagueness elements in the students' performance.

1. "You seem *a little bit* upset."
2. "I was *a little* terrified."
3. "I need *this kind of* moment."
4. "I think you might be a great roommate for me because I can do so many *things*."
5. "Just pick up your *thing* and go."
6. "I want to ask you about teachers, their relationships with student and how they teach *and everything* about them."

The students' use of vague language is appropriate, except for 04 elements that were not suitably selected for the context in which they were employed.

1. "He refused to let me leave my work at 9 **or something else*." (The appropriate structure is "or so").
2. "Just pick up your **thing* [referring to "luggage"] and go." (The appropriate item is the plural word "things" or the uncountable word "stuff").
3. "Can you present about your preparation, like people number and the invitations, **something like that?*" (The right phrase is "and everything").

4. “I’m really good at cooking **and something like this.*” (The suitable vagueness phrase is “and things like that”).

These students need to know how to discriminate between the various types of vague language words and phrases, especially the sets that may sound alike such as “something like that” vs. “things like that,” “and everything” vs. “and things like that” and “thing / things” vs. “stuff”. Furthermore, it may be of great use to equip the students with a broader range of vagueness elements and to draw their attention to the fact that vague language is very extensive in spoken language use, especially the semi-formal and informal one.

– **Spoken Discourse Markers**

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 09 |
| 2 | 09 |
| 3 | 08 |
| 4 | 07 |
| 5 | 07 |
| 6 | 07 |
| 7 | 07 |
| 8 | 05 |
| 9 | 05 |
| 10 | 04 |
| 11 | 03 |
| 12 | 03 |
| 13 | 03 |
| 14 | 02 |
| 15 | 02 |
| 16 | 01 |
| Total | 82 |

Table 19: Frequency of Spoken Discourse Markers in the Experimental Group’s Role Plays in the Pre-test

More than half the pairs (09) who used spoken discourse markers inserted between 5 and 9 markers. The markers that occurred in the role plays are “ok,” “so,” “yes,” “oh”

and “you know”. The students may be aware of the interpersonal, interactive functions of a few spoken discourse markers, but also need to be introduced to other markers of both types: the markers which focus on the speaker, helping him/her structure what s/he is saying, and the markers which focus on the listener, checking that s/he is following what is being said and / or making sure that the speaker does not sound very certain or dogmatic. This way, the students can have a wider range of conversational markers that may enable them to make appropriate choices for their communicative purposes.

– Informal Reported Speech

As it is the case with tails, no student incorporated informal reported speech into his/her role play. Some students reported speech according to the rules of standard grammar, by making certain changes in the structure of the speech instead of keeping the original words used by the original speaker(s). Examples of the way O2 pairs reported others’ speech are:

1. “I called him, I told him that I had a meeting at 10.”
2. “By this you are telling me that I should quit.”

It can be said that conversational resources for reporting speech are much richer than is suggested by standard-grammar-based accounts of the structure of direct and indirect speech. It is worthwhile for the students to shed light on the fact that in informal speech reporting, speakers of English exhibit a preference for using the original words of the original speaker, i.e. direct speech. By using the latter, the reporter does not merely say the information, but also replicates the original conversation as if it were taking place at the same moment of speaking.

– Question Tags

Like tails and informal reported speech, question tags were non-existent in all the role plays. This means that all the students either were ignorant of this spoken grammar aspect or avoided using it due to the difficulty of its form. In either case, the students' awareness about how positively question tags contribute to natural conversation needs to be raised.

– Contractions

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 17 |
| 2 | 14 |
| 3 | 12 |
| 4 | 11 |
| 5 | 10 |
| 6 | 10 |
| 7 | 10 |
| 8 | 08 |
| 9 | 07 |
| 10 | 06 |
| 11 | 06 |
| 12 | 06 |
| 13 | 04 |
| 14 | 04 |
| 15 | 03 |
| 16 | 03 |
| 17 | 02 |
| Total | 133 |

Table 20: Frequency of Contractions in the Experimental Group's Role Plays in the Pre-test

More than half the pairs (09) who inserted contractions in their role plays used between 7 and 17 patterns. This use is rather frequent, reflecting the students' awareness of the prevalent occurrence of such forms in speech.

– Vocative Use

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 07 |
| 2 | 05 |
| 3 | 04 |
| 4 | 04 |
| 5 | 03 |
| 6 | 03 |
| 7 | 02 |
| 8 | 02 |
| 9 | 02 |
| 10 | 02 |
| 11 | 01 |
| 12 | 01 |
| 13 | 01 |
| Total | 37 |

Table 21: Frequency of Vocative Use in the Experimental Group’s Role Plays in the Pre-test

Most of the pairs (09) made use of this spoken grammar aspect between once and 3 times. The vocative forms that occurred frequently in the role plays are the names of the students or the characters they were playing, “mum,” “mother,” “sister,” “my sweetheart,” “honey,” “(my) dear,” “apple of my eye,” “my neighbor” and “my best friend”.

– Statements as Questions

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 03 |
| 2 | 01 |
| 3 | 01 |
| 4 | 01 |
| 5 | 01 |
| 6 | 01 |
| 7 | 01 |
| Total | 09 |

Table 22: Frequency of Statements as Questions in the Experimental Group’s Role Plays in the Pre-test

All the pairs who used statements as questions embedded one in their role plays, except for one pair who used 03.

1. "That's all?"
2. "You know that I looked for her, I searched for her everywhere, even in public toilets?"
3. "You know why?"
4. "Normally you know it?"
5. "You should go and sit on the floor?"
6. "You mean that everything, every module is easy if I represent in the class?"
7. "You mean between choosing English and Medicine?"
8. "You was in literary branch?"
9. "You accept my choice?"

– Response Questions

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 02 |
| 2 | 02 |
| 3 | 02 |
| 4 | 01 |
| 5 | 01 |
| 6 | 01 |
| 7 | 01 |
| Total | 10 |

Table 23: Frequency of Response Questions in the Experimental Group's Role Plays in the Pre-test

The 07 pairs who made use of response questions employed this aspect between once and twice. The response question "Really?" was the most frequent, in that it occurred 06 times. The other 04 response questions produced by the participants are:

1. “Algerian movie?” (in response to “Well, I love English movie and I watch Algerian movie, but one in the two months.”)
2. “Trip?” (in response to “My friends are organising a trip, and they asked me to go with them.”)
3. “Are you kidding?” (in response to “Give me a chance to take a rest. I’m coming very fast. I want to take my breath.”)
4. “You haven’t a time?” (in response to “Sorry, I haven’t enough time.”)

4.3.1.3 Comparison of the Results Obtained by the Control Group and the Experimental Group in the Pre-test

In what follows, the results obtained by the students in the CG and the Exp.G under the pre-test conditions are compared in terms of the percentage of the students who used the eleven spoken grammar aspects and the frequency of occurrence of such aspects in the role plays, as Tables 24 and 25 indicate. The aim is to describe the main differences and/or similarities in the performance of the students in the two groups. According to Table 24, the percentage of use of most of the spoken grammar aspects in the CG and the Exp.G is approximately the same (heads, tails, conversational ellipsis, spoken discourse markers, informal reported speech, question tags, contractions and vocative use).

| Aspects of Spoken Grammar | CG | | Exp.G | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 1. Heads | 03 | 17.65 | 02 | 11.76 |
| 2. Tails | 01 | 05.88 | / | / |
| 3. Conversational Ellipsis | 15 | 88.23 | 14 | 82.35 |
| 4. Vague Language | 04 | 23.53 | 08 | 47.05 |
| 5. Spoken Discourse Markers | 14 | 82.35 | 16 | 94.11 |
| 6. Informal Reported Speech | 01 | 05.88 | / | / |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|----|-------|----|-------|
| 7. Question Tags | 01 | 05.88 | / | / |
| 8. Contractions | 16 | 94.11 | 17 | 100 |
| 9. Vocative Use | 12 | 70.59 | 13 | 76.47 |
| 10. Statements as Questions | 01 | 05.88 | 07 | 41.17 |
| 11. Response Questions | 01 | 05.88 | 07 | 41.17 |

Table 24: Use of the Spoken Grammar Aspects by the Control Group and the Experimental Group in the Pre-test

Therefore, we can say that the two groups are homogeneous in terms of awareness of spoken grammar. Homogeneity is a significant factor that helps to prevent “contamination” of the results. Only a few discrepancies are noticed, mainly in the percentage of use of three aspects: vague language (CG: 23.53%, Exp.G: 47.05%), statements as questions (CG: 05.88%, Exp.G: 41.17%) and response questions (CG: 05.88%, Exp.G: 41.17%).

In terms of the frequency of occurrence of the spoken grammar aspects, the following table shows that most of the aspects are infrequent in the role plays of the CG and the Exp.G, except for four elements: contractions, spoken discourse markers, conversational ellipsis and vocative use.

| Aspects of Spoken Grammar | CG | Exp. G |
|----------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| 1. Heads | 03 | 03 |
| 2. Tails | 01 | / |
| 3. Conversational Ellipsis | 54 | 44 |
| 4. Vague Language | 09 | 11 |
| 5. Spoken Discourse Markers | 73 | 82 |
| 6. Informal Reported Speech | 01 | / |
| 7. Question Tags | 01 | / |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----|
| 8. Contractions | 136 | 133 |
| 9. Vocative Use | 24 | 37 |
| 10. Statements as Questions | 02 | 09 |
| 11. Response Questions | 01 | 10 |

Table 25: Frequency of the Spoken Grammar Aspects in the Control Group's and the Experimental Group's Role Plays in the Pre-test

Concerning heads, except for an approximately similar and very limited percentage of the students in the CG and the Exp.G (17.65% and 11.76%, respectively), the overwhelming majority did not employ them. The head aspect was very infrequent in the performance of both groups (03 heads in each). This reflects severe lack of awareness of this aspect on the part of most of the students in the two groups.

Except for 01 pair in the CG, who embedded appropriately 01 tail into their role play, all the students in the two groups did not make use of the tail construction. Like the head aspect, the tail aspect appears to be unfamiliar to almost all the students in the CG and the Exp.G.

The vast majority of the students in the CG and the Exp.G incorporated conversational ellipsis into their role plays (88.23% and 82.35%, respectively). This can be interpreted by the fact that the students in the two groups are aware of this aspect of spoken grammar. However, ellipsis was more frequently employed in the role plays of the CG than in the role plays of the Exp.G (54 and 44 instances, respectively).

The percentage of use of vague language by the CG and the Exp.G is 23.53% and 47.05%, respectively. Although the number of the pairs in the Exp.G who took account of this aspect (08 pairs) is as twice as the number of the pairs in the CG (04 pairs), it cannot

be described as high. This reveals the need of the students to be sensitised to vague language and supplied with a wider range of its elements.

In the CG and the Exp.G, very high proportions of the learners, with slight differences in percentage, did consider the employment of spoken discourse markers (82.35% and 94.11%, respectively). 73 markers were embedded by the CG, while 82 by the Exp.G. The participants in the two groups seem not to be ignorant of this aspect, in spite of the fact that the spoken discourse markers which they used do not constitute a wide variety (“ok,” “oh,” “yes,” “so,” “well” and “you know”).

Despite the informality of the context of the role plays, only 01 pair in the CG chose the use of informal reported speech (01 instance) over the use of standard-grammar-based reported speech that sounds rather inappropriately formal for such settings. This shows severe lack of awareness of this aspect on the part of almost all the pairs in the two groups.

Like tails and informal reported speech, question tags were not used by almost all the students in both groups. This aspect confirms the participants’ lack of awareness of spoken grammar and the significance of the interactive, interpersonal implications which it conveys in informal spoken contexts.

Almost all the 17 pairs in the CG and the Exp.G seem to be sensitive to contractions. In terms of the frequency of occurrence of this spoken grammar aspect, it is approximately the same in the CG and the Exp.G (136 and 133 contractions, respectively).

As it is the case with conversational ellipsis, spoken discourse markers and contractions, the percentage of the students who embedded vocative forms in their role plays is considerable and nearly the same in the two groups (70.59% in the CG and 76.47% in the Exp.G). However, vocative forms were used more frequently by the Exp.G than the

CG (37 and 24 forms, respectively). With slight differences in the percentage of use and frequency of occurrence, most of the students in both groups appear to be alert to this aspect of spoken grammar.

Regarding statements as questions, the percentage of use differs from one group to the other: in the CG, only 05.88% made use of 02 statements as questions, while in the Exp.G, 41.17% used 09 statements as questions. The Exp.G seem to be more acquainted with this spoken grammar aspect, compared to the CG. It should be mentioned, however, that over half the pairs (10) in the Exp.G did not use statements as questions. This reflects their lack of awareness of such patterns.

As it is the case with statements as questions, the discrepancy between the CG and the Exp.G in the percentage of use of response questions is rather appreciable, in that 41.17% (Exp.G) is a high percentage in comparison with 05.88% (CG). The 07 pairs in the Exp.G appropriately employed 10 response questions, whereas the one pair in the CG used only 01.

4.3.2 The Post-test

The post-test intends to check whether the teaching of a selected set of spoken grammar aspects has been effective in sensitising the students in the Exp.G to the spoken grammar aspects and their interpersonal, interactive meanings. In other words, the ultimate aim is to test the impact of the provided instruction on the students' conversational output. The results obtained by the CG and the Exp.G have been analysed in terms of the percentage of use of the spoken grammar aspects by the 17 pairs and the frequency of the spoken grammar aspects in the students' role plays.

4.3.2.1 The Control Group

The percentage of use of most of the spoken grammar aspects by the CG is very low.

| Aspects of Spoken Grammar | N | % |
|----------------------------------|----------|----------|
| 1. Heads | 02 | 11.76 |
| 2. Tails | / | / |
| 3. Conversational Ellipsis | 14 | 82.35 |
| 4. Vague Language | 03 | 17.65 |
| 5. Spoken Discourse Markers | 17 | 100 |
| 6. Informal Reported Speech | 01 | 05.88 |
| 7. Question Tags | / | / |
| 8. Contractions | 17 | 100 |
| 9. Vocative Use | 14 | 82.35 |
| 10. Statements as Questions | 04 | 23.53 |
| 11. Response Questions | / | / |

Table 26: Use of the Spoken Grammar Aspects by the Control Group in the Post-test

The least used aspects were informal reported speech (05.88%), heads (11.76%), vague language (17.65%) and statements as questions (23.53%). More noteworthy is the fact that no tails, question tags or response questions were spotted in any of the role plays. Most of the students made reference to the standard, rather than spoken, grammar aspects, except for four spoken grammar aspects which were employed by the vast majority of the students (spoken discourse markers: 100%, contractions: 100%, conversational ellipsis: 82.35% and vocative use: 82.35%). It can be deduced that most of the students are not as acquainted with spoken grammar as they are with standard grammar. They seem to have the aspects of standard grammar as the only choices for interaction in all kinds of spoken contexts: the formal, semi-formal and informal ones.

With respect to the frequency of occurrence of the spoken grammar aspects in the CG's role plays, most of the aspects were extremely infrequent, as shown in Table 27. The very least frequent aspects were tails, question tags, response questions, informal reported speech, heads and statements as questions.

| Aspects of Spoken Grammar | Frequency |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Heads | 02 |
| 2. Tails | / |
| 3. Conversational Ellipsis | 50 |
| 4. Vague Language | 07 |
| 5. Spoken Discourse Markers | 69 |
| 6. Informal Reported Speech | 01 |
| 7. Question Tags | / |
| 8. Contractions | 97 |
| 9. Vocative Use | 28 |
| 10. Statements as Questions | 04 |
| 11. Response Questions | / |

Table 27: Frequency of the Spoken Grammar Aspects in the Control Group's Role Plays in the Post-test

– Heads

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 01 |
| 2 | 01 |
| Total | 02 |

Table 28: Frequency of Heads in the Control Group's Role Plays in the Post-test

Each of the 02 pairs who used heads inserted 01 instance appropriately:

1. “You are helping me a lot because I know that *style of wearing*, it somehow has a relationship with your personality.”
2. “*Teachers*, some are serious while others not care.”

This aspect is almost non-existent in the students’ output.

– Tails

In all the role plays, no tail construction has been spotted. One pair inappropriately used the spoken discourse marker “yes” instead of tails to emphasise their opinion:

1. “You are helping me a lot because I know that style of wearing, it somehow has a relationship with your personality, *yes*.”
2. “You can wear something which go with your age, *yes*.”

The tails “*it has*” and “*you can*”, respectively, would have been appropriate choices. The non-existence of the tail aspect in the role plays bears witness to the students’ ignorance of this grammatical pattern.

– Conversational Ellipsis

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 07 |
| 2 | 07 |
| 3 | 07 |
| 4 | 05 |
| 5 | 05 |
| 6 | 04 |
| 7 | 04 |
| 8 | 02 |
| 9 | 02 |
| 10 | 02 |
| 11 | 02 |

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| 12 | 01 |
| 13 | 01 |
| 14 | 01 |
| Total | 50 |

Table 29: Frequency of Conversational Ellipsis in the Control Group's Role Plays in the Post-test

Most of the pairs (09) used conversational ellipsis infrequently (between once and 4 times). Their role plays are mostly made up of complete utterances (Subject + Verb + Object / Complement). A few examples of the elliptical utterances produced by some students include:

1. "Just our classmates."
2. "So traditional?"
3. "Any addition, please?"
4. "Attractive somehow."
5. "No problem."
6. "About what?"

It appears that the learners do not realise the worthwhile natural contribution of such an aspect to conversation.

– Vague Language

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 05 |
| 2 | 01 |
| 3 | 01 |
| Total | 07 |

Table 30: Frequency of Vague Language in the Control Group's Role Plays in the Post-test

Of the 03 pairs who integrated vague language into their oral performance, 02 pairs used only 01 element. The vagueness elements were embedded in the following utterances.

1. “Besides, I have a very bad luck and I’m *a bit* messy too.”
2. “I’m revising in a weekends *a little bit*.”
3. “You can wear *something* which go with your age.”
4. “What *kind of* advice you can give me to help me to be exceptional in the party?”
5. “Attractive *somehow*.”
6. “It *somehow* has a relationship with your personality.”
7. “We can be *somehow* strict because we are wearing a veil.”

Like heads and tails, vague language is very infrequent in the students’ performance, which reflects the learners’ severe lack of awareness of this aspect and its implications.

– Spoken Discourse Markers

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 14 |
| 2 | 07 |
| 3 | 06 |
| 4 | 06 |
| 5 | 06 |
| 6 | 05 |
| 7 | 05 |
| 8 | 04 |
| 9 | 04 |
| 10 | 02 |
| 11 | 02 |
| 12 | 02 |
| 13 | 02 |
| 14 | 01 |
| 15 | 01 |
| 16 | 01 |
| 17 | 01 |

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| Total | 69 |
|--------------|-----------|

Table 31: Frequency of Spoken Discourse Markers in the Control Group’s Role Plays in the Post-test

Almost half the pairs (08) made use of only 01 or 02 spoken discourse markers. So, we can say that all the 17 pairs used such markers, but not all of them used these markers frequently. The markers that occurred in the students’ role plays are “yes,” “ok,” “so,” “oh” and “you know”.

– Informal Reported Speech

The only pair who chose to report others’ speech according to the norms of spoken grammar used 01 instance of informal reported speech: “We were screaming Maria, Maria, where are you?” As it is the case with heads and tails, this spoken grammar aspect is almost non-existent in the students’ output.

– Question Tags

Like tails, no question tag occurred in any of the role plays. It is worth noting that one of the pairs produced the following utterance: “You don’t, you have a mobile *or what?*” This pair seems to have used an “easier” phrase, “*or what?*”, to carry out the function of a question tag. The latter would have been an apt choice in this context (“You have a mobile, *don’t you?*”).

– Contractions

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 14 |
| 2 | 11 |
| 3 | 10 |
| 4 | 10 |
| 5 | 09 |

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| 6 | 07 |
| 7 | 07 |
| 8 | 06 |
| 9 | 04 |
| 10 | 04 |
| 11 | 03 |
| 12 | 03 |
| 13 | 03 |
| 14 | 02 |
| 15 | 02 |
| 16 | 01 |
| 17 | 01 |
| Total | 97 |

Table 32: Frequency of Contractions in the Control Group's Role Plays in the Post-test

Over half the pairs (09) employed contractions between once and 4 times. The infrequent use of such patterns can be traced back to the fact that the students are more accustomed to the use of full forms.

– Vocative Use

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 05 |
| 2 | 04 |
| 3 | 03 |
| 4 | 02 |
| 5 | 02 |
| 6 | 02 |
| 7 | 02 |
| 8 | 02 |
| 9 | 01 |
| 10 | 01 |
| 11 | 01 |
| 12 | 01 |
| 13 | 01 |
| 14 | 01 |
| Total | 28 |

Table 33: Frequency of Vocative Use in the Control Group's Role Plays in the Post-test

The majority of the pairs (11) who embedded vocative forms in their role plays used between 01 and 02 forms. In spite of the fact that 06 pairs used only 01 form, we can say that the majority of the students are aware of this spoken grammar aspect. The students' vocative use includes primarily their names, in addition to other forms like "dad," "mum," "(dear) father," "son," "my daughter," "darling," "friend" and "Miss".

– **Statements as Questions**

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 01 |
| 2 | 01 |
| 3 | 01 |
| 4 | 01 |
| Total | 04 |

Table 34: Frequency of Statements as Questions in the Control Group's Role Plays in the Post-test

Only 01 statement as question occurred in the role plays of each of the 04 pairs.

1. "Your party is just with women?"
2. "I understand that you stop your studies?"
3. "You mean the incident of last summer?"
4. "You remember those group of boys that smoking in the classroom after the session?"

It is questionable that the 02 pairs who produced the first and second statements as questions are aware of such kind of statements and their interpersonal, interactive function. Due to a problem these pairs had with the inversion of the subject and verb, they might have accidentally formed the 02 statements as questions when they were trying to form regular questions. Having examined the regular questions produced by these pairs, we have noticed the existence of a few ill-formed questions that have the form of statements – for

example, “*What kind of advice *you can* give me to help me to be exceptional in the party?”

– Response Questions

Like tails and question tags, no instance of response questions was found in all the role plays. Response questions constitute a further aspect of spoken grammar which unveils the very infrequent use of spoken grammar on the part of the vast majority of the students.

4.3.2.2 The Experimental Group

Overall, most of the aspects of spoken grammar were used by a large percentage of the pairs.

| Aspects of Spoken Grammar | N | % |
|----------------------------------|----------|----------|
| 1. Heads | 09 | 52.94 |
| 2. Tails | 01 | 05.88 |
| 3. Conversational Ellipsis | 17 | 100 |
| 4. Vague Language | 11 | 64.71 |
| 5. Spoken Discourse Markers | 17 | 100 |
| 6. Informal Reported Speech | 02 | 11.76 |
| 7. Question Tags | 07 | 41.17 |
| 8. Contractions | 17 | 100 |
| 9. Vocative Use | 15 | 88.23 |
| 10. Statements as Questions | 05 | 29.41 |
| 11. Response Questions | 10 | 58.82 |

Table 35: Use of the Spoken Grammar Aspects by the Experimental Group in the Post-test

All the 17 pairs used conversational ellipsis, spoken discourse markers and contractions. Most of the pairs embedded vocative forms and vague language elements in their role plays (88.23% and 64.71%, respectively). Moreover, slightly more than half the pairs considered the use of response questions and heads (58.82% and 52.94%, respectively). Such results lend a strong support for the viability of the provided treatment (instruction of the eleven spoken grammar aspects). Having been made aware of the various aspects of spoken grammar and their interpersonal, interactive functions, the students chose to make reference to most of the aspects of spoken grammar, rather than the aspects of standard grammar, in their role plays.

Table 36 exhibits that most of the spoken grammar aspects were frequent in the role plays of the Exp.G. The aspects that were used most frequently are contractions, spoken discourse markers, conversational ellipsis, vocative use and response questions.

| Aspects of Spoken Grammar | Frequency |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Heads | 13 |
| 2. Tails | 01 |
| 3. Conversational Ellipsis | 75 |
| 4. Vague Language | 18 |
| 5. Spoken Discourse Markers | 131 |
| 6. Informal Reported Speech | 02 |
| 7. Question Tags | 10 |
| 8. Contractions | 171 |
| 9. Vocative Use | 50 |
| 10. Statements as Questions | 05 |

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| 11. Response Questions | 21 |
|------------------------|----|

Table 36: Frequency of the Spoken Grammar Aspects in the Experimental Group's Role Plays in the Post-test

– Heads

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 03 |
| 2 | 03 |
| 3 | 01 |
| 4 | 01 |
| 5 | 01 |
| 6 | 01 |
| 7 | 01 |
| 8 | 01 |
| 9 | 01 |
| Total | 13 |

Table 37: Frequency of Heads in the Experimental Group's Role Plays in the Post-test

Out of the 09 pairs who employed the head aspect, 07 used 01 item. The heads produced by the students can be categorised into two main types: “typical heads” (a subject or an object placed at the beginning of the clause and repeated in the form of a pronoun in the subsequent part of the same clause):

1. “And *the administration*, they don't tell you what you should do.”
2. “*Mrs. Smith*, I hate her when she screams.”
3. “*Lots of them*, they haven't beautiful voice.”
4. “And *the other kind*, they're very severe and specially the old ones.”
5. “There are *teachers*, they even don't know what they're doing.”

6. “But you find *some teachers*, I mean, they’re excellent.”

and “heads which provide a broad topical framework,” not necessarily repeated in any subsequent part of the clause:

7. “*I have very important news to tell you about.* (...) I decide to leave the school to get a job.”

8. “*I want to tell you just something you have to keep it in your mind,* that Medicine is a good branch for you...”

9. “*That’s when I learned something important.* (...) Never get your eyes away from a child.”

10. “*They’re a few ingredients,* you just need a cup and half flour and two eggs...”

11. “Mum, *I want to tell you something,* but promise me to be agree with me. (...) My friends are organise a trip, and they asked me to go with them.”

12. “*That’s funny because I just remember the last summer incident.* (...) I remember that you were in your room chatting...”

13. “*I remember there is a big show today.* Can you come with me? We will enjoy our time.”

This frequent use of heads owes its occurrence to the instruction supplied for the Exp.G.

– Tails

Only 01 pair used 01 tail in their role play: “Because it is low-leveled, *the transport.*” 02 pairs inappropriately inserted the spoken discourse marker “yes” at the end of their utterances in order to emphasise their opinions:

1. “No, no, it’s very easy, *yes.*”

2. “You can’t study, *yes*.”

Instead of the marker “yes,” the pairs could have embedded appropriate elements, tails, that would have fitted in this particular part of the utterance and achieved the intended purpose (emphasising opinions):

1. “No, no, it’s very easy, *it is*.”

2. “You can’t study, *you can’t*.”

Although many students stated opinions and incorporated narratives into their role plays, almost no one embedded any tails to emphasise their opinions or highlight and evaluate key moments in their narratives. Even after instruction, the students followed the Subject-Verb-Object pattern, rather than the tail pattern. It is common in language teaching and learning that the students may not use immediately the language aspects they have newly learnt.

– **Conversational Ellipsis**

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 12 |
| 2 | 11 |
| 3 | 09 |
| 4 | 06 |
| 5 | 06 |
| 6 | 06 |
| 7 | 05 |
| 8 | 04 |
| 9 | 03 |
| 10 | 02 |
| 11 | 02 |
| 12 | 02 |
| 13 | 02 |
| 14 | 02 |
| 15 | 01 |
| 16 | 01 |
| 17 | 01 |

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| Total | 75 |
|--------------|-----------|

Table 38: Frequency of Conversational Ellipsis in the Experimental Group's Role Plays in the Post-test

We notice that 07 pairs used this spoken grammar aspect between 5 and 12 times.

What follows are some instances of the students' elliptical utterances.

1. "As you like."
2. "And funny at the same time, remember?"
3. "Glad to meet you."
4. "Maybe in the future."
5. "How about chocolate cup cakes?"
6. "Always the same story."
7. "Not now, after finishing our works."
8. "Welcome, any time."
9. "Sorry, something to drink?"
10. "And some cakes as well."

It appears that after the instructional period, the students came to realise that ellipsis is a very prevalent feature of spoken English.

– Vague Language

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 04 |
| 2 | 03 |
| 3 | 02 |
| 4 | 02 |

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| 5 | 01 |
| 6 | 01 |
| 7 | 01 |
| 8 | 01 |
| 9 | 01 |
| 10 | 01 |
| 11 | 01 |
| Total | 18 |

Table 39: Frequency of Vague Language in the Experimental Group's Role Plays in the Post-test

Most of the pairs (07) who considered the use of vague language embedded 01 item into their role plays. The following utterances include the 18 elements of vague language used by the 11 pairs.

1. "Your voice seems *a bit* gloom."
2. "I just had a party and I invited *maybe* twenty of my friends..."
3. "I want to have *some* fun."
4. "*If I didn't forget*, you have, erm, you have eleven module in first year."
5. "Forget about the party *and everything*."
6. "No, I just clean the house *and everything*."
7. "I think that a teacher who's teaching in the university (...) should know about the teaching and about dealing with students, giving marks and feedback *and all things*."
8. "It's better to pick up your *things* and go out."
9. "We have also many *things* in common."
10. "We can share really good *things*."

11. “You find *things* special here.”
12. “There is a lot of *things* that can be counted as minus.”
13. “There is a lot bad *things* here.”
14. “I will be good in cooking and helping you in other *stuff*.”
15. “I can’t study Medicine *or anything* else.”
16. “Wait, Sarah, give me a pen *or something*, that’s to write the ingredients.”
17. “Oh, sorry, *something* to drink?”
18. “Could you figure out *something* just to see you for a while?”

During instruction, the students were sensitised to the interactive, interpersonal implication conveyed by vague language: softening the message being transmitted, especially in contexts where precision might sound unduly authoritative and assertive.

– **Spoken Discourse Markers**

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 16 |
| 2 | 12 |
| 3 | 11 |
| 4 | 11 |
| 5 | 11 |
| 6 | 10 |
| 7 | 08 |
| 8 | 07 |
| 9 | 07 |
| 10 | 07 |
| 11 | 06 |
| 12 | 06 |
| 13 | 05 |
| 14 | 05 |
| 15 | 04 |
| 16 | 03 |
| 17 | 02 |

| | |
|--------------|------------|
| Total | 131 |
|--------------|------------|

Table 40: Frequency of Spoken Discourse Markers in the Experimental Group’s Role Plays in the Post-test

Most of the pairs (14) embedded their role plays with a variety of spoken discourse markers, ranging between 5 and 16 markers in each. The range of the markers inserted includes “ok, yes, right, so, I know, well, you know, by the way, I mean, as you said, I don’t know, anyway, the hesitation marker er/erm and the interjections oh (dear), look and wow”. Having been made alert to the preponderance of such markers in spoken English, the students came to use them more frequently.

– Informal Reported Speech

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 01 |
| 2 | 01 |
| Total | 02 |

Table 41: Frequency of Informal Reported Speech in the Experimental Group’s Role Plays in the Post-test

Each of the 02 pairs who chose to report speech informally, by keeping the original words used by the original speakers, employed 01 instance of informal reported speech.

1. “My sister said I will be happy if I make them by myself.”
2. “Sarah said I’m waiting for you.”

Although the students were sensitised, during instruction, to this aspect and its interactive, interpersonal function, the majority did not make use of it. We could note that some of them did not report speech in the first place, while others chose to report speech according

to the norms of standard grammar, rather than the norms of spoken grammar which would have been more appropriate for the informal context of the role plays.

– **Question Tags**

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 02 |
| 2 | 02 |
| 3 | 02 |
| 4 | 01 |
| 5 | 01 |
| 6 | 01 |
| 7 | 01 |
| Total | 10 |

Table 42: Frequency of Question Tags in the Experimental Group's Role Plays in the Post-test

The 07 pairs who made use of question tags used them between once and twice.

The accurately formed question tags are the following ones:

1. "You are a first-year student, *aren't you?*"
2. "I think it's a garbage, *isn't it?*"
3. "You have a stone head, *haven't you?*"
4. "You will put me in embarrassing situation, *will you not?*"
5. "You have the recipe, *don't you?*"

When teaching spoken grammar, light was cast on the point that question tags constitute an essential aspect of spoken grammar that is selected by speakers of English to be frequently used in less formal spoken contexts of interaction. In the latter, messages are not simply stated, but are the subject of negotiation and re-negotiation. We could also notice that 04 pairs had difficulty forming such questions; hence, the wrong use of 05 question tags:

1. “*You should be happy because you’ve got your Bacculaureate, *aren’t you?*” (Correct form: “shouldn’t you?”)
2. “*You don’t have any recipe, *don’t you?*” (“do you?”)
3. “*It must be good thing, *is it?*” (“It’s a good thing, isn’t it?”)
4. “*You remember that my father was sick, *don’t you remember it?*” (“don’t you?”)
5. “*Are you Ahlem, *aren’t you?*” (“You’re Ahlem, aren’t you?”)

These students may need more practice and focus on the form of this kind of questions, so as to ensure more accurate use.

– **Contractions**

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 20 |
| 2 | 19 |
| 3 | 18 |
| 4 | 16 |
| 5 | 16 |
| 6 | 12 |
| 7 | 10 |
| 8 | 09 |
| 9 | 09 |
| 10 | 09 |
| 11 | 08 |
| 12 | 07 |
| 13 | 07 |
| 14 | 04 |
| 15 | 03 |
| 16 | 02 |
| 17 | 02 |
| Total | 171 |

Table 43: Frequency of Contractions in the Experimental Group’s Role Plays in the Post-test

The majority of the pairs (13) used contractions between 7 and 20 times. These students employed such patterns appropriately and consistently throughout their role plays. Instruction has helped to direct the students' attention to the fact that contractions are very preponderant in speech and make a vital contribution to its natural tenor.

– Vocative Use

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 08 |
| 2 | 07 |
| 3 | 06 |
| 4 | 05 |
| 5 | 04 |
| 6 | 03 |
| 7 | 03 |
| 8 | 03 |
| 9 | 02 |
| 10 | 02 |
| 11 | 02 |
| 12 | 02 |
| 13 | 01 |
| 14 | 01 |
| 15 | 01 |
| Total | 50 |

Table 44: Frequency of Vocative Use in the Experimental Group's Role Plays in the Post-test

Of the 15 pairs who considered the use of vocative forms, the majority (12) employed more than 01 form. A number of the vocative items embedded by the students include the names of the latter or the characters they were playing, in addition to other forms like “mum, (my) daughter, sister, brother, friend, Miss, honey” and “apple of my eyes”. This improvement confirms again the fruitfulness of the provided treatment.

– **Statements as Questions**

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 01 |
| 2 | 01 |
| 3 | 01 |
| 4 | 01 |
| 5 | 01 |
| Total | 05 |

Table 45: Frequency of Statements as Questions in the Experimental Group’s Role Plays in the Post-test

Each of the 05 pairs who used statements as questions produced one appropriately.

1. “This is how you answer back my favour?”
2. “So, you want to study abroad?”
3. “When we lost the girl little Kathy?”
4. “No, you know that your exams begin next week?”
5. “So, I will choose it now?”

Although the use of these statements as questions is appropriate, we cannot claim to have recorded progress in the use of such an aspect of spoken grammar.

– **Response Questions**

| Pairs | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | 03 |
| 2 | 03 |
| 3 | 03 |
| 4 | 03 |
| 5 | 02 |
| 6 | 02 |
| 7 | 02 |

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| 8 | 01 |
| 9 | 01 |
| 10 | 01 |
| Total | 21 |

Table 46: Frequency of Response Questions in the Experimental Group's Role Plays in the Post-test

Most of the pairs (07) who took into consideration the use of this spoken grammar aspect employed appropriately more than 01 response question. In a few role plays, more than 01 response question were embedded consecutively (the last four utterances).

1. "Really?" (occurred **05 times**, in response to various utterances, one of which is "I'll go.")
2. "How can I forget it?" (occurred **twice**: in response to "Do you remember days of joy and play?" and "Do you remember our days together, especially in the Mathematic session...?")
3. "Chocolate cup cakes?" (in response to "How about chocolate cup cakes?")
4. "Turkish movies?" (in response to "Well, I like Turkish movies.")
5. "Today?" (in response to "We will enjoy our time.")
6. "How could I forget the day you were suffering?" (in response to "You remember that my father was sick, don't you remember?")
7. "Do you really?" (in response to "You know, I will go.")
8. "Nothing?" (in response to "Nothing, forget about it.")
9. "Trip? Are you killing me?" (in response to "My friends are organise a trip, and they asked me to go with them.")

10. “Disgusting? Are you talking seriously?” (in response to “The room is too disgusting.”)
11. “The kitchen? What have you left?” (in response to “All it needs is to wash some dishes and clean the floor and to remove the dust as well from the ceiling.”)
12. “What? Next month?” (in response to “My wedding party will take place next month.”)

This frequent use of response questions can be traced back to the teaching of spoken grammar which has served to raise the learners’ awareness about how such questions express emotions and personal attitudes in response to what has been said.

4.3.2.3 Comparison of the Results Obtained by the Control Group and the Experimental Group in the Post-test

The percentage of the students who used the eleven spoken grammar aspects and the frequency of occurrence of these aspects in the role plays are compared in the CG and the Exp.G, as displayed in Tables 47 and 48. On the whole, Table 47 suggests that the percentage of use of some spoken grammar aspects (heads, conversational ellipsis, vague language, question tags and response questions) considerably differs one group from the other. The higher percentages of use of these aspects were recorded in the Exp.G.

| Aspects of Spoken Grammar | CG | | Exp.G | |
|-----------------------------|----|-------|-------|-------|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 1. Heads | 02 | 11.76 | 09 | 52.94 |
| 2. Tails | / | / | 01 | 05.88 |
| 3. Conversational Ellipsis | 14 | 82.35 | 17 | 100 |
| 4. Vague Language | 03 | 17.65 | 11 | 64.71 |
| 5. Spoken Discourse Markers | 17 | 100 | 17 | 100 |
| 6. Informal Reported Speech | 01 | 05.88 | 02 | 11.76 |
| 7. Question Tags | / | / | 07 | 41.17 |
| 8. Contractions | 17 | 100 | 17 | 100 |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|----|-------|----|-------|
| 9. Vocative Use | 14 | 82.35 | 15 | 88.23 |
| 10. Statements as Questions | 04 | 23.53 | 05 | 29.41 |
| 11. Response Questions | / | / | 10 | 58.82 |

Table 47: Use of the Spoken Grammar Aspects by the Control Group and the Experimental Group in the Post-test

This major difference in the results obtained by the two groups owes its occurrence to the treatment (the teaching of the eleven spoken grammar aspects) provided for the Exp.G.

Table 48 indicates that, like the percentage of use of the spoken grammar aspects, the frequency of occurrence of most of such aspects in the Exp.G's role plays is remarkably higher than the one in the CG's role plays (heads, conversational ellipsis, vague language, spoken discourse markers, question tags, contractions, vocative use and response questions). After the instructional period, the students came to realise the prevalence of the spoken grammar aspects in conversational settings.

| Aspects of Spoken Grammar | CG | Exp. G |
|----------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| 1. Heads | 02 | 13 |
| 2. Tails | / | 01 |
| 3. Conversational Ellipsis | 50 | 75 |
| 4. Vague Language | 07 | 18 |
| 5. Spoken Discourse Markers | 69 | 131 |
| 6. Informal Reported Speech | 01 | 02 |
| 7. Question Tags | / | 10 |
| 8. Contractions | 97 | 171 |
| 9. Vocative Use | 28 | 50 |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|----|----|
| 10. Statements as Questions | 04 | 05 |
| 11. Response Questions | / | 21 |

Table 48: Frequency of the Spoken Grammar Aspects in the Control Group's and the Experimental Group's Role Plays in the Post-test

The percentage of use of heads remarkably differs one group from the other, in that more than half the students (52.94%) in the Exp.G employed such elements, while only 11.76% in the CG took them into account. In terms of the frequency of occurrence, whereas only 02 heads occurred in all the role plays of the CG, a variety of 13 heads was embedded in the Exp.G's role plays.

Nearly all the pairs in the two groups did not consider the use of the tail pattern. The latter is thoroughly infrequent in the performances of both groups.

In the CG, the majority of the pairs (82.35%) incorporated conversational ellipsis into their role plays, while in the Exp.G, all the pairs took this aspect into consideration. The use of conversational ellipsis by the Exp.G is more frequent than the one by the CG (75 and 50 instances, respectively).

The percentage of use of vague language by the Exp.G (64.71%) is noticeably higher than the one by the CG (only 17.65%). This aspect of spoken grammar was used by the Exp.G in a more frequent way (18 elements) than it was by the CG (07 elements).

Spoken discourse markers were embedded by all the 17 pairs in the two groups. However, these patterns were employed much more frequently and appropriately by the Exp.G than the CG (131 and 69 markers, respectively).

The percentage of the students who used informal reported speech is very low and approximately the same in the CG and the Exp.G (05.88% and 11.76%, respectively).

Regarding the frequency of occurrence of this aspect, the one pair in the CG and each of the 02 pairs in the Exp.G appropriately employed 01 instance of informal reported speech.

While no student in the CG made use of question tags, 41.17% of the learners in the Exp.G embedded 10 into their role plays. Therefore, the difference in the percentage of use and the frequency of occurrence of question tags in the role plays of the two groups is appreciable.

As it is the case with spoken discourse markers, contractions were employed by all the students in both groups. However, in the Exp.G, these items were used remarkably more frequently than they were in the CG (171 and 97 contractions, respectively).

Vocative use was taken account of by considerable and almost similar proportions of the students in the two groups (82.35% in the CG and 88.23% in the Exp.G). However, in the CG, vocative forms were used very noticeably less frequently than they were in the Exp.G (28 and 50 forms, respectively).

The percentage of use of statements as questions is rather low and nearly the same in the CG and the Exp.G (23.53% and 29.41%, respectively). Each of the 04 pairs in the CG and 05 pairs in the Exp.G appropriately used 01 statement as question.

Last but not least, while no pair in the CG used response questions, more than half the students in the Exp.G (58.82%) employed 21. Such spoken grammar structures were integrated into the role plays in an appropriate way.

4.3.3 Overall Analysis of the Results

What emerges from the analysis of the results obtained by the CG and the Exp.G in the pre-test and the post-test suggests that, as was expected, the students in both groups did not display noticeable results in the pre-test. In contrast, the students in the Exp.G achieved a major improvement in the post-test.

4.3.3.1 The Control Group

The analysis of the results displayed in Table 49 suggests that there is no remarkable difference between the pre-test and the post-test performances of the CG in terms of the percentage of use of the spoken grammar aspects.

| Aspects of Spoken Grammar | Pre-test | | Post-test | |
|-----------------------------|----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 1. Heads | 03 | 17.65 | 02 | 11.76 |
| 2. Tails | 01 | 05.88 | / | / |
| 3. Conversational Ellipsis | 15 | 88.23 | 14 | 82.35 |
| 4. Vague Language | 04 | 23.53 | 03 | 17.65 |
| 5. Spoken Discourse Markers | 14 | 82.35 | 17 | 100 |
| 6. Informal Reported Speech | 01 | 05.88 | 01 | 05.88 |
| 7. Question Tags | 01 | 05.88 | / | / |
| 8. Contractions | 16 | 94.11 | 17 | 100 |
| 9. Vocative Use | 12 | 70.59 | 14 | 82.35 |
| 10. Statements as Questions | 01 | 05.88 | 04 | 23.53 |
| 11. Response Questions | 01 | 05.88 | / | / |

Table 49: Use of the Spoken Grammar Aspects by the Control Group in the Pre-test and Post-test

Apart from four aspects of spoken grammar, namely conversational ellipsis, spoken discourse markers, contractions and vocative use, which were employed by most of the pairs in the pre-test and the post-test, the other seven aspects (heads, tails, vague language, informal reported speech, question tags, statements as questions and response questions) were used by a very extremely limited percentage of the pairs. More importantly, the percentage of use of many aspects dropped in the post-test (heads: from 17.65% in the pre-test to 11.76% in the post-test, tails: from 05.88% to 00%, conversational ellipsis: from

88.23% to 82.35%, vague language: from 23.53% to 17.65%, question tags: from 05.88% to 00%, and response questions: from 05.88% to 00%). The students in the CG have not achieved progress because they did not receive instruction of the spoken grammar aspects.

Concerning the frequency of occurrence of the spoken grammar aspects in the CG's role plays, the following table indicates that no significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test performances was recorded.

| Aspects of Spoken Grammar | Pre-test | Post-test |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. Heads | 03 | 02 |
| 2. Tails | 01 | / |
| 3. Conversational Ellipsis | 54 | 50 |
| 4. Vague Language | 09 | 07 |
| 5. Spoken Discourse Markers | 73 | 69 |
| 6. Informal Reported Speech | 01 | 01 |
| 7. Question Tags | 01 | / |
| 8. Contractions | 136 | 97 |
| 9. Vocative Use | 24 | 28 |
| 10. Statements as Questions | 02 | 04 |
| 11. Response Questions | 01 | / |

Table 50: Frequency of the Spoken Grammar Aspects in the Control Group's Role Plays in the Pre-test and Post-test

Such results bear witness to the fact that the CG was not made aware of the preponderance of the spoken grammar aspects in conversations.

4.3.3.2 The Experimental Group

On the basis of the results obtained by the Exp.G, it can be deduced that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test performances in terms of the percentage of use of the spoken grammar aspects.

| Aspects of Spoken Grammar | Pre-test | | Post-test | |
|-----------------------------|----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 1. Heads | 02 | 11.76 | 09 | 52.94 |
| 2. Tails | / | / | 01 | 05.88 |
| 3. Conversational Ellipsis | 14 | 82.35 | 17 | 100 |
| 4. Vague Language | 08 | 47.05 | 11 | 64.71 |
| 5. Spoken Discourse Markers | 16 | 94.11 | 17 | 100 |
| 6. Informal Reported Speech | / | / | 02 | 11.76 |
| 7. Question Tags | / | / | 07 | 41.17 |
| 8. Contractions | 17 | 100 | 17 | 100 |
| 9. Vocative Use | 13 | 76.47 | 15 | 88.23 |
| 10. Statements as Questions | 07 | 41.17 | 05 | 29.41 |
| 11. Response Questions | 07 | 41.17 | 10 | 58.82 |

Table 51: Use of the Spoken Grammar Aspects by the Experimental Group in the Pre-test and Post-test

In the post-test, progress has been recorded in the percentage of use of most of the spoken grammar aspects: heads: from 11.76% in the pre-test to 52.94% in the post-test, question tags: from 00% to 41.17%, conversational ellipsis: from 82.35% to 100%, vague language: from 47.05% to 64.71%, response questions: from 41.17% to 58.82%, vocative use: from 76.47% to 88.23%, and spoken discourse markers: from 94.11% to 100%. This significant improvement could be traced back to the treatment (instruction of the eleven spoken grammar aspects) which has proved to be worthwhile in sensitising the students to the

various aspects of spoken grammar as well as the importance of the interactive, interpersonal implications which these aspects convey in semi-formal and informal spoken settings. In other words, raising the students' awareness of the spoken grammar aspects has helped to equip them with more grammatical choices between the aspects of spoken grammar and the aspects of standard grammar which the students are already more familiar with, as evidenced by the pre-test results.

With regard to the frequency of occurrence of the spoken grammar aspects in the Exp.G's role plays, the following table shows that there is a major difference between the pre-test and the post-test performances.

| Aspects of Spoken Grammar | Pre-test | Post-test |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. Heads | 03 | 13 |
| 2. Tails | / | 01 |
| 3. Conversational Ellipsis | 44 | 75 |
| 4. Vague Language | 11 | 18 |
| 5. Spoken Discourse Markers | 82 | 131 |
| 6. Informal Reported Speech | / | 02 |
| 7. Question Tags | / | 10 |
| 8. Contractions | 133 | 171 |
| 9. Vocative Use | 37 | 50 |
| 10. Statements as Questions | 09 | 05 |
| 11. Response Questions | 10 | 21 |

Table 52: Frequency of the Spoken Grammar Aspects in the Experimental Group's Role Plays in the Pre-test and Post-test

Most of the aspects were used noticeably more frequently under the post-test conditions: spoken discourse markers: from 82 instances in the pre-test to 131 instances in the post-test, contractions: from 133 to 171 instances, conversational ellipsis: from 44 to 75

instances, vocative use: from 37 to 50 instances, response questions: from 10 to 21 instances, heads: from 03 to 13 instances, question tags: from 00 to 10 instances, and vague language: from 11 to 18 instances. In relation to the underused three aspects, namely tails, informal reported speech and statements as questions, it should be brought to light the fact that it is common in the SLA / FLA field that acquisition of language aspects may not be necessarily immediate. The students may need more time and exposure to such three aspects in order to come to perceive how they positively contribute to natural English conversation.

Conclusion

This chapter has reported on an experiment which was conducted to test our first hypothesis. The results obtained validate this hypothesis. On the basis of the pre-test results, the majority of the students were found unaware of most of the aspects of spoken grammar. This lack of awareness was reflected through the students' constant reference to the aspects of standard grammar in their oral performance. The post-test results have shown the positive effect of spoken grammar teaching on the students' conversational English. Provision of this treatment has resulted in significant progress: most of the students in the Exp.G have grown alert to the various aspects of spoken grammar and the interactive, interpersonal meanings which these aspects transmit in conversational contexts. The instruction supplied has helped the largest proportion of the students to make use of various aspects of spoken grammar which they did not employ in the pre-test performance. It has also served to reinforce in the students the aspects which they were already aware of, before the provision of instruction, enabling them to use such aspects more frequently, especially the ones which are very pervasive in spoken English.

CHAPTER FIVE

TEACHERS' METHODOLOGY AND VIEWS ABOUT THE SPOKEN GRAMMAR ASPECTS

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Introduction

The students' lack of awareness of the spoken grammar aspects, revealed by the pre-test findings, raises questions about whether the OE teachers at the Department of Letters and English, University of Constantine 1, assign adequate attention to the teaching of spoken grammar. Through the Teachers' Questionnaire, we aim at finding out whether and to what extent the teachers of OE present spoken grammar, the methodology they adopt in teaching it, as well as their views about incorporating seven spoken grammar aspects into the OE syllabus: heads, tails, conversational ellipsis, vague language, spoken discourse markers, informal reported speech and question tags. We have listed in the questionnaire only seven aspects of spoken grammar instead of all the eleven aspects, as highlighted in the previous chapter, because it would have been time-consuming for the teachers to respond to questions about all the eleven aspects. Our choice of these seven aspects, in particular, is based on the fact that they are the most typical aspects of spoken grammar recurring in various works: McCarthy's and Carter's (1995, 2002), Carter's, Hughes' and McCarthy's (2000), Timmis' (2005) and Paterson's (2011). Exploration of the above-mentioned issues serves to test the second hypothesis of the present research: the OE teachers who are convinced of the importance of teaching the intrinsic aspects of spoken grammar would refer less to standard grammar in the teaching of conversation. The total number of our sample is 41 teachers of OE at the Department of Letters and English, University of Constantine 1.

5.1 Description of the Questionnaire

In the introduction of the Teachers' Questionnaire (see Appendix V: Teachers' Questionnaire, p. 402), we explain to the informants the aims of our study and request them to tick the appropriate box (or boxes) and make full statements whenever necessary. The questionnaire consists of ten questions presented in four sections. **Section One,**

General Information (Question (Q) 1 – Q3), intends to obtain general information about the respondents, namely their degree (Q1), experience in teaching OE (Q2) and teaching levels (Q3). In **Section Two, Teaching Spoken Grammar** (Q4 – Q6), the teachers are asked if they have taught the main seven aspects of spoken grammar, illustrated with an example, that characterise informal spoken English: heads, tails, conversational ellipsis, vague language, spoken discourse markers, informal reported speech and question tags (Q4). Then, they are required to mention the method(s) implemented in the presentation of each of the listed seven aspects of spoken grammar (Q5). This section also inquires into the activities employed in the instruction of each of the seven spoken grammar items (Q6). **Section Three, Views about Spoken Grammar** (Q7 – Q9), deals with the teachers' views about whether one should refer to spoken grammar, rather than standard grammar, in the teaching of conversation (Q7). If the answer is “No”, light is cast on the aspects of spoken grammar that the teachers think should not be taught (Q8) as well as the reasons why they think these aspects should not be taught (Q9). The final section, **Section Four: Further Suggestions**, is an opportunity for the teachers to add any suggestions or comments (Q10).

5.2 Analysis and Discussion of the Results

Section One: General Information

Q1. What is your degree?

- a. Licence**
- b. Master**
- c. Magister**
- d. Doctorat**

| Degree | N | % |
|---------------|-----------|------------|
| Licence | 01 | 02.44 |
| Master | 22 | 53.66 |
| Magister | 09 | 21.95 |
| Doctorat | 09 | 21.95 |
| Total | 41 | 100 |

Table 53: Teachers' Degrees

Note: “Magister” is the postgraduate degree in the former system. It lasts two years (or more) and is preceded by four years of instruction for the degree of “Licence” and followed by five years (or more) of training for the degree of “Doctorat.”

Table 53 indicates that slightly over half the teachers (53.66%) have a Master degree. The proportion of the teachers who have a “Magister” degree and those who have a “Doctorat” degree is the same (21.95%). Only one respondent has a “Licence” degree. This implies that most of the teachers are qualified to teach OE.

Q2. How long have you been teaching Oral Expression?

..... years.

| Years | N | % |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 – 5 | 27 | 65.85 |
| 6 – 10 | 06 | 14.63 |
| 11 – 15 | 03 | 07.32 |
| 16 – 20 | 03 | 07.32 |
| 21 – 25 | 02 | 04.88 |
| Total | 41 | 100 |

Table 54: Teaching Experience

According to Table 54, the mode class is [1 – 5[with an absolute frequency of 27. This means that more than half the teachers (65.85%) have a teaching experience which ranges between 1 and 5 years. The rest have an experience which ranges between 6 and 25 years. This entails that the teachers' contribution to the study can be relied on.

Q3. Which year(s)?

- a. First**
- b. Second**
- c. Third**
- d. Master**

| Level | N | % |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| a | 08 | 19.51 |
| b | 07 | 17.07 |
| c | 03 | 07.32 |
| d | 03 | 07.32 |
| ab | 06 | 14.62 |
| ac | 04 | 09.76 |
| bc | 03 | 07.32 |
| cd | 01 | 02.44 |
| abc | 04 | 09.76 |
| abd | 01 | 02.44 |
| abcd | 01 | 02.44 |
| Total | 41 | 100 |

Table 55: Teaching Levels

Out of 41 teachers, the greatest part forming 24 teachers (08 have taught only First year, 06 both First and Second years, 04 First and Third years, 04 First, Second and Third years, 01 First, Second and Master years, and 01 First, Second, Third and Master years) have taught First year. Slightly over half the teachers (22) have taught Second year, 16 teachers Third year, and 06 teachers Master. It could be said that the greatest part of the

teachers have taught First and Second years; this gives them a sound background for teaching the foundations of OE.

Section Two: Teaching Spoken Grammar

Informal spoken English is mainly characterised by the use of Heads, Tails, Conversational ellipsis, Vague language, Spoken discourse markers, Informal reported speech and Question tags.

Q4. Have you taught these aspects?

| Aspects | Examples | Yes | No |
|-----------------------------|--|-----|----|
| a. Heads | A friend of mine, his uncle bought a Ford Escort. | | |
| b. Tails | It's really nice, this dress . | | |
| c. Conversational Ellipsis | Seems nice . I like the place, very exciting there , and honestly never seen so many people! | | |
| d. Vague Language | <u>Speaker A</u> : Are you upset or something? <u>Speaker B</u> : I'm afraid I've a bit of a stomach ache. I guess I'm going to a sort of throw up. | | |
| e. Spoken Discourse Markers | <u>Speaker A</u> : Well, I mean in some ways, you should make the difference but, you know , it's complicated as well. <u>Speaker B</u> : Yeah, I see . | | |
| f. Informal Reported Speech | <u>Mary</u> : ...So she said, 'Well, go in the queue, Mary ,' she said, 'and find out what's happening.' So I went back to Dulcie and she says, 'All right Mary , will the bingo be starting soon? I can't see any chairs and tables .' 'Oh, no,' I said, 'we're in the wrong place! ' | | |
| g. Question Tags | Jimmy's a very nice boy, isn't he? He never says 'no' to someone who needs his help, does he? | | |

a. Heads

| Options | N | % |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 09 | 21.95 |
| No | 23 | 56.10 |
| No Answer | 09 | 21.95 |
| Total | 41 | 100 |

Table 56: Teaching Heads

More than half the teachers (56.10%) said they did not teach heads. This would imply that they referred to the standard grammar aspect, Subject-Verb-Object, in the teaching of informal speaking, most probably because they are more familiar with the standard grammar aspect than the spoken grammar one. It has also been observed that the percentage of the respondents who did not provide an answer (21.95%) is the same as the one of those who said they taught this spoken grammar aspect.

b. Tails

| Options | N | % |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 11 | 26.83 |
| No | 22 | 53.66 |
| No Answer | 08 | 19.51 |
| Total | 41 | 100 |

Table 57: Teaching Tails

Although the tail aspect is more appropriate in conversational contexts, over half the teachers (53.66%) said they did not teach it. Consequently, they made reference to the standard grammar Subject-Verb-Object pattern in their instruction of conversation. This could be due to the fact that this standard grammar aspect is more common to the teachers than the tail aspect.

c. Conversational Ellipsis

| Options | N | % |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 15 | 36.59 |
| No | 22 | 53.66 |
| No Answer | 04 | 09.75 |
| Total | 41 | 100 |

Table 58: Teaching Conversational Ellipsis

More than half the teachers (53.66%) who did not present this aspect appear to have adopted, in their teaching of conversation, the traditional meaning of the term “sentence”: a “complete” structure consisting of a Subject + Verb + Object. Therefore, they most probably considered “complete” sentences as more “correct” or “explicit” than ellipited sentences. In addition, we note that the percentage of the informants who said they taught conversational ellipsis (36.59%) is slightly higher than that of heads (21.95%) and that of tails (26.83%).

d. Vague Language

| Options | N | % |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 13 | 31.71 |
| No | 21 | 51.22 |
| No Answer | 07 | 17.07 |
| Total | 41 | 100 |

Table 59: Teaching Vague Language

Over half the teachers who said they did not introduce vague language (51.22%) most probably regarded it as a “negative” aspect which implies imprecision. In other words, they might have considered the elements of vague language as “ambiguous” forms

that are not worth teaching. We notice that a slighter percentage of the teachers (31.71%) than that of those who said they taught conversational ellipsis (36.59%) indicated that they taught vague language.

e. Spoken Discourse Markers

| Options | N | % |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 23 | 56.09 |
| No | 13 | 31.71 |
| No Answer | 05 | 12.20 |
| Total | 41 | 100 |

Table 60: Teaching Spoken Discourse Markers

Unlike heads, tails, conversational ellipsis and vague language, spoken discourse markers were presented by over half the teachers (56.09%). This could be due to the fact that such markers are a common terminology, and that they are often referred to in the OE class.

f. Informal Reported Speech

| Options | N | % |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 09 | 21.95 |
| No | 24 | 58.54 |
| No Answer | 08 | 19.51 |
| Total | 41 | 100 |

Table 61: Teaching Informal Reported Speech

The greatest part of the teachers (58.54%) said they did not teach informal reported speech. They may have thought that this aspect does not conform to the rules of standard

grammar which call for certain changes in the structure of the reported speech. It appears that the same limited percentage of the teachers as the one of those who said they taught heads (21.95%) indicated that they took into account the teaching of informal reported speech.

g. Question Tags

| Options | N | % |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 26 | 63.41 |
| No | 10 | 24.39 |
| No Answer | 05 | 12.20 |
| Total | 41 | 100 |

Table 62: Teaching Question Tags

Unlike the previously mentioned five aspects (heads, tails, conversational ellipsis, vague language and informal reported speech), the largest proportion of the teachers (63.41%) said they taught question tags. As it is the case with spoken discourse markers, this is most probably related to the fact that question tags are a common terminology, and that they are usually referred to in the teaching of speaking.

Q5. If “Yes”, which teaching method(s) have you used?

a. Implicit / Inductive

b. Explicit / Deductive

c. Both

| Aspects | Teaching Method |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| a. Heads | |
| b. Tails | |
| c. Conversational Ellipsis | |

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| d. Vague Language | |
| e. Spoken Discourse Markers | |
| f. Informal Reported Speech | |
| g. Question Tags | |

a. Heads

Out of the 09 teachers who said they taught heads and provided an answer, the vast majority, forming 07 teachers, said they used the implicit method in their instruction. These teachers may have thought that it might not be appealing for the students to start the presentation of this spoken grammar aspect with a number of grammatical rules (the explicit method).

b. Tails

| Teaching Method | N | % |
|----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Implicit / Inductive | 05 | 45.45 |
| Explicit / Deductive | 01 | 09.10 |
| Both | / | / |
| No Answer | 05 | 45.45 |
| Total | 11 | 100 |

Table 63: Method(s) Used for Teaching Tails

Out of the 11 teachers who said they taught this aspect, 05 said they adopted the implicit method, while 01 teacher said s/he used the explicit method. In addition, it is striking that nearly half the teachers (05) who said they taught this aspect did not mention their teaching method(s).

c. Conversational Ellipsis

| Teaching Method | N | % |
|----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Implicit / Inductive | 06 | 40 |
| Explicit / Deductive | 01 | 06.67 |
| Both | 01 | 06.67 |
| No Answer | 07 | 46.66 |
| Total | 15 | 100 |

Table 64: Method(s) Used for Teaching Conversational Ellipsis

Of the 15 teachers who said they taught this aspect, 06 said they employed the implicit method. We can also notice that, unexpectedly, more than half the teachers (07) did not indicate the teaching method(s).

d. Vague Language

| Teaching Method | N | % |
|----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Implicit / Inductive | 05 | 38.46 |
| Explicit / Deductive | 01 | 07.69 |
| Both | 01 | 07.69 |
| No Answer | 06 | 46.16 |
| Total | 13 | 100 |

Table 65: Method(s) Used for Teaching Vague Language

Out of the 13 teachers who said they introduced vague language, 05 said they taught it implicitly, whereas only 01 teacher indicated that s/he presented it explicitly. This is a further aspect which proves again that most of the teachers prefer the implicit method, rather than the explicit one in the introduction of spoken grammar. As it is the case with the previous aspect (conversational ellipsis), the largest number of the informants (06) did not supply an answer about the method(s) they used in the teaching of vague language.

e. Spoken Discourse Markers

| Teaching Method | N | % |
|------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Implicit / Inductive | 07 | 30.43 |
| Explicit / Deductive | 01 | 04.35 |
| Both | 02 | 08.70 |
| No Answer | 13 | 56.52 |
| Total | 23 | 100 |

Table 66: Method(s) Used for Teaching Spoken Discourse Markers

Very strikingly, out of the 23 teachers who said they taught spoken discourse markers, more than the half (13) did not state the teaching method. It is also worth noting the fact that 07 teachers said they made use of the implicit method in the teaching of such markers.

f. Informal Reported Speech

| Teaching Method | N | % |
|------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Implicit / Inductive | 03 | 33.33 |
| Explicit / Deductive | / | / |
| Both | 02 | 22.22 |
| No Answer | 04 | 44.45 |
| Total | 09 | 100 |

Table 67: Method(s) Used for Teaching Informal Reported Speech

Out of the 09 teachers who said they taught informal reported speech, 03 said they put into practice the implicit method, whereas 02 teachers said they employed both methods. The 02 teachers may have seen that it was more effective to vary the method according to the teaching situation.

g. Question Tags

| Teaching Method | N | % |
|------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Implicit / Inductive | 09 | 34.62 |
| Explicit / Deductive | 02 | 07.69 |
| Both | 04 | 15.38 |
| No Answer | 11 | 42.31 |
| Total | 26 | 100 |

Table 68: Method(s) Used for Teaching Question Tags

Out of the 26 teachers who said they taught question tags, 09 indicated that they implemented the implicit method. Like the previously mentioned six aspects (heads, tails, conversational ellipsis, vague language, spoken discourse markers and informal reported speech), it seems that the largest proportion of the teachers who stated the teaching method(s) said they used the implicit method in the presentation of question tags. Once again, the teachers most probably see that this method is more effective than the explicit method for the teaching of this spoken grammar aspect. Furthermore, as it is the case with most of the aspects mentioned previously (tails, conversational ellipsis, vague language, spoken discourse markers and informal reported speech), nearly half the teachers who said they presented question tags (11 teachers) did not provide any answer about the teaching method.

Q6. If “Yes”, please, list some activities you have used.

| Aspects Types | a. Listening-based Activities | b. Speaking-based Activities | c. Writing-based Activities |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a. Heads | | | |
| b. Tails | | | |
| c. Conversational Ellipsis | | | |
| d. Vague Language | | | |
| e. Spoken Discourse Markers | | | |
| f. Informal Reported Speech | | | |
| g. Question Tags | | | |

a. Heads

| Activity Types | N | % |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| a | / | / |
| b | 02 | 22.22 |
| c | / | / |
| ab | 04 | 44.44 |
| abc | 01 | 11.12 |
| No Answer | 02 | 22.22 |
| Total | 09 | 100 |

Table 69: Activity Types Used in the Teaching of Heads

Of the 09 teachers who said they taught heads, 04 said they used a combination of listening and speaking-based activities, while 02 teachers said they put into practice only speaking-based activities. It is important that the teachers vary the types of activities they use in the teaching of the spoken grammar structures. This is more likely to result in better teaching and learning. It is also worth noting that 04 teachers, out of the 07 ones who indicated the types of activities they used, did not list any activities; they only ticked the types (listening, speaking and/or writing). The other 03 teachers listed the following activities.

- Listening-based activities:

Recordings of native speakers (listed once)

- Speaking-based activities:

- Role plays (2)

- Repetitions (1)

- Discussions (1)

- Games (1)

- Dialogues (1)

Some of the listed activities such as role plays, recordings of native speakers and dialogues, are more suitable for teaching the aspects of spoken grammar: these activity types involve interaction between the students, and thus trigger the interpersonal and interactive uses of the spoken grammar aspects.

b. Tails

| Activity Types | N | % |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|
| a | 01 | 09.09 |
| b | 01 | 09.09 |
| c | / | / |
| ab | 03 | 27.28 |

| | | |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| ac | 01 | 09.09 |
| abc | 01 | 09.09 |
| No Answer | 04 | 36.36 |
| Total | 11 | 100 |

Table 70: Activity Types Used in the Teaching of Tails

Out of the 11 teachers who said they taught this aspect, 03 said they employed listening and speaking-based activities. As it is the case with heads, the teachers implemented a blend of activity types because they most probably believe that this is more fruitful than the use of one type. It has also been noticed that only 02 teachers, out of the 07 ones who mentioned the types of activities they used, outlined a number of activities.

- Listening-based activities:

Recordings of conversations (2)

- Speaking-based activities:

– Discussions (1)

– Games (1)

– Role plays (1)

- Writing-based activities:

Writing dialogues for role playing (1)

c. Conversational Ellipsis

| Activity Types | N | % |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|
| a | 02 | 13.33 |
| b | 03 | 20 |
| c | / | / |
| ab | 05 | 33.33 |

| | | |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| abc | 01 | 06.67 |
| No Answer | 04 | 26.67 |
| Total | 15 | 100 |

Table 71: Activity Types Used in the Teaching of Conversational Ellipsis

Like heads and tails, a combination of listening and speaking-based activities were implemented in the teaching of conversational ellipsis by the largest part of the teachers (05 out of the 15 who said they taught it). 03 teachers said they used only speaking-based activities. They may have seen it sufficient for the students to learn this aspect through such an activity type. The teachers outlined the following activities.

- Listening-based activities:
 - Tapes (authentic materials) (2)
 - Videos (2)
 - Recordings of native speakers' conversations (2)
- Speaking-based activities:
 - Discussions (4)
 - Role plays (2)
 - Dialogues (2)
 - Games (2)

d. Vague Language

| Activity Types | N | % |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|
| a | 01 | 07.69 |
| b | 03 | 23.08 |

| | | |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| c | / | / |
| ab | 05 | 38.46 |
| No Answer | 04 | 30.77 |
| Total | 13 | 100 |

Table 72: Activity Types Used in the Teaching of Vague Language

Of the 13 teachers who said they presented this element, 05 indicated that they used a variety of listening and speaking-based activities. It is striking the fact that only 02 teachers listed a few activities; the rest (07 teachers) only ticked the types. The activities which the teachers said they used in the instruction of this aspect are the following ones.

- Listening-based activities:
 - Listening and comparing the TL with the FL in terms of vague language (1)
 - Recordings of native speakers (1)
- Speaking-based activities:
 - Games (1)
 - Discussions (1)
 - Role plays (1)

e. Spoken Discourse Markers

| Activity Types | N | % |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|
| a | 01 | 04.35 |
| b | 08 | 34.78 |
| c | / | / |
| ab | 09 | 39.13 |
| abc | 01 | 04.35 |

| | | |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| No Answer | 04 | 17.39 |
| Total | 23 | 100 |

Table 73: Activity Types Used in the Teaching of Spoken Discourse Markers

As it is the case with the previous four aspects (heads, tails, conversational ellipsis and vague language), the largest proportion of the teachers (09 out of the 23 who said they taught spoken discourse markers) said they made use of a blend of listening and speaking-based activities. This implies again that the teachers most probably prefer to vary the types of activities in order to achieve more effective instruction of spoken grammar. An approximately similar number of the teachers (08) to that who said they used a combination of listening and speaking-based activities indicated that they employed only speaking-based activities.

- Listening-based activities:
 - Listening to conversations (1)
 - Videos (1)
 - Recordings of native speakers (1)
 - Listening to authentic materials (1)
 - Listening to speeches (1)
- Speaking-based activities:
 - Conversations (1)
 - Role plays (4)
 - Dialogues (3)
 - Discussions (6)
 - Games (1)

f. Informal Reported Speech

| Activity Types | N | % |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| a | / | / |
| b | 02 | 22.22 |
| c | / | / |
| ab | 03 | 33.33 |
| bc | 01 | 11.12 |
| No Answer | 03 | 33.33 |
| Total | 09 | 100 |

Table 74: Activity Types Used in the Teaching of Informal Reported Speech

Out of the 09 teachers who said they presented this element, the greatest part (03 teachers) indicated that they used a blend of listening and speaking-based activities. We should also point out that only 03 teachers, out of the 06 ones who mentioned the activity types, listed the activities they used.

- Listening-based activities:

Listening to native speakers (1)

- Speaking-based activities:

– Group discussion (1)

– Oral sentences (1)

- Writing-based activities:

Writing isolated sentences (1)

g. Question Tags

| Activity Types | N | % |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| a | 01 | 03.85 |
| b | 06 | 23.07 |
| c | 01 | 03.85 |
| ab | 08 | 30.77 |
| ac | 02 | 07.69 |
| bc | 03 | 11.54 |
| abc | 03 | 11.54 |
| No Answer | 02 | 07.69 |
| Total | 26 | 100 |

Table 75: Activity Types Used in the Teaching of Question Tags

As it is the case with the six previous aspects, the largest number of the teachers (08 out of the 26 who said they took into account question tags in their teaching) indicated that they used a combination of listening and speaking-based activities. As has been explained earlier when dealing with the previous aspects, this is most probably related to the fact that most of the teachers who stated the activities believe in the fruitfulness of varying the activity types in order to achieve better internalisation of the spoken grammar structures. A slighter proportion of the teachers than that who used a variety of listening and speaking-based activities (06 teachers) said they put into practice only speaking-based activities. Again, it could be that they thought it was sufficient for the students to practise this spoken grammar aspect through the use of one activity type (speaking). The listed activities are the following.

- Listening-based activities:
 - Recordings of conversations (1)
 - Native speaker dialogues (2)
 - Tapes (authentic materials) (2)
 - Videos (1)
- Speaking-based activities:
 - Dialogues (5)
 - Discussions (4)
 - Drills (1)
 - Role plays (5)
 - Conversations (2)
 - Oral sentences (1)
 - Presentations (1)
 - Games (1)
- Writing-based activities:
 - Filling in gaps using IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) (1)
 - Writing dialogues (1)
 - Writing isolated sentences (1)
 - Filling in transcripts (1)

Section Three: Views about Spoken Grammar

Q7. When teaching conversation, one should not refer to standard grammar, but rather to spoken grammar as characterised by the seven aspects covered in Q4, Q5 and Q6.

- Yes
- No

| Options | N | % |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 22 | 53.66 |
| No | 17 | 41.46 |
| No answer | 02 | 04.88 |
| Total | 41 | 100 |

Table 76: Views about Incorporating Spoken Grammar into the Teaching of Conversation

According to the results displayed in Table 76, slightly over half the teachers (53.66%) see that the type of grammar that should be referred to in the teaching of conversation is spoken, rather than standard, grammar. As seen earlier in Chapter Two, Sub-section 2.2.1 Definition of Spoken Grammar, p. 67, McCarthy and Carter (1995) remark that popular conceptions of spoken language are often that it is “corrupt,” and that its influence on grammatical norms is extremely “corrosive”. “Correct” English grammar is believed to be what is codified in standard grammar. Our evidence (53.66% of the teachers who are for the integration of spoken grammar, rather than standard grammar, into the teaching of conversation) suggests that these popular conceptions are not very widespread among the teachers we surveyed, or at least, not very extreme. One teacher who showed willingness to make reference to spoken grammar in the instruction of conversation wrote: “Although I have never taught spoken grammar, I realize that if I did, I would be consistent with the idea that not only standard grammar should be taught, but other types, too.”

Q8. If “No”, which spoken grammar aspects should NOT be taught?

- a. Heads**
- b. Tails**
- c. Conversational Ellipsis**

d. Vague Language

e. Spoken Discourse Markers

f. Informal Reported Speech

g. Question Tags

| Aspects | N | % |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| ce | 01 | 05.88 |
| cf | 01 | 05.88 |
| df | 02 | 11.77 |
| abc | 01 | 05.88 |
| adf | 01 | 05.88 |
| abdf | 01 | 05.88 |
| abcdf | 01 | 05.88 |
| abceg | 01 | 05.88 |
| bcdef | 01 | 05.88 |
| abcdef | 04 | 23.54 |
| abcdefg | 03 | 17.65 |
| Total | 17 | 100 |

Table 77: Spoken Grammar Aspects that Should Not Be Taught

Most of the 17 teachers who said in the previous question (Q7) that one should not refer to spoken grammar, but rather to standard grammar in the teaching of conversation, seem not to be against the presentation of all the seven aspects of spoken grammar. Question tags were dismissed by only 04 teachers (01 teacher dismissed it in combination with heads, tails, conversational ellipsis and spoken discourse markers, while 03 teachers dismissed it in combination with all the six aspects). Spoken discourse markers were dismissed by 10 teachers, whereas heads and tails 12 teachers. The aspects that most of the 17 teachers said should not be taught are informal reported speech (14 teachers), conversational ellipsis and vague language (13 teachers).

Q9. Why should each of these aspects NOT be taught?

| Aspects Reasons | a. It is difficult for the students. | b. It deviates from standard grammar. | c. It is less familiar to you. | d. There is no clear teaching methodology. | e. Other: Please, specify. |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| a. Heads | | | | | |
| b. Tails | | | | | |
| c. Conversational Ellipsis | | | | | |
| d. Vague Language | | | | | |
| e. Spoken Discourse Markers | | | | | |
| f. Informal Reported Speech | | | | | |
| g. Question Tags | | | | | |

a. Heads

| Options | N | % |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| a | 01 | 08.33 |
| b | 03 | 25 |
| c | 01 | 08.33 |
| d | 03 | 25 |
| e | 02 | 16.68 |
| ac | 01 | 08.33 |
| abd | 01 | 08.33 |
| Total | 12 | 100 |

Table 78: Why Not Teach Heads

Out of the 12 teachers who said that this aspect should not be taught, more than the quarter (04 teachers: 03 who opted for only reason “b” and 01 who opted for this reason in combination with “a” and “d”) explained that it deviates from standard grammar. These respondents appear to consider this element of spoken grammar as “ungrammatical” since it does not conform to the rules of standard grammar. The same proportion (04 teachers) said that there is no clear methodology for teaching this aspect. 03 teachers see that the head aspect is difficult for the students, while 02 teachers revealed that it is less familiar to them. In addition, 02 teachers indicated two other reasons why the head structure should not be presented: time constraints and being an “optional” element.

b. Tails

| Options | N | % |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| a | 03 | 25 |
| b | 01 | 08.33 |
| c | 02 | 16.67 |
| d | 03 | 25 |
| e | 02 | 16.67 |
| abde | 01 | 08.33 |
| Total | 12 | 100 |

Table 79: Why Not Teach Tails

For 04 teachers, the learners should not be presented with the tail aspect because of its difficulty. An equal number of the teachers (04) said there is no clear methodology for teaching this item. 02 teachers explained that the tail structure deviates from standard grammar, whereas the same proportion (02) said they are less familiar with this aspect. 03 teachers mentioned other reasons for dismissing this aspect: limitation of the time devoted to the teaching of OE, and being a “luxury” (optional) aspect.

c. Conversational Ellipsis

| Options | N | % |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| a | 02 | 15.38 |
| b | 05 | 38.47 |
| c | / | / |
| d | 03 | 23.08 |
| e | 01 | 07.69 |
| ad | 01 | 07.69 |
| bd | 01 | 07.69 |
| Total | 13 | 100 |

Table 80: Why Not Teach Conversational Ellipsis

Out of the 13 teachers who did not advocate the teaching of conversational ellipsis, the largest part (06 teachers) justified their view by saying that this aspect deviates from standard grammar. 05 teachers revealed that there is no clear methodology for presenting this aspect. 03 teachers explained that it is difficult for the students, while 01 informant indicated another reason: limited time devoted to teaching OE.

d. Vague Language

| Options | N | % |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| a | 02 | 15.39 |
| b | / | / |
| c | / | / |
| d | 04 | 30.76 |
| e | 02 | 15.39 |
| ab | 01 | 07.69 |
| ac | 02 | 15.39 |
| bd | 01 | 07.69 |
| cd | 01 | 07.69 |
| Total | 13 | 100 |

Table 81: Why Not Teach Vague Language

Out of the 13 teachers who are not for the introduction of this aspect, 06 explained that there is no clear teaching methodology. 05 teachers said this aspect is difficult for the students, whereas 03 teachers owe their reluctance to present this element to lack of familiarity with it. 02 teachers explained that it deviates from standard grammar, and 02 added the following reasons: “The time allotted is not enough” and “[Vague language] is an optional aspect.”

e. Spoken Discourse Markers

| Options | N | % |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| a | 02 | 20 |
| b | 01 | 10 |
| c | 01 | 10 |
| d | 03 | 30 |
| e | 02 | 20 |
| ab | 01 | 10 |
| Total | 10 | 100 |

Table 82: Why Not Teach Spoken Discourse Markers

Of the 10 teachers who said that spoken discourse markers should not be taught, 03 justified their view by indicating that they are difficult for the students. The same number of teachers (03) explained that there is no clear teaching methodology. 02 teachers said that these patterns deviate from standard grammar, while 01 teacher revealed that s/he is less familiar with such structures. Moreover, 02 teachers added two reasons: time constraints and being optional patterns.

f. Informal Reported Speech

| Options | N | % |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| a | 02 | 14.29 |
| b | 02 | 14.29 |
| c | 01 | 07.14 |
| d | 03 | 21.43 |
| e | 02 | 14.29 |
| bd | 01 | 07.14 |
| de | 01 | 07.14 |
| abd | 01 | 07.14 |
| acd | 01 | 07.14 |
| Total | 14 | 100 |

Table 83: Why Not Teach Informal Reported Speech

As it is the case with the previous four aspects, namely heads, tails, vague language and spoken discourse markers, lack of a clear teaching methodology appears to be the major reason opted for by the greatest number of the teachers: 07 out of the 14 ones who said informal reported speech should not be taught. This suggests that had they a clear methodology, the teachers would most probably present the aspects of spoken grammar. Furthermore, 04 teachers said that informal reported speech should not be taught because it is difficult for the students, whereas an equal part (04 teachers) explained that it deviates from standard grammar. 02 respondents said that this aspect is less familiar to them, and 03 added two reasons: time constraints and being an optional aspect.

g. Question Tags

| Options | N | % |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| a | 02 | 50 |
| b | / | / |
| c | / | / |
| d | 01 | 25 |
| e | 01 | 25 |
| Total | 04 | 100 |

Table 84: Why Not Teach Question Tags

Out of the 04 teachers who are against the teaching of question tags, 02 justified their view by saying that these patterns are difficult for the students. 01 teacher explained that there is no clear teaching methodology, whereas another one brought to light a further reason: having a limited amount of time for teaching speaking.

One teacher who did not provide an answer when dealing with the seven aspects of spoken grammar wrote that his/her first-year students needed more guidance and encouragement than learning new language elements. Most of the students, s/he said, tended to remain silent, so s/he had first to encourage them to speak using activities of the game type. S/he explained that his/her second-year students were most often having listening activities to train their ears to native speakers' different accents. This teacher added that when s/he started teaching Master students, she employed listening activities which aimed at fostering the students' knowledge about the English language culture.

Section Four: Further Suggestions

Q10. Please, add any further suggestion or comment.

15 teachers completed the "Further Suggestions" section. 09 teachers expressed a **positive attitude** towards spoken grammar, focusing on:

- the paramount role that spoken grammar plays in making the students’ spoken English more natural, which is a basic aim of the Communicative Approach;
 - the advantage of practising the spoken grammar aspects inside and outside the classroom;
 - the importance of assigning informal speaking equal attention, like that given to formal speaking;
 - the necessity of supplying the students with models of spontaneous speech, such as conversations and interviews, which can be an opportunity to practise elements of spoken grammar, in particular, and to develop their speaking skill, in general;
 - the careful consideration that has to be given to the way spoken grammar should be implemented; and
 - the significance of introducing the learners to the pronunciation features that may differ between spoken and Standard English.
- One teacher said: “What sounds to be unconventional and a ‘bad’ means to an academic purpose might well and best serve the main aim of teaching Oral Expression: developing our students’ oral proficiency. Informal English, although it is not recommended in our educational institution, is a real key to guiding our students towards that aim.”
- One teacher wrote: “I would like to include some aspects of spoken grammar in the teaching of speaking. It seems to me meaningless when a spoken sentence is semantically correct, but grammatically wrong.”
- One of the respondents pointed out that “the teachers should draw the students’ attention to the difference between textbook dialogues and real conversation, i.e. help them notice the difference between speaking naturally and writing sentences.”

03 teachers expressed a rather **negative attitude** towards teaching spoken grammar, focusing on:

- the difficulties that the teachers might come across if they decide to teach spoken grammar, namely lack of adequate materials and a teaching methodology
- the challenging nature of this “new area of language” (spoken grammar) for the teachers with a humble experience in teaching OE.
- One teacher said: “To me, grammar is useless in speech. The learners should be exposed to authentic speech and should practise as often as possible. This [spoken grammar] looks like the Structural Approach; I disapprove of this way of teaching. Actually, the students cannot improve their fluency by means of such a structural approach. One should talk like native speakers, i.e. use a wide range of strategies to convey the message.”

03 teachers expressed their **reservations** about teaching spoken grammar.

- One teacher said that only the students at a higher level should be exposed to spoken grammar. This teacher saw that at lower levels, it may only confuse the students to present them with aspects of spoken grammar.
- One teacher wrote that a distinction between “reception” and “production” of spoken grammar should be drawn. S/he stated that it is acceptable, and might be useful, if the students are exposed to spoken grammar to get an idea about its aspects and functions. However, s/he added, spoken grammar should not be recommended as the standard to teach. In other words, this teacher approved of introducing spoken grammar to the learners for the purposes of reception only.

– One teacher expressed his/her concern that the students might transfer the aspects of spoken grammar to their academic writing. S/he said that “it is more likely that the learners misuse the spoken grammar elements in a formal context.”

5.3 Interpretation of the Results

The analysis of the findings has suggested that, expectedly, more than half the teachers said they did not teach the most salient aspects of spoken grammar, as Q4, p. 226 reveals (informal reported speech: 58.54%, heads: 56.10%, tails: 53.66%, conversational ellipsis: 53.66% and vague language: 51.22%). An exception is made to two aspects, question tags and spoken discourse markers, which appear to have been taught by more than half the informants (63.41% and 56.09%, respectively). It may well be that the teachers are more acquainted with these two items than they are with the other five ones.

Concerning the teachers who said they did teach the spoken grammar aspects, it is striking the fact that a considerable part did not state the method(s) adopted in the presentation of nearly all the aspects (Q5, p. 231) (spoken discourse markers: 56.52%, conversational ellipsis: 46.66%, vague language: 46.16%, tails: 45.45%, informal reported speech: 44.45% and question tags: 42.31%). Out of the teachers who mentioned their teaching method(s), the largest percentage appear to have put into practice the implicit method (heads: 77.78%, tails: 45.45%, conversational ellipsis: 40%, vague language: 38.46%, question tags: 34.62%, informal reported speech: 33.33% and spoken discourse markers: 30.43%). Like these teachers, we hold that the spoken grammar aspects, and grammatical patterns in general, should better be introduced in an OE class implicitly. The students might not find it appealing to start the presentation of the spoken grammar aspects with a number of grammatical rules (the explicit method).

With regard to the activities used in the teaching of the seven spoken grammar aspects (Q6, p. 235), the largest part of the teachers who said they taught (some of) the

spoken grammar aspects did not list activities, but only ticked the activity types they said they used (listening, speaking and/or writing). The activities that most of the teachers said they employed are a blend of listening and speaking-based activities. Some of the latter, such as role plays and recorded conversations, require the interaction of more than one student, so they suit best the interpersonal and interactive nature of spoken grammar. Other types of activities used, such as drills and presentations, are less effective in the teaching of the spoken grammar aspects. Moreover, few teachers employed a few writing-based activities (such as writing illustrative sentences) in combination with speaking and listening-based activities. As it is the case with the standard grammar aspects, we see that using a variety of activities (speaking, listening and writing-based ones) to draw the learners' awareness to the aspects of spoken grammar can ensure better teaching and learning results. It is beneficial for the students to have opportunities in the language laboratory to listen to and watch native speakers of English use aspects of spoken grammar in real-life situations.

The analysis of the results obtained from Section Three (Q7, Q8 and Q9, pp. 243, 244 and 246, respectively) has revealed that the proportion of the teachers who said that reference should be made to spoken grammar, rather than standard grammar, in the teaching of conversation, goes beyond the half (53.66%). They seem to be convinced of the importance of teaching the intrinsic aspects of spoken grammar. The 17 teachers (41.46%) who said that spoken grammar should not be referred to appear not to be against the teaching of all the seven aspects of spoken grammar. Question tags were the least dismissed aspect of spoken grammar (by only 04 teachers), whereas informal reported speech was dismissed by the highest number of the teachers (14). Furthermore, reluctance of the teachers to integrate the spoken grammar aspects into the teaching of conversation was accounted for by various reasons, on top of which is lack of a clear teaching methodology. This implies that the teachers would most probably teach the spoken

grammar aspects if they had a clear methodology to follow in instruction. The other reasons why the informants think the spoken grammar aspects should not be taught are the difficulty of these items for the students, deviation of these aspects from standard grammar, and the teacher's lack of familiarity with such aspects.

Conclusion

Through the analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire feedback, we have come out with the conclusion that more than half the OE teachers have not taught the main aspects of spoken grammar, but referred to the standard grammar aspects in their teaching of conversation. Concerning the rest of the teachers who taught (some of) the spoken grammar aspects, the greatest part did not mention the method(s) and activities implemented in their presentation. The results obtained from the questionnaire have also shown that over half the teachers believe that reference should be made to spoken grammar, rather than standard grammar, in the teaching of conversation. We can say that our second hypothesis is partly confirmed and partly not, since over half the teachers are convinced of the importance of teaching the intrinsic aspects of spoken grammar, but do not translate this conviction into practical classroom activities.

CHAPTER SIX

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Introduction

In this part of the study, we seek to throw light on the main implications of the present research. Basically, we attempt to give some insights into the importance of teaching spoken grammar. We will also shed light on some crucial principles of pedagogical spoken grammar and provide some recommendations about the level at which the students' attention should be drawn to spoken grammar. The recommendations indicated in this chapter are by no means comprehensive, but are meant to bring some ideas on the subject to the attention of syllabus designers and teachers of OE, so as to help them make informed decisions about the positive effects of integrating aspects of spoken grammar into the teaching of spoken English.

6.1 Importance of Teaching Spoken Grammar

The theoretical insights of the present work suggest that spoken grammar should be taken account of by syllabus designers and teachers. The grammar of conversation (spoken grammar) is commonly thought of as “incorrect,” “inferior” to, or at best, “less important” than standard grammar, as seen in Chapter Two, Sub-section 2.2.1 Definition of Spoken Grammar, p. 67. Such a negative view is a result of the legacies of traditional grammar. The latter sees that spoken language is full of “imperfections” and has “less” grammar because it does not “conform to the rules” of written language. In fact, there are many crucial differences between speaking and writing, but such differences do not suggest that the grammar of conversation (spoken grammar) is less correct than the grammar of writing and formal speaking (standard grammar). Rather, such differences imply that each type of grammar has its specific characteristics and aspects which distinguish it from the other type. In other words, whereas standard grammar meets the requirements of the writing and formal speaking processes, spoken grammar is very suitable for the conversational process.

Therefore, each type of grammar is an indispensable system which reflects and facilitates the expression of meanings for its particular type of language.

Another important argument in favour of teaching spoken grammar relates to the interpersonal, interactive nature of spoken grammar. The aspects of spoken grammar are a systematic part of how native speakers of English establish relationships. These aspects enable a greater degree of interpersonal and interactive language uses of the language which are in harmony with the goals of CLT. Such interpersonal, interactive meanings that the aspects of spoken grammar can convey are worthwhile and suited to the nature of the conversational process. The latter is highly interactive, interpersonal and takes place in real time, with minimal time for detailed planning. Examples of the interpersonal, interactive functions carried out by the spoken grammar aspects include:

- helping listeners comprehend better by highlighting key information for them at the beginning of an utterance (heads);
- expressing the speaker's affect or evaluative stance towards the topic (tails);
- conveying information in a softened way, rather than an assertive and unduly authoritative way (vague language);
- maintaining a conversational and involving tone (spoken discourse markers);
- creating a more vivid and dramatic picture of the events being reported (informal reported speech);
- making a direct appeal for the listener(s)'s consent, or developing a point in exchanges with other interlocutors (question tags);
- involving the listener(s) in the conversational process through the use of their names or adjectives that directly address them (vocative use);

- being less explicit in contexts where the meaning is assumed to be clear to the listener(s) (conversational ellipsis);
- contributing to the natural tenor of speech (contractions);
- conveying information in a more satisfactory manner (statements as questions); and
- expressing emotions or personal attitudes in response to what has been said (response questions).

The third argument for teaching spoken grammar is that its integration into the teaching of speaking contributes to an almost egalitarian kind of English, that is not only based on a standard or written version of the language. What is the point producing students of English who cannot have a natural conversation because their English is based only on samples from standard language? Is it sufficient for our students to be able to carry out only formal functions? Giving due care to both types of functions, formal and conversational, helps train the students to be more efficient communicators who are able to vary their grammatical choices according to the context in which language is used.

The practical insights of our work confirm that spoken grammar justifies the time taken to teach it in the classroom and deserves to be incorporated into OE syllabuses. As demonstrated by the experimental findings (see Chapter Four, p. 155), presenting the students with the aspects of spoken grammar alongside the aspects of standard grammar, which the learners are already familiar with, has proved to have a paramount role in enriching the students' communicative competence and helping them to approximate a more natural output. Having equipped the students with more grammatical choices, by introducing the aspects of spoken grammar, has enabled them to interact more flexibly and naturally in a wider range of contexts, not only the formal, but also the informal ones. Moreover, the analysis of the results of the Teachers' Questionnaire (see Chapter Five, p.

222) reveals that over half the OE teachers under investigation (53.66%) hold positive views about the integration of the spoken grammar aspects into the OE syllabus. These teachers appear to be consistent with the view that standard grammar should not be the only point of reference in the teaching of speaking. In the “Further Suggestions” section, a significant point has been brought to light by a teacher who expressed his/her concern that the students may transfer the aspects of spoken grammar to their academic writing or misuse them in a formal spoken context. We see that like spoken grammar, standard grammar has a number of aspects which the learners tend to misuse, such as tenses and the passive vs. active voice, yet this has not prevented such aspects from being presented. It does not seem to be reasonable to refrain from teaching a certain language aspect only because the students may use it inappropriately. As a matter of fact, what makes it difficult for the students to use spoken grammar appropriately is that it is not taught in the first place, by over half the OE teachers in the present case, as evidenced by the results obtained from the Teachers’ Questionnaire. It is very significant to make the students clear about the differences between the aspects of spoken grammar and the aspects of standard grammar, so as to ensure that they can use each type in the appropriate setting: written or spoken, formal or informal. Some students may choose not to use some of the spoken grammar aspects introduced to them, but it is important that such grammatical choices are understood and put at their disposal. We believe that better teaching and learning results can be achieved if there is collaboration on the part of the teachers of OE and those of Grammar in order to describe adequately the differences between the two types of grammar.

6.2 Pedagogical Spoken Grammar

The design and implementation of pedagogical spoken grammar require getting insight into some of its crucial principles. The level of the students is another important factor to be considered in the implementation of pedagogical spoken grammar.

6.2.1 Principles

The design of pedagogical spoken grammar is one of the serious problems facing syllabus designers and teachers who choose to introduce spoken grammar in syllabuses. The model suggested by McCarthy and Carter (2002) incorporates spoken grammar teaching into a curriculum designed to develop the students' speaking skill which is essential for more natural communication in informal contexts (see Chapter Three, Section 3.2 A Pedagogical Spoken Grammar Model: McCarthy and Carter (2002), p. 123). This model helps discourse analysts, syllabus designers and teachers to readdress their overall approach to the analysis and presentation of grammatical aspects. There is an urgent need for considerable refinement in the analysis of the functions of particular conversational structures. Such an analysis requires more extensive comparison with standard grammar norms and a recognition that there are many intermediate categories along a continuum from "Spoken" to "Written" and from "Very informal" to "Very formal." This will enable one to describe properly a piece of discourse as being more spoken or written, informal or formal than another one. It will also allow more precise formulation of the entire network of grammatical choices between the aspects of standard grammar, which are suitable for written and formal spoken settings, and the aspects of spoken grammar appropriate for semi-formal and informal speech.

Like Rühlemann (2008), we recommend that in the framework of pedagogical spoken grammar, the notion of "correctness" should be replaced by the notion of "appropriateness"; the latter depends on the contextual conditions of language use: spoken

or written, informal or formal. Moreover, the role of grammar should be viewed as conducive, not restrictive, to natural communication. In other words, there seems to be no reason for not considering spoken grammar when designing speaking activities since grammar aims at facilitating natural communication, rather than restricting it by sorting out natural-occurring forms as “ungrammatical.” The predominant role of standard grammar in EFL, primarily caused by the predominant role of Standard English, needs to be reassessed. Owing to its almost exclusive reliance on written or formal language, standard grammar is not appropriate for conversational production, and thus should be supplemented by spoken grammar which is based on corpora built from samples of real-life spoken discourse.

Although some aspects of spoken grammar are of little or no pedagogical value, such as the socially or regionally marked aspects, syllabus designers and teachers are left with a variety of useful and potentially-teachable aspects of spoken grammar like the eleven ones highlighted in Chapter Four, Sub-section 4.2.2 Instruction of the Spoken Grammar Aspects, p. 160 (heads, tails, conversational ellipsis, vague language, spoken discourse markers, informal reported speech, question tags, contractions, vocative use, statements as questions and response questions). As mentioned in Chapter Three, Section 3.1 Approaches and Materials of Teaching Spoken Grammar, p. 103, the major problem with the recent shift of focus to spoken grammar teaching is that spoken English, including its spoken grammar, displays many strong regional and idiomatic aspects. The latter appear to cause comprehension problems to the students; for example, the UK Caribbean all-purpose negative question tag “innit?” (meaning “*isn’t it?*”, “*didn’t they?*”, “*hasn’t she?*”, “*can’t we?*”, etc.) and the negative auxiliary “ain’t” (a contraction of *am not*, *is not*, *are not*, *have not* and *has not*). Such aspects may be hard for the students to understand and inappropriate for use in the kinds of contexts where most EFL students operate: they usually use English to communicate with other non-native speakers. For the purposes of

mutual intelligibility, the best model of spoken grammar for EFL students might be a form of neutral grammar, without marked regional aspects or a strong bias to either the informal spoken mode or the standard written one.

A further point about the principles of pedagogical spoken grammar has to do with the lack and complexity of authentic spoken language materials. In Chapter Three, Sub-section 3.1.1 The Native-speaker Spoken Grammar Approach: Timmis (2005), p. 111, it has been pointed out that finding materials that answer all the criteria, mainly of interest and plausibility in terms of naturalness, is far from being an easy task. However, with the Internet as an available and relatively widely used source, syllabus designers and teachers of OE have a great chance to get access to a variety of materials that are both interesting for the students and rich in various aspects of spoken grammar. With regard to the complexity of authentic spoken language materials, it can be said that vocabulary and cultural components should be simplified in a way that suits the level of the students. In other words, the solution to the complexity of spoken language materials lies in achieving a compromise of naturally-occurring and specially-constructed texts.

It is of equal significance to stress the crucial role of audio-visual materials in reinforcing the teaching and learning of spoken grammar. We see that using a variety of materials that are not only based on writing, such as filling in transcripts, but are also available for listening and watching, is more likely to achieve better teaching and learning results. The students can get a clearer idea about various conversational contexts, interlocutors, their relationships and tones. In other words, the interpersonal and interactive implications that spoken grammar reflects can be demonstrated more clearly if they are not merely embedded in texts, but also heard from native speakers in real-life situations. In fact, this stresses the earnest need to equip our language laboratories with the necessary tools, such as tapes and audio-visual means, that enable the students to enrich their oral

communicative competence and the teachers to draw a more effective pragmatic methodology.

6.2.2 Level of Introducing Spoken Grammar

First-year and second-year university (upper-intermediate) students may be more interested in authentic language and less biased towards spoken grammar since they have not been as much drilled in the grammar of Standard English as advanced students have. However, the complexity of authentic spoken language and its grammar necessitates simplification. More advanced students (Third year – onwards), having been more drilled in the grammar of Standard English, may find it rather difficult to develop an awareness of natural conversation, in general, and spoken grammar, in particular. This suggests teaching conversation and spoken grammar at an earlier stage: First and/or Second years. At advanced levels (Third year – onwards), standard grammar might be given more weight since many of the students at the Department of Letters and English, University of Constantine 1, are being trained to be future teachers and/or carry out postgraduate studies. To attain such goals, the students require, in the first place, good command of standard grammar.

The level of the students has to be considered when the teacher selects a certain approach to teaching spoken grammar. We hold that consciousness-raising-based approaches, such as that of McCarthy's and Carter's (2002) (see Chapter Three, Sub-section 3.2.1 Background of the Model, p. 125), are more appropriate for advanced students. The latter, being more used to the notion of "correctness" which is deeply rooted by the almost exclusive exposure to standard grammar, can start using aspects of spoken grammar if made aware of the different natures of standard grammar and spoken grammar. This could be done by introducing these students to consciousness-raising approaches that address their cognitive abilities. Although there has been little progress on the issue of how

to teach spoken grammar, we can suggest a few approaches which may be of help for the teachers who choose to incorporate elements of spoken grammar into the OE syllabus: the Native-speaker Spoken Grammar Approach: Timmis (2005), the Register Approach: Rühlemann (2008) and the Three Stage Approach: Paterson (2011) (see Chapter Three, Section 3.1 Approaches and Materials of Teaching Spoken Grammar, p. 103, for details). We need to mention that the point of the present study is not to prove what approach, of the above-mentioned ones, is the most effective, but to highlight the usefulness of teaching selected aspects of spoken grammar. Nevertheless, checking what teaching approach can best help the students, intermediate and advanced, to acquire the aspects of spoken grammar is a further essential issue worth exploring in future research.

Conclusion

Based on what has been theoretically and empirically found in this investigation, it is recommended that reflective incorporation of selected aspects of spoken grammar into the teaching of spoken English will be a valuable addition to language teaching. It has proved to be worthwhile in enriching the students' communicative competence and helping them to approximate a more natural conversational output. More detailed analysis of spoken language data, in general, and spoken grammar, in particular, is required. Being committed to a communicative methodology that stresses the significance of the speaking skill, any well-evidenced information about spoken grammar and its usefulness in the pedagogical context will be a further positive contribution to the ELT domain.

CONCLUSION

McCarthy and Carter (1995, 2002) have observed that the grammar presented to the students of English as a foreign language has been based almost exclusively on samples from written standard language. The grammar of spoken language (spoken grammar) is commonly believed to have a negative impact on the grammatical system of the language. However, they argue, recent research suggests that spoken grammar offers a wide range of interpersonal, interactive aspects which enables the students to interact more naturally in conversational contexts. Throughout the present exploratory work, our major concern has been the way spoken grammar is handled in the Oral Expression class by the teachers and the students at the Department of Letters and English, University of Constantine 1. This thesis provides an overview of basic issues that pertain to the speaking skill, describes the nature and aspects of spoken grammar, as opposed to the ones of standard grammar, then supplies some account of how to teach spoken grammar (Chapter One, Chapter Two and Chapter Three). The ultimate aim has been to sketch some background information against which the practical details could be seen.

The analysis of the students' use of spoken grammar (Chapter Four) has been undertaken to check the first hypothesis which underlies this research: if the students under study receive instruction of a selected range of spoken grammar aspects, their conversational English is likely to be more natural. In the light of this analysis, the hypothesis has been confirmed. As evidenced by the pre-test findings, the majority of the students were found unaware of most of the aspects of spoken grammar and the interactive, interpersonal meanings which these aspects convey in semi-formal and informal spoken contexts. This severe lack of awareness was reflected through the students' constant reference to the aspects of standard grammar although the spoken settings which they were expected to interact in were informal, requiring the use of spoken grammar. On the other

hand, the post-test results of the Experimental Group have demonstrated the positive impact of the independent variable (the teaching of the spoken grammar aspects) on the students' conversational output. A significant difference between the pre-test and post-test performances has been recorded, given that most of the students in the Experimental Group have grown aware of the aspects of spoken grammar and their interactive, interpersonal meanings. This remarkable increase in awareness was reflected through the students' choice to embed various elements of spoken grammar in their role plays. Indeed, spoken grammar instruction has proved to have a paramount role in helping the students to approximate a more natural conversational output. It has served to enrich the learners' communicative competence by equipping them with more grammatical choices: the spoken grammar aspects alongside the standard grammar aspects which the students are already familiar with.

On the basis of the examination of the data collected from the Teachers' Questionnaire, we have come to the conclusion that over half the Oral Expression teachers realise the viability of integrating a range of spoken grammar aspects into the teaching of conversation. Nevertheless, a nearly similar proportion of the teachers (more than the half) have not taught most of the intrinsic aspects of spoken grammar. As regards the rest of the teachers who did take into consideration the presentation of (some of) the spoken grammar aspects, the greater part did not state the method(s), nor did they list the activities they put into practice. It follows that our second hypothesis is partly confirmed: the Oral Expression teachers who are convinced of the importance of teaching the intrinsic aspects of spoken grammar would refer less to standard grammar in the teaching of conversation.

We recommend that the Oral Expression teachers do not conceive of standard grammar as the only point of reference in the teaching of speaking. The pedagogical grammar of spoken language has to ensure that the full range of grammatical choices, the

aspects of spoken grammar as well as the aspects of standard grammar, is described and made available to the students. This will enable them to make informed grammatical choices and vary them for different communicative situations. In other words, the students will be able to interact more flexibly and naturally in a wider variety of spoken contexts, not only the formal, but also the semi-formal and informal ones. We also recommend that the controversial issue of the usefulness of introducing aspects of spoken grammar into the pedagogical grammar of spoken English finds an adequate solution through further research in the near future.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Topics of the Role Plays

Appendix II: Teaching the Spoken Grammar Aspects

- Heads
- Tails
- Conversational Ellipsis
- Vague Language
- Spoken Discourse Markers
- Informal Reported Speech
- Question Tags
- Integration of the Eleven Spoken Grammar Aspects

Appendix III: Transcripts of the Pre-test Performances

- The Control Group
- The Experimental Group

Appendix IV: Transcripts of the Post-test Performances

- The Control Group
- The Experimental Group

Appendix V: Teachers' Questionnaire

APPENDIX I

Topics of the Role Plays

❖ Theme 1: FAMILY RELATIONSHIP

Topic 1: Child and Parent: Permission to Go to a Birthday Party

Role Card 1:

- You're 15 years old.
- You're trying to convince your parent to allow you to go to your friend's birthday party.
- You're reassuring him/her about the time and the persons with whom you will come back home, the people at the party, the address and phone number of your friend, etc.

Role Card 2:

- Your 15-year-old child strongly wants to go to his/her friend's birthday party, and s/he's trying to convince you to allow him/her to.
- You don't accept easily because you want to make sure s/he will be safe.
- You're arguing with your child about the time and the persons with whom s/he will come back home, the people at the party, the address and phone number of her/his friend, etc.

Topic 2: Child and Parent: Permission to Go on a Trip

Role Card 1:

- You're going on a trip with friends.

- You're trying to get your parent's permission by reassuring him/her that everything will be fine: telling him/her the place you're going to, the names of friends, how long you're going to stay there, the place you'll be staying in, etc.

Role Card 2:

- You're an over-protective parent.
- Your child has asked your permission to go on a trip with friends.
- You don't accept easily until s/he gives you the details about the trip: the place s/he's going to, the names of friends, how long s/he's going to stay there, the place s/he'll be staying in, etc.

Topic 3: Child and Parent: Convincing Your Parent about Having a Job

Role Card 1:

- You've found a nice full-time job and decided to stop going to the university.
- You're going to tell your parent the news and discuss your decision.
- You want to convince your parent that this job is a golden chance by telling him/her about how much you need this job, a good salary, a nice work-place, a nice office for you, nice people, etc.

Role Card 2:

- You strongly believe that education is much more important than making money.
- You're trying to convince your child to finish his/her study first, then have any job s/he wants.

Topic 4: Child and Parent: Choosing a University Specialty

Role Card 1:

- You've got your Baccalaureate, and now you're trying to choose a university specialty.
- Your parent wants you to do Medicine, but you prefer English.
- You're going to discuss your decision with your parent and try to convince him/her about your chosen specialty (English).

Role Card 2:

- Your child's got his/her Baccalaureate, and s/he's now trying to choose a university specialty.
- S/he prefers to do English, but you have been dreaming of Medicine since s/he started school.
- You try to discuss your child's decision and make him/her aware of the good aspects of becoming a doctor.

Topic 5: Siblings: Blaming Your Sibling for Messing Your Apartment

Role Card 1:

- You asked your brother/sister to stay in your apartment for a month, while you were away.
- Now, you're back and have just seen how terrible your apartment has become: unclean floor, piles of unwashed dishes, bad smell, missing things, broken tap, etc.
- You're blaming your brother/sister for not having taken good care of your apartment.

Role Card 2:

- You've been staying in your brother's / sister's apartment for a month and haven't taken care of it.
- Now, s/he's back and is blaming you for turning his/her apartment into a mess.
- You're trying to calm him/her down by ensuring that everything will be fixed, making various excuses, apologising, etc.

Topic 6: Siblings: Preparing a Dish / Cake with Your Sister's Help

Role Card 1:

- You're good at cooking.
- You're giving (a) recipe(s) to your sister who doesn't know much about cooking.

Role Card 2:

- You like cooking and baking, but you're not good at them.
- You ask your sister to tell you how to prepare a certain dish/cake.
- You keep asking her about the details.

Topic 7: Siblings: Remembering Last Summer's Incident

Role Card 1:

- You and your brother/sister are remembering the incident that happened to both of you, last summer.
- You both were supposed to take care of your neighbour's 5-year-old girl, but you accidentally lost her.

– You’re both talking about how you reacted when you found out she was lost, how and where you searched for her, whether or not you told the girl’s mother, how and where you finally found the little girl, and how you felt.

Role Card 2:

– You and your brother/sister are remembering the incident that happened to both of you, last summer.

– You both were supposed to take care of your neighbour’s 5-year-old girl, but you accidentally lost her.

– You’re both talking about how you reacted when you found out she was lost, how and where you searched for her, whether or not you told the girl’s mother, how and where you finally found the little girl, and how you felt.

Topic 8: Cousins: Preparing for a Wedding Party

Role Card 1:

– You’re preparing for your wedding party and need your cousin’s help.

– Ask her/his opinion about the number of people you should invite, where to have the party, the decor, flowers, cakes / food, invitations, etc.

Role Card 2:

– Your cousin is preparing for his/her wedding party and needs your help.

– Give him/her your opinion about the number of people s/he should invite, where to have the party, the decor, flowers, cakes / food, invitations, etc.

❖ Theme 2: UNIVERSITY RELATIONSHIP

Topic 9: Students: At the University

Role Card 1:

- You're a first-year student.
- You're asking a second-year student, whom you've met in the cafeteria, about how his/her first year was: the modules, teachers' knowledge and personalities, exams, the administration, libraries, restaurant, etc.

Role Card 2:

- You're a second-year student and have already become familiar with everything at the university.
- You're asked by a first-year student, whom you've met in the cafeteria, to give her/him some advice about how things go on at your university: the modules, teachers' knowledge and personalities, exams, the administration, libraries, restaurant, etc.

Topic 10: Students: The University Conditions

Role Card 1:

- You're on the students' bus going home.
- You're talking with a student about the bad conditions of your university: noise, smoke, dust, lack of chairs/tables, a large number of students in a small room, lack of useful books, bad food in the restaurant, etc.

Role Card 2:

- You're on the students' bus going home.

- You're talking with a student about the bad conditions of your university: noise, smoke, dust, lack of chairs/tables, a large number of students in a small room, lack of useful books, bad food in the restaurant, etc.

Topic 11: Classmates: Sharing Memories with a Former Classmate

Role Card 1:

- You have accidentally met a classmate whom you studied with in the Middle and the High school.
- You share memories with him/her.

Role Card 2:

- You have accidentally met a classmate whom you studied with in the Middle and the High school.
- You share memories with him/her.

Topic 12: Roommates: Refusing Politely a Roommate

Role Card 1:

- You're a first year university student who's looking for a room and nice company in the residence hall.
- You've just met an old friend from your native city and strongly want to share the room with him/her, this year.
- But, your friend has already chosen a roommate.
- You're trying hard to convince your friend that you're a better choice and will be the best roommate: helpful, calm, clean, organised, good at cooking, familiar with each other, etc.

Role Card 2:

- You're a second year university student who's living in a residence hall.
- You've just met an old friend from your native city, and s/he strongly wants to share your room with you, this year.
- But, you've already chosen a roommate who's bringing her/his bags at any time of this week.
- You try to explain to your old friend that it's not an easy decision, and that it's inappropriate and almost late to change your mind now, after you've given your word.

Topic 13: Roommates: The New Roommates

Role Card 1:

- You love talking about roommates when they're out.
- You seem not to like the 3 new roommates.
- You're telling your sister/brother-like roommate what you don't like about the 3 new roommates: their appearance, the noise they make, how unhelpful with cooking and cleaning, how disorganized, the many bad friends they invite to your room, etc.

Role Card 2:

- Three new roommates have been sharing the room for a week with you and your sister/brother-like roommate.
- You don't like this new situation, but you don't think they're so bad.

- You're telling your close roommate what you like and dislike about the 3 new roommates: their appearance, helpfulness, calmness, cleaning, cooking, organisation, the friends they invite to your room, etc.

❖ **Theme 3: SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP**

Topic 14: Friends: Complaining about Being Late

Role Card 1:

- You're an hour late for your appointment with your friend who doesn't like to wait for long.
- Make excuses justifying your being late: extra work in your office, traffic problems, forgetting your mobile phone, etc.

Role Card 2:

- You're waiting for your friend in a coffee shop.
- You're angry because you have an appointment with him/her, but s/he is already an hour late.
- S/he has just arrived, and you're asking for an explanation and blaming him/her for letting you wait for long.

Topic 15: Friends: Shopping with a Friend

Role Card 1:

- You're in a clothes store with your close friend.
- It's difficult to satisfy your taste.

– You're trying on some clothes (jeans, coats, skirts, etc.) and asking your friend's opinion on each piece: colour, size, material, patterns on the piece of clothes, traditional/modern style, etc.

Role Card 2:

– You're in a clothes store with your close friend.

– You're helping her/him buy some clothes (jeans, coats, skirts, etc.) by giving your opinion on each piece: colour, size, material, patterns on the piece of clothes, traditional/modern style, etc.

Topic 16: Friends: Refusing an Invitation from a Friend

Role Card 1:

– You have invited your close friend to your party tonight and strongly want her/him to come over.

– But, your friend seems to have other more important things to do tonight.

– Try to convince her/him that it'll be much fun: delicious food, the names of the invited friends, video games, dancing, music s/he likes, etc.

Role Card 2:

– Your close friend has invited you to her/his party, but you don't think you can go because you have other more important things to do.

– Explain to him/her why you can't come, for example: looking after your sick grandmother, your turn to babysit your small brother, having to go with your family to the hospital to visit someone, etc.

Topic 17: Friends: Discussing TV Programmes with a Friend

Role Card 1:

– You're telling your friend what you like and dislike about various TV programmes: the actors, decor, kind of topics, language, message, presenter of the show, etc.

Role Card 2:

– Your friend is giving you her/his opinion on various TV programmes (films, series, documentaries, cartoons, shows).

– It seems that there're some programmes which you both think good/bad, but there're also other programmes which you have different opinions on.

– You're sharing your opinions with her/him about what you like and dislike about some TV programmes: the actors, decor, kind of topics, language, message, presenter of the show, etc.

Topic 18: Neighbours: The New Neighbours

Role Card 1:

– You're telling your old next-door neighbour why you don't like the new neighbours: their noise, having a lot of kids who keep playing in your garden, the too many visits your neighbour pays you, etc.

Role Card 2:

–Your old next-door neighbour is telling you why s/he doesn't like the new neighbours, but you don't agree with him/her on everything.

- You think there're some good things about your new neighbours: kind, sociable, helpful, their intelligent funny kids, etc.

Topic 19: Neighbours: Missing a Neighbour's Party

Role Card 1:

- You missed your neighbour's party because you had to stay late at work.
- You don't think it's a good idea to tell your neighbour the real reason for your absence.
- You have just met him/her and started apologising and explaining why you couldn't come to his/her party.

Role Card 2:

- You invited your next-door neighbour to your party, but s/he didn't come, nor did s/he call you to apologise.
- Now, you feel very bad and can't accept his/her apology easily, no matter what excuses s/he is telling you.

Topic 20: Neighbours: Looking after a Neighbour's Apartment

Role Card 1:

- You're going on a business trip for a few days.
- You ask your next-door neighbour to look after your apartment while you're away.
- You make several requests, for example: watering the plants, taking phone messages, feeding your cat, taking in the mail, keeping the windows open in the morning, etc.

Role Card 2:

- Your next-door neighbour is going on a business trip for a few days and would like you to look after his/her apartment while s/he's away.
- You ask him/her about certain things which you think are important to know, for example: how many times his/her cat needs to be fed, what time to close the windows, what to tell to the people who might come to see him/her, etc.

APPENDIX II

Teaching the Spoken Grammar Aspects

- Heads**
- Tails**
- Conversational Ellipsis**
- Vague Language**
- Spoken Discourse Markers**
- Informal Reported Speech**
- Question Tags**
- Integration of the Eleven Spoken Grammar Aspects**

Heads

– Illustration Phase

- Examine the following informal spoken sentences and indicate what you notice about them.

1. A: Fortunately, John was there to fix my PC.

B: John, he's nice.

A: Oh, he is.

2. A: How was your first day?

B: Fine, thanks. The teachers seem nice.

C: The teacher with glasses, he seems very nice.

3. A: The man I bought the car from, he lives near here.

B: Really? I didn't know that.

4. A: My new neighbour, she is cool.

B: Very much.

5. A: Those shoes with low heels, I really like them.

B: Yes, they're fashionable.

6. A: Linda, her brother has a taxi firm.

B: I thought it's her father's.

7. A: My friend, his aunt, her husband is a good lawyer and can help you.

B: Can you please get me his phone number?

A: Sure.

– **Interaction Phase** (Carter, Hughes and McCarthy, 2000: 159)

➤ Make the following sentences more informal by using heads.

1. A: Most castles in Spain are really impressive.

B: Indeed.

2. A: The English football team are always losing.

B: Very disappointing.

3. A: The brother of the girl over there owns the office I work in.

B: The girl with brown eyes and dark hair?

A: Yes, the one in red.

4. A: If Laura's thinking seriously of quitting, then who's going to replace her?

B: Mr. Brown's secretary's sister from Australia is coming to work here.

A: When?

B: I heard next month.

5. A: Is that boy with curly hair your friend?

B: I've never seen him before.

6. A: Do they live in that house with the large garden?

B: Since they were kids.

7. A: Montpellier is a city with lots of old buildings in the centre.

B: Quite a lot.

8. A: I like that black car most.

B: So do I.

Tails

– Illustration Phase

- Examine the following informal spoken sentences and indicate what you notice about them.

1. A: It's an exciting place, Hong Kong.

B: Have you ever been to there?

A: Once when I was 17.

2. A: Did Samy help you?

B: Yes, he moved all my books. He was very helpful, Samy was.

3. A: He was a great leader, Ghandi.

B: Very great.

4. A: It has collapsed suddenly, that big house has.

B: Fortunately, nobody was in.

5. A: You can fix everything, you can.

B: Not this time.

6. A: Have you heard her sing?

B: Yes, she sings beautifully, Maya does.

7. A: It was late at night, and the last bus had gone, it had.

B: And what did you do?

A: I called Kate to come and pick me up.

– **Interaction Phase** (Carter, Hughes and McCarthy, 2000: 150)

➤ Fill in the gaps in the following sentences with an appropriate tail.

1. A: What do you think of Sarah?

B: She's the best swimmer in the class, she is.

2. A: You're too slow,

B: I guess I need more practice.

3. A: I'm ready to play now,

B: Well then, go ahead!

4. A: It's a sweet dish,

B: Very sweet.

5. A: That little cat hasn't moved from there since morning.

B: Cats just lie in the sun all day,

6. A: Carol's just passed all her exams,

B: Oh, good, congratulations, Carol!

C: Thanks.

7. A: Do you watch a lot of movies?

B: I don't, but Maria and her sister watch TV all the day,

8. A: It was a nice movie,

B: One of the best movies I've ever seen.

9. A: It's getting very expensive these days,

B: You can say that again.

Conversational Ellipsis

– Illustration Phase

- Mark places where you think words are missing in the following spoken sentences.
- What would the speakers have said in full if they had put in all the words?
- How formal do you think these situations are?

1. A: Hope you're OK?

B: Great, thanks.

2. A: She's not coming.

B: Think so.

3. A: Have a look at the painting now. What do you think?

B: Much better now.

4. A: Finished?

B: All the work.

5. A: Any tea left?

B: I'm afraid not.

6. A: More cream on my cake, please.

B: OK.

7. A: How about going to the cinema tonight?

B: Sounds nice!

8. A: Don't forget to bring Judy with you. See you soon!

B: See you!

– **Interaction Phase** (Carter, Hughes and McCarthy, 2000: 162-64)

- Mark places where you think ellipsis is used.
- Write the words which you think could be added in a more formal context.

1. A: Another coffee?

B: Yes, please.

A: Some more cakes as well?

B: No, thanks.

2. A: Seen Mike lately?

B: Yes, last night actually.

3. A: Heard the joke about the monkey?

B: Don't you remember you told me that last week at the party?

4. A: Can I have chips, beans and a sausage?

B: Chips, beans and a sausage?

A: Yeah.

B: Wrapped up?

A: Open, please.

5. A: No, you can't change the name after it's been registered.

B: Didn't know that.

6. A: I came by bike, along the river.

B: A bit dangerous there, isn't it?

7. A: He's been ill because of the weather.

B: Because of the weather?

A: Yes, too cold for him.

Vague Language

– Illustration Phase

- Examine the following informal spoken sentences.
- What is the function of the underlined aspects?

1. A: What's that sticky stuff on the carpet?

B: Samy's friend spilt some jam on it.

2. A: So, you're not coming with us?

B: My father's bought a sort of artist's studio and needs some help with the cleaning.

3. A: What do they sell in there?

B: I guess home-made biscuits and things like that.

4. Linda: Sarah, can you please get me a sandwich or something?

Sarah: How about a cheese burger?

Linda: Good, thanks.

5. A: Please, give me your pen or anything to write the number.

B: Here it is.

– **Interaction Phase** (Paterson, 2011: 10)

➤ Use the appropriate vague phrases in the following conversation.

Mel: Have a seat. Would you like a coffee or something? (**and everything / or something**)

Jo: No thanks, I've just had one. Listen, have you heard the news about Paula? She left her flat and her job (**and everything / and things like that**), and she's going to Australia to work as a tour guide!

Mel: Really? What about her fiancé and family? (**or something / and stuff**)

Jo: Her fiancé isn't here at the moment. He's working in Scotland (**or something / and things like that**). Maybe he can get a job in Australia too. He makes designs (**and everything / and things like that**)

Mel: I think so. But I'm sure she hasn't even e-mailed him (**or anything / or something**). You know what she's like.

Jo: Her mum won't be happy. She plays tennis with Paula and they go shopping together (**or something / and everything**)

Spoken Discourse Markers

– Illustration Phase

- Examine the following informal spoken sentences.
- What is the function of the underlined aspects?

1. A: It's practical, I mean, you can take it with you everywhere.

B: Fantastic!

2. A: You know, it's not easy to find a good job these days.

B: Right.

3. A: Well, I'll ring later to confirm it.

B: OK, see you then.

4. A: I didn't apologise because it was her fault.

B: Mm, I see.

5. A: Wow, that was an impressive poem!

B: Oh, really? Thanks.

A: Look, I'm sure everyone'll love it.

– **Interaction Phase** (Carter, Hughes and McCarthy, 2000: 175)

- Underline the words or phrases which function as spoken discourse markers.
- Indicate whether each marker focuses on the speaker or listener.

A: So, how long have you been doing this new job?

B: Well, er, a couple of months. Hey look, it doesn't sound a long time, but I've already learnt much, you know, if you like something you learn it quickly, right?

A: Yeah. I'm sure you'll do well in this job. Anyway, I'll call you tonight to talk more about it, OK?

B: OK, bye!

Informal Reported Speech

– Illustration Phase

- What do you notice about the way Mary “reports” yesterday’s speech?

(Mary is talking to Jack about what she and her friend Sarah said yesterday.)

Mary: So, we came back home and had dinner and I said, what would you like to do tonight, Sarah? She said, hey Mary, let’s go to the cinema! In fact, I don’t like the cinema

Jack: You don’t?], I don’t but I had to say yes. All right then, Sarah, what film would you like to see? I don’t know, she said, but we’ll see. So when we got there, we saw very few people and I said, I don’t know Sarah, it doesn’t look like a good film. Well, let’s find out, she said. So, we took seats and I said, will the film be starting soon because I’m starting to feel bored? Then she said, look Mary, if you don’t want to be here, let’s just go...

– **Interaction Phase** (Paterson, 2011: 08)

- Turn the following reported sentences, which sound rather more formal, into informal sentences.
- Sort out the aspects that mark these sentences as informal.

Joe: Then, Steve said he was from America, and I asked him why he didn't have an American accent. He replied by saying that we didn't all speak like Tom Cruise!

Rebecca: That's interesting because Mike said there were six American exchange students in our class that year.

Joe: You spoke to Mike! I thought you didn't like him any more.

Rebecca: I know, but he looked ill and I asked him if he was Ok. He answered by saying that he wasn't, and that he had a really bad cold. So, I advised him to go home and get some rest.

Joe: Good advice. Anyway, did you manage to speak to Kate about going to the theatre?

Rebecca: Sure. She told me she was afraid she couldn't come. So, I told her that Joe had already got the tickets. She apologised and said her friends were coming to visit her.

Question Tags

– Illustration Phase

- Examine the following informal spoken sentences.
- Is the speaker asking a real question in each sentence?

1. A: It's a nice day, isn't it?

B: Yes, beautiful.

2. A: Nora should pass the exam, shouldn't she?

B: Yes, it's her last chance.

3. A: Michael won't be late, will he?

B: No, he'll be here on time.

4. A: You haven't seen Lisa today, have you?

B: I'm afraid I haven't.

5. A: You didn't lock the door, did you?

B: No, I forgot.

– **Interaction Phase** (Murphy, 2004: 105)

➤ Insert a question tag at the end of the following sentences.

1. A: You're tired, ?

B: Yes, a little.

2. A: You've got a camera, ?

B: I've got two actually.

3. A: Sue doesn't know Ann, ?

B: They've never met.

4. A: Kate has applied for the job, ?

B: Yes, but she won't get it.

5. A: You can't speak German, ?

B: Yes, but not very fluently.

6. A: He won't mind if I use his phone, ?

B: Of course he won't.

7. A: There're a lot of people here, ?

B: More than I expected.

8. A: This isn't very interesting, ?

B: No, not very.

9. A: You wouldn't tell anyone, ?

B: Of course not.

10. A: Helen's lived here for a long time, ?

B: Twenty years.

Contractions

Illustration Phase

➤ What are the full forms of the underlined elements?

1. A: You 'll do what I asked you to, won't you?

B: I don't know. Let 's see first what they 've decided.

2. A: I 'd never see a doctor if I were you.

B: Well, I have to.

3. A: What 's just happened?

B: No idea.

4. A: He isn't the one in charge?

B: I 've been told he is.

Vocative Use

Illustration Phase

- How would the following exchanges sound without the underlined elements?
- Why did the speakers choose to use them?

1. **Susan:** Maya, can you show me how to fix it?

Maya: I can't believe you broke it again, Susan.

2. **Mother:** What's wrong with you, honey.

Son: I don't know, mum. I just don't feel well.

3. **A:** Excuse me, Miss. Is this seat taken?

B: No, it's not.

Statements as Questions

Illustration Phase

- What do you notice about the underlined structures?
- Why did the speakers use statements in the form of questions?

1. A: He didn't invite me, but if he had, I don't know...

B: You'd have gone?

2. A: Let me first check the number.

B: You can't remember it?

A: I'm afraid I can't.

3. A: That's how you repay me for what I did for you?

B: Sorry, I didn't mean it that way.

4. A: We have to give him the essay tomorrow, you know that?

B: No idea!

Response Questions

Illustration Phase

- Are the underlined structures real questions that need to be answered?
- What do they express?

1. A: I went to France to see them.

B: You went where?

A: I couldn't tell you because it all happened so fast.

2. A: I told her to stop acting like a fool.

B: You told her what?

A: I was getting so angry and didn't know what I was saying.

3. A: It sounds boring?

B: Boring? Are you kidding?

4. A: She's going too.

B: Really?

Integration of the Eleven Spoken Grammar Aspects

Conversational Exchange One: Deciding Where to Eat

(Conrad, Biber and Leech, 2002: 99-100)

- Sort out all the aspects of spoken grammar from the following conversational extract.

Sandra₁: I remember when I was looking for a job, I was driving all the day. It was so awful, it was. It took at least twenty hours a day just in the car, driving and filling up the gas tank every three days and watching my money dwindle, because time was running out.

Lily₁: Oh!

Sandra₂: Those days, they were so exhausting. I was sure I wasn't going to get a job. It was just, er, I was really lucky I got a job.

Lily₂: Where're we going to go to eat if you don't want to drive? Do you want to go to some place that you know?

Sandra₃: I'll take you to a place I've been told of.

Lily₃: Is that on the river walk?

Sandra₄: No, but I guess it's far away. Uh, I don't know of any restaurants. We can always go to Olive Garden.

Lily₄: Go where?! I thought you'd take me to some fancy restaurant!

Sandra₅: Somehow I had a feeling you were going to say that, I had.

Lily₅: They have salad. Maybe it's not too bad. Anyway, no choice.

Sandra₆: OK, so let's go.

Lily₆: I'll change my clothes and put on a necklace or something. (...)

Sandra₇: Hey Lily, listen, maybe we should check on Martha first. Last time I met Mike, he said how can you let her on her own in such a bad time?

Lily₇: No way, I want to go to Olive Garden.

Sandra₈: Do you really?

Lily₈: Definitely. (...) What're you looking for, Sandra?

Sandra₉: My voter registration card. This is what happens when you rely on others to keep stuff for you.

Lily₉: Look, William told me you can still vote if you lost the card.

Sandra₁₀: I can?

Lily₁₀: They should have, you know, your name on their list.

Sandra₁₁: But this is absentee voting, isn't it?

Lily₁₁: Oh, no. I bet you won't have any problem.

Sandra₁₂: Well then, let's go.

Conversational Exchange Two: Choosing a Dessert from the Menu

(Conrad, Biber and Leech, 2002: 98)

- Sort out all the aspects of spoken grammar from the following conversational extract.

Sandra₁: Hey Lily, you couldn't handle the spicy cranberry cobbler or the warm ginger chocolate cake?

Lily₁: Well, the spicy cranberries.

Sandra₂: And the pound cake, you wouldn't want it.

Lily₂: Think there's something in it, erm, I don't know, a kind of strong sour taste.

Sandra₃: Green lime and blood orange sorbet.

Lily₃: Sounds really disgusting, doesn't it? Why would you name a dessert blood orange?!

Sandra₄: Apple fritters, that doesn't sound yummy. Why not the date and cinnamon ice-cream or something like that? That might be good, right?

Lily₄: Yeah, that's much better, that is. (...)

Sandra₅: Oh, lovely music!

Lily₅: It's what we want, beautiful music.

Notes:

- **Cranberry**: small red and sour berry, used in cooking.
- **Cobbler**: a fruit pie with a thick bread-like layer on top.
- **Sorbet**: a sweet frozen food made of sugar, water and fruit juice, often eaten as a dessert.
- **Fritter**: a piece of fruit covered in batter and fried.

APPENDIX III

Transcripts of the Pre-test Performances

- The Control Group**
- The Experimental Group**

Pre-test: Control Group

Role Play 1

A: Good morning, Wafa!

B: Good morning!

A: I decide to stop going to university because I think that this it's not serious, and a teacher, there is a lot of teacher who are who have not a good level. It's and they and they are and study is not very ...

B: ⌞ Don't try to convince me because I will not accept.

A: But I have I need to have a good job in in the good and good salary.

B: I can give you money but you don't have to stop your study.

A: But it's time to work.

B: It's time you you can you can you can go to at the university and work in at the same time.

A: I think that I lose my time at the at the university.

B: I don't think so.

A: But it's my choice.

B: It's very important to go at the university and to get a diplome — You have to take

A: ⌞ Don't worry I got a diplome I got a diplome I I'm sure that I can't find a job

B: ⌞ You can ...

A: ⌞ with my diplome.

B: No, you can't be sure of that.

A: Because it's very difficult to find to find.

B: I am disagree I am disagree with you. You can't stop studying, because it's very, very important

A: L But my there is my friend who tell me that he find he find me a good job at the office and with a good salary.

B: But you can't be sure of this job. You can't stop at any time —— and you'll not have something sure.

A: — But it's necessary — to have to have money

B: L I can

A: Nowadays without money we can't we can't do anything.

B: You can find an another job. You can work at the end of the day at the end of the day.

A: But the salary is very bad — It's this job is the best one.

B: I'll not let you stop — your studies — because I have an experience. Life is not very easy.

A: I think about this.

Pre-test: Control Group

Role Play 2

A: Mum, please I want to go to my friend's birthday.

B: Oh, honey, please no, you can't.

A: Why?

B: You know, I don't know her. I don't I didn't meet her parents. I can't accept.

A: But it's my best friend.

B: No, no I dislike this idea to go to the house of someone I don't know him.

A: But all my friends they will be there. I want to be with them.

B: Oh, my Gosh!

A: Please!

B: No, no, I didn't meet her parents. I don't know where we you are going.

A: Please!

B: My Gosh, you are killing me. — OK, I can accept just with condition, one condition. —
You go with your father

A: L OK.

B: And you go first — When you want to go?

A: At 8.

B: Yes, when, the day?

A: Tomorrow.

B: OK, at 8 p.m.?

A: Yes.

B: Yes and when you will be back?

A: At 11.

B: No.

A: Why?

B: Your father will be there at 9:50 p.m.

A: OK.

B: OK?

A: Yes.

B: So, you can go.

A: Thank you.

B: You're welcome.

Pre-test: Control Group

Role Play 3

A: Good morning, how are you?

B: Good morning, I'm fine, thanks, and you?

A: I'm fine, thank you. I want to buy some clothes, I want to go to a the market. Can you help me to choose some clothes because I am very I can't decide which kind of clothes to wear.

B: Yes, of course, I want to help you and to change your style of wearing.

A: Thank you. You know that I don't accept anything, because I'm very strict.

B: Yes.

A: I want to buy jeans. Which kind of jeans can I buy?

B: You always wear blue jeans. It's classical it's classical ...

A: L You know I can't wear something attractive.

B: I want yes, I know because you are with veil, you cannot wear everything, but you must change, you must change your style, your. I want to choose to break the routine.

A: Yes, yes. What what about colour?

B: — Not very attractive colour but you change from the blue, the gray

A: L Yes.

B: You always wear traditional classical clothes.

A: Yes, yes. What's about skirts? I I don't like the rich.

B: Oh no, you can't because it's forbidden in our religion.

A: Yeah — what do you think?

B: I want you choose you choose a long skirt, a long skirt, with some slight colours, not a lot of colours

A: L Yes.

B: Because we are in the spring.

A: L Yes.

B: But we are in the spring you can't continue to wear like this, black and gray and

A: L Yes, it's right. What do you think I am somehow traditional or

B: L Yes, [laugh] you are very traditional. I want to change. I want to bring something new and glad. There is happiness in ...

A: L But fashion nowadays not all things are acceptable. There are some some some ...

B: L Yes, there are some colours which which are which are very attractive

A: L Yes.

B: L like red and yellow.

A: L Yes.

B: You can't wear everything yellow but you break your colour, your traditional colour.

A: Yes. Tell me about you, some some some information about your style because I'm trust in your choice, that's why I I bring it ...

B: L I want to change, I I wear everything, not everything but something which I trust to be to be beautiful and ...

A: L Yes, we are students in the university. We must must be in good appearance. We must be elegant

B: L Yes.

A: We must have we must have show the other of your style because the physical appearance can affect your personality.

B: Yes, that's right, yeah.

A: What what's the the ...

B: L I don't like very very long coats.

A: I don't like short one.

B: Not not very short, but you can wear a short skirt with with with short coat with a skirt, you can.

A: I want to be exceptional in this party, that's why I want to buy something very exceptional, because [laugh] it's a party, you know.

B: It's a party you have to choose the colour which is attractive, because you are only girls, you can wear everything.

A: L Yes, yes.

B: Yes — I want to say something. You cannot you cannot you must wear the skirt with

A: L Yes, of course.

B: Choose a silky skirt with a colour and put some accessories, some accessories, some attractive one.

A: Yeah, I can I can do this. Yes, maybe [laugh] because I'm sometimes I change my decision.

B: In a party we can make something attractive.

A: Yes, what's about the size?

B: Size?

A: Yes.

B: Your size is 38, the same?

A: Yes, the same. I don't like the the narrow jeans and t-shirts and I like the wide one.

B: Why, do you feel relax with wide?

A: Yes, comfortable, more comfortable than the narrow one, yes.

B: Yes, we choose 20 38 or 14, sorry 40.

A: L Yes.

B: Yes, is enough.

A: — What about the traditional style? We cannot ...

B: † Yes, nowadays we see something traditional and with touch of modernity, like like —

A: † Koftan?

B: Yes, yes.

A: Yes, we can wear Koftan, but it's it's it's makes you, it makes you —

B: † Older?

A: † older than your age, yes.

B: You are very young, 20 years old.

A: Sometimes we want to change our appearance.

B: Something new, you must try something new because it's good.

A: Yes but in your size 38, not more.

Pre-test: Control Group

Role Play 4

A: Mum, I want your opinion about my choice.

B: What do you choose?

A: I choose English to study English as ...

B: ⊥ Why not Medicine?

A: Because it's, because it's my dream since childhood.

B: But I think that Medicine is better. You can improve yourself in scientific scientific thoughts and it's it's more it has a more power and more importance than literature.

A: But I want to study English. But I want to speak to speak English in order to communicate with different people from different religions and to develop my culture.

B: Yes, I know that, but English, sorry, that Medicine, it is with human being, with how to how to deal with with people who who are ill and you can you can give them give them —

A: ⊥ help

B: ⊥ help, you can help them.

A: ⊥ Yes.

B: Yes, and you can go to conferences, you can I think it's better to English.

A: But teaching is also a noble job, and you can deal with with different students and improve their level, and it's a respectful job for women.

B: The final point, it's your choice and you can you can think careful before dealing with it, and I hope you good luck in your choice.

A: Thank you.

Pre-test: Control Group

Role Play 5

A: Hello, Imene!

B: Hello, Soumya! How are you?

A: I'm fine, and you?

B: I'm good.

A: Did you watch Mary Chuwy yesterday?

B: No, I didn't watch I didn't watch I didn't watch it because I was very busy.

A: It happened a new new bad event because she had an accident.

B: Oh, my God! This is why I didn't like this topic of TV programmes.

A: So what do you prefer?

B: I prefer another kind of TV programmes and another another kind of movies like I prefer like like action movies.

A: Like what?

B: Like Prison Break.

A: I like it too, but I prefer to the romantic like Titanic and I also want like so much the cartoons like Rimy.

B: Rimy, this is this is kind of TV programmes for children and not for you.

A: I don't agree with you because I I think that it doesn't depend on the age on the age.

B: OK.

Pre-test: Control Group

Role Play 6

A: Hello! How are you?

B: I'm fine, what about you?

A: I'm fine too, what about your party?

B: If you are so interested, why didn't come, why didn't come?

A: I know that you are anger with me. I'm sorry.

B: Don't be sorry. Party is over and party is over you promised me.

A: I'm sorry. I can understand your anger. I have some reasons which force me to miss your party.

B: What what they are, what are they?

A: My car is broken up last night and I have to wait for my brother, I have to wait for my brother to come. When he come when he come came late and I can't found time to prepare myself to your party.

B: It's OK but I faced this problem before, but why didn't you call me?

A: I thought that face to face is better to provide better explanation.

Pre-test: Control Group

Role Play 7

A: What's wrong with you?

B: Mum, I want to ask your permission for something but I I am afraid that you that you won't accept.

A: Why? Are you doing something wrong?

B: No, of course.

A: So, just tell me.

B: But I know that we will be going to be angry and you will shout at me as usual.

A: No.

B: OK my friend my close friend Mouna going is going to make her birthday party and she invited me.

A: But you know that I am always but you know that I am I didn't accept to go alone in this party.

B: But why? You know my friend Mouna. She live near.

A: At what time? OK, at what time?

B: At 10.

A: At 10. With who are you going to go?

B: She told me that her father will take me.

A: And with whom you come back?

B: With her father also.

A: So, but whom the people that will will be there?

B: You know that are all just our friends of the class.

A: OK, so go but don't come back late.

B: OK, thank you.

A: Wait, don't switch your mobile because I will call you.

B: OK, don't worry.

Pre-test: Control Group

Role Play 8

A: I've been waiting for you for more than an hour. We had an appointment at 12. What's what's wrong with you?

B: I know, really really sorry, but I had circumstances. Believe me.

A: Where have you been?

B: I I've prepared myself on time but something came up.

A: Something like what?

B: I I had to wait for my mother until 11:45 because she had no keys.

A: But it's not an excuse, do you know?

B: I know, but I couldn't possibly leave her out.

A: But you could at least call me.

B: I but I couldn't find my phone. I put it somewhere and totally forgot its place.

A: But you've told me that you've left home at 11:45.

B: Yes, but I had a huge transportation problem, I couldn't find a taxi and once I did I I, there was the traffic jam.

A: OK, OK, you are excused, but don't do it again.

B: Yes, it won't happen again. I will be on time next time.

A: I hope so.

Pre-test: Control Group

Role Play 9

A: Kenza, you know what I have just remembered?

B: What?

A: The incident of last summer.

B: Ah, you mean you mean when we you mean when we were supposed to take care of our neighbour's girl?

A: Yes, she was five year old.

B: From, at the first moment she arrived, she she started running running around and jumping all over the place.

A: Yes, and we were supposed to chase her from room to room.

B: — And finally when we felt asleep, when she felt sleep, we put her in her bed.

A: Yes, but I remember when I went to check on her, she was gone.

B: I still remember the lookk on your face. You were screaming she's not there, she's not here! [laugh]

A: Yes, I was I was scared.

B: —

A: Scared and we started searching for her.

B: Yes, and finally — and when and for a moment I thought we will never find find her.

A: Thank God we heard her screaming under her bed.

B: We were we felt released.

A: Yes.

Pre-test: Control Group

Role Play 10

A: Well, I'm home. — Oh, my God! What is this? Why the house is so unclean and ...

B: ♫ Oh, you're already back. I don't I didn't expect that you will come today.

A: Well, you should know that I'm coming. You know the date of the plane.

B: I'm very sorry. I'm so sorry. I had no time to make an arrangement in your apartment, but I swear I'm sorry.

A: Where was you?

B: I was, you know ...

A: ♫ You had no time I absent for one month. What were you doing during this large time?

B: You know, honey, I was so busy with my study, my job and I had no time, and when I come back home in the evening I go directly to sleep, I swear, no fiesta, no ...

A: ♫ At least you could arrange it a little bit. You know that I'm coming today. I was ...

B: ♫ I know, I know, I know, I'm really sorry for turning your house into a mess, but I swear I will fix it today and it will be nice.

A: Don't bother, it's my fault, I shouldn't leave you at my my space, and I know that you are irresponsible.

B: I know I'm clumsy and I admit I'm clumsy and irresponsible person, I'm young, I'm still young, so, next time, I will be more ...

A: ♫ No, there is no next time.

B: Please, I love your cute apartment, it's very comfortable.

A: No, it's the last time. You need a baby-sitter next time.

B: Come on!

Pre-test: Control Group

Role Play 11

A: Did you remember last summer when we lost our small neighbour?

B: Of course I do. We were so afraid when we did not find her. At first, I thought that she was with you.

A: That's the same for me. I was thinking she was with you too.

B: I was shocked when you told me that she is not with me. I was so afraid to lose her.

A: Me too I was shocked but I remember quickly that she was we left it we left her on the beach.

B: Yes, we rushed to the beach and we found her crying in the same place which we were in it.

A: I was so happy after when we found her.

B: Me too, but I think that we were not responsible enough to take care of anyone else.

A: Yes, responsibility is not something easy.

Pre-test: Control Group

Role Play 12

A: Hi, dad!

B: Hello, son!

A: I want to ask you for permission to go to the party this night.

B: But whom this party and where it will take place?

A: It's for my friend birthday. It's and in his house on house.

B: Ever you can't.

A: Why, father?

B: Because you are too young for parties.

A: But why parents friends go allowed for them to go? Please, dad.

B: OK, son, but with conditions.

A: Yeah, dad, I accept.

B: I take you, I will take you to the party and will come back to bring you after two hours.

A: Oh, thank you, dad! I appreciate and I will call you when I will when I will be there.

B: OK, you can go.

Pre-test: Control Group

Role Play 13

A: Hi! How are you?

B: Hi! I'm fine, thanks.

A: I am afraid because, could you please, could you help me?

B: Of course, you are welcome.

A: I am afraid because it is the first time I come to the university of Constantine and I don't know everything to help me so I wish you to solve my problems.

B: Don't worry. I welcome with your questions. I will do my best to guide you.

A: I want you to give me an opinion about the situation of studying, modules, teachers and administration.

B: Look, you must be so seriously from the first time and do not be neglect at all. About studying, there depends on your own ability, and try to be self-relevant because things are here is totally different from refer to the secondary school.

A: Please, tell me, how about teachers and administration?

B: Teachers are, teachers are severe, but of course they have high level and good situation of teaching. Administration are working but in slowly way. You will fed up with them, for example in the deliberation.

A: Thanks, Miss but and see you next ...

B: L You are welcome, good luck!

Pre-test: Control Group

Role Play 14

A: Hello, Nadjwa! Why you are looking angry?

B: Good afternoon I'm not looking angry but I'm so tired.

A: Normally we normally we have a session with with our teacher in grammar in room 20, but she has late, you know the large number of of students and the room is small. They starts making noisy girls laughing and boy smoking. You know I'm ill I can't just I can't just breath a safe air, because of that I'm tired — and I'm so angry because of this bad condition of our university.

B: Don't worry. We know that our university has bad conditions. We should to be so satisfied.

A: So, how about you?

B: At the restaurant waiting for to buy sandwich of hamburger.

A: Oh my God, for three hours? I know.

B: Yeah.

Pre-test: Control Group

Role Play 15

A: Hi Manel! How are you? It's long time that I didn't see you.

B: Fine, thanks. What about your studying?

A: I am second year.

B: Are you in university residence?

A: Yes.

B: Oh, so I have chance because I'm looking for a nice company in the room hall, but and I think that you are the perfect person.

B: Of course, you are my best friend, and I will be happy to to be my my roommate — and I know you from long time but I I have already chosen my roommate.

A: Oh, please, Manel, try, we still have a time and I really want to stay with you and I will be the best roommate. I'm helpful and calm and I'm good at cooking as you know.

B: Sorry, Karima, it's over because I gave her a word, and this evening she will — brings her bags. I'm really sorry.

A: It's OK, no problem. I understand you. Next year.

Pre-test: Control Group

Role Play 16

A: Good morning, dad! I want to tell you something.

B: Go, going ahead, daughter.

A: I would like to travel to Bejaia with my friends but my mother does not let me to go.

B: In fact, your mother is not wrong, but try to convince her to let, if you tell you I convince her to let go to let you go if you tell the names of your friends.

A: Certainly, I will go with my neighbour Fayrouz, my cousin Dalel and of course my best friend Radia.

B: Great, how long do you want to stay?

A: At at least five days.

B: Where? I prefer not to go — but if this make you feel happy it's OK.

A: Thank you, dad. I love you so much.

Pre-test: Control Group

Role Play 17

A: Hi, Imene! How are you doing?

B: Hi, I'm doing good, and you?

A: I'm fine, thanks. — What's new about your studies?

B: For the moment, everything is OK — with my studies. I wish it will be the same for the second semester.

A: We hope so. With the climate and the heat I guess we can't stand the period of exam.

B: For me, I want I want finish the the second serie without make-up exam and enjoy staying home.

A: Staying home? Are you sure about what you saying? How could you — and how do you spend your weekends and holidays at home?

B: I really love staying home — and watching movie, for for instance this weekend I have seen one of my favourite films Ocean Eleven. It's drama story, concerns stealing a casino to pay back and not for other purposes.

A: Yes, I saw it too. I think it's amazing because behind all the events it contains a love story of the heroes George Clooney and Julia Robert, which led the hero to revenge from the new man of his ex-wife by stealing his casino and I like the most the presentation of Brad Pitt.

B: No, I dislike this actor. I find him somehow. — At the other hand, I love George Clooney because he is handsome and very attractive.

A: Tell me, do you like Julia Robert's dresses?

B: Yes, I like them specially the red one.

A: In a word, it was a great film. I really like it and I want to see it again.

B: Yes, it's pleasant to see like this movie.

Pre-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 1

A: What's wrong with you, my sweetheart? I thought that you are on top of the world after getting your Bacculaureate.

B: Of course I am happy. I'm very excited.

A: What, so, what's wrong with you?

B: I choose my branch.

A: What do you mean? Is there any problem?

B: You know, after getting my Bacculaureate I must choose my university degree. I'm confused between mine and yours.

A: You mean between choosing English and Medicine?

B: Yes.

A: I know that you love English and you want to be a teacher of native speaker of English, but I think that Medicine is very better to you and this is the better decision you make it in your life.

B: Mum, if I do you have any problem if I choose English?

A: Of course I don't have any problem but I prefer to do Medicine because, you know, I have been dreaming about this. But you start start, but you want to speak English fluently as good as a native speaker and to teach at university. But, you know, if you choose Medicine and you was scientific student in the high school. You was literary branch?

B: Yes, I was.

A: And also Medicine you can help others.

B: No, I want English.

A: So, if you are interesting in English I will not I will not disagree with you.

B: You accept my choice?

A: Yes, of course.

B: Thanks a million, I feel myself on walking on the air.

A: Because if I didn't let you choose English, maybe you choose Medicine and you will not make a big success, but I trust on you and I make all proud of you, apple of my eye.

B: Thank you, mum.

Pre-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 2

A: Hi, Sarah! How are you?

B: OK, you seem a little bit upset. What's up?

A: You know, Sarah, that I'm not good at cooking but I need a huge help from you to teach how to cook.

B: That's all? Don't worry, dear. I've got a simple simple recipe and easy to do.

A: I'm planning for a huge party tomorrow.

B: Yes, I'm here and I'm gonna help you.

A: And I was wondering if you could give me some recipes, especially for cookies.

B: Of course, I've got, what about chocolate cookies recipe? It's very easy and very delicious too.

A: Thanks God, tell me what to do.

B: Yes, you just need a few ingredients. Let's say some flour, eggs and ...

A: How many eggs do we need?

B: You need two eggs and cup of flour, cup of sugar, sorry, and two thirty cup of cocoa powder, two spoon of baking soda and pinch of salt.

A: Thank you very much.

B: Oh, don't worry, it's a very simple and I'm guarantee you you will have a very good cookies. You just mix some butter and don't forget it of course, and mix it with the sugar, then add the eggs and with two ...

A: L The vanilla and the sheet paper you told me to find?

B: Just in the kitchen tool, shop, you find everything you need.

A: And by the way, you will go with me.

B: Yes, sure, I'm here, erm, as I've said, and add the eggs and add the, some the vanilla, extra extra vanilla or sugar vanilla, as you like, then put the dry ingredients at the bench, erm, so mix it together well and take ice-cream scoop, then put them on the sheet paper and put them into the oven for for about 50 minute at 35 degrees.

A: We can make this cake ever ——

B: And I suggest you to serve them and some chocolate sauce on the top. That will that will gonna be good.

Pre-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 3

A: Hi! How are you today?

B: Fine.

A: What's the wrong? I know you that you want to tell me something. I notice it.

B: Yes, my close friend is going to make a birthday party and she invited me to ...

A: ♫ Oh, no, your exams start next week. Forget it.

B: Oh, mum, please don't let me down.

A: I said no.

B: Oh, you put me in embarrassing situation with my friend.

A: My God, you have a stone headed — but you didn't tell me about the place and the time of this party.

B: Well, you know my friend Sarah, and the party will be tomorrow in the noon.

A: OK, but give me the phone number of your friend. I will get you back to from.

B: OK, I do what have you said, thank you.

A: Good, you can go, my dear.

Pre-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 4

A: Hi! How are you?

B: Hi, I'm fine, but I want to fall asleep.

A: What's up? You look very tired.

B: Yes, yesterday I didn't sleep till 4 o'clock.

A: Are you a night person?

B: No no no, in fact — in fact, I was watching an interesting movie.

A: What's its title?

B: Fatma movie.

A: OK, I know it but I don't love it very much.

B: Really? Which kind do you like?

A: Well, I love English movie and I watch Algerian movie but one in the two months.

B: Algerian movie? Are you kidding? It's the it's the ridiculous one.

A: Yes, I know, especially the topics. I feel that they make a monkey out of themselves.

B: Yeah, I know it, I note it. Also the actress have never — face the camera.

A: Spite the fact that, yes, I know, despite the fact that they have some good movies and I really like it.

Pre-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 5

A: Amira, Amira!

B: Yes, mum!

A: Can you help me can you come here to help me to prepare dinner?

B: Of course, mum, what what I suppose to do?

A: You can prepare a salad and the table.

B: OK — Mum, I I would tell you something, but promise me to agree with me.

A: What's going on?

B: My friends are organising a trip and they asked me to go with them.

A: Trip? When? It's impossible to go in now. You have not finished your studies yet.

B: Please, mum, I finished the examination and all my friends are going and I reassuring you that everything will be OK.

A: So, I want to know you everything about this trip and then I decide, and when and where you going?

B: We are going to the park of Setif in in in this weekend.

A: How long do you stay here, there?

B: We stay all the day and the the, we will back, returned back in the evening.

A: With who?

B: With my friend Sarah and Djihan and her sister Maya.

A: OK, but promise me that you will be safe yourself and call me every time.

B: Thank you, mum. You are the most beautiful mum in the world.

A: I love you too, honey.

Pre-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 6

A: What are you thinking about?

B: I just remember the incident that happened last summer.

A: Well, that was a day full of horror and fun.

B: For me, I I don't remember exactly what was the first reaction when we found out that the little Kathy was missing.

A: Don't make me laugh. You were like — shocked.

B: You didn't see your face.

A: OK, I was a little terrified but not like you.

B: You know that I looked for her I searched for her everywhere, even in public toilets?

A: Really?

B: Thanks God Miss Parker found Kathy in the supermarket playing with dolls.

A: Yes, we didn't tell her mother the truth.

B: Yes, we didn't, well, let's go to her house and tell her the funny story.

A: OK, that sounds a great idea.

B: I hope she won't kill us.

Pre-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 7

A: Hello, Meriem! I'm sorry for being late like this.

B: Hi! But for you it must be good morning. You know why?

A: Give me a chance to take a rest. I'm coming very fast. I want to take my breath.

B: Are you kidding? I think that you have we have an appointment at 10 o'clock, but you come late and want to take a breath as well.

A: I'm sorry again, I have my excuses to tell to you.

B: No, I didn't want to listen anything — because this late causes many changes in what's we are must to do this day.

A: I know that you are very angry, but I have my excuse. Please, try to listen to me.

B: But why didn't call me?

A: Eh, that's the story of my life! I will tell you all my excuses I have going to work this morning at 8 o'clock and this man, it's old man, it's my boss, it's the worst man in my life, I call I told to him that I had a meeting at 10 o'clock but he didn't he refused to to let me leave my work at at least at 9 or something else, but he refused and when I have have to take a taxi I have faced many traffic a great traffic jam — I'm sorry.

B: And what about calling me?

A: I have forgotten my my phone at home.

B: You have always an excuse for everything. It doesn't matter now. We must we must think about what we must do today in our programme. Let's go.

Pre-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 8

A: Hi, mother! How do you feel today? Are you tired?

B: Oh, I feel very tired today.

A: Why? Is there something who makes you tired?

B: Because I clean all all the house.

A: Why don't you? We can come and help you.

B: You know that you study and I don't like to interrupt you in your free time.

A: By the way I have something to tell you about.

B: It must be good thing, so you seem like the top of the world.

A: I think, mum, I'm free to —— I find a nice time job and I thought very well and decide to work to help you.

B: Oh, my God, you really shocked me! I wonder you to study and and get a high degree and proud of you in front our neighbours and family. Why you do that?

A: I'm sorry, mum, if I disappointed you, but we know our condition life. You are not are very bad.

B: Don't talk about this. I can ensure what all what you need. Do I let you down?

A: No, mum, you know it's such a chance we can let it like this.

B: Be sure I wonder my daughter be successful, not rich.

A: OK, I will think, mum.

Pre-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 9

A: Hello, Mino! How are you?

B: I'm fine and you?

A: I'm fine, thanks.

B: OK, what do you think about our new neighbour?

A: I don't feel good with them. For me, I don't like them.

B: Really? Why?

A: Because they disturb me by making noise.

B: Sorry I don't totally agree with you. They seem kind sociable and helpful.

A: What about their kids? They keeping, they keep playing in my garden all the time.

B: That's not reasonable you have to be good because they are they are kids they they are funny and intelligent.

A: It's not the only reason Also the the too many visits our neighbour getting my nerve.

B: Oh, my neighbour, don't think like that. Don't forget that our Prophet has different recommendation about the neighbour.

A: Oh, you're right. I will I will try to deal with them in a good way.

Pre-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 10

A: Hello, dear! Where are you?

B: Hello, sister! I'm at home.

A: So, it's cute, open the door.

B: Really?

A: Yes ——— Oh, what's up?

B: I don't think so.

A: Oh, let's see the kitchen ——— Oh, my God, why are these dishes are not washed?

B: Sorry, I haven't enough time.

A: Don't make me laugh, you haven't a time?

B: It's the truth.

A: Oh, you are irresponsible person.

B: Oh, please stop talking like that.

A: But it's true. Everything is is disgusting. The floor is not clean. Look, it's a lot of dust.

B: Sorry, I wasn't able to do all this by myself.

A: But I'm sorry, I don't accept your excuse because it's not reason.

B: So, what can I do?

A: Oh, just pick up your thing and go.

Pre-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 11

A: Hello, Rania! How are you?

B: I'm is not happy. I'm confused between my study and my preparing for my wedding party which would take place next month.

A: Can you present something about your preparation like people number or the invitation, something like that.

B: So about the invitation, decor and flowers I have been reserved them from Sidi-Mabrouk's magazine.

A: What about the place? Where do you want to do your party, wedding party?

B: In Dar El-Ferdaous.

A: Where is that?

B: In your way to El-Meridj. Normally you know it?

A: Oh, I remember — What about cakes and food?

B: I'm not worry about food because my mother prepared them, but what I'm worry about cakes.

A: Just tell me about the number of people are going to come.

B: One hundred, and thanks million, my best friend!

Pre-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 12

A: Hi, Romaiissa! How are you?

B: Hi! I'm good, what about you?

A: I'm so fine. We didn't see each others for a long time.

B: Yes, I miss our best moments together with our friends.

A: Wait a minute, I think there is a big show this weekend. Can you accept my invitation to go with me?

B: This looks like a date for me, right?

A: Yes, you may say that. I just want to have some fun like the old days.

B: I'm blushed now as you surprised me. I don't know what to say, but I'm so so busy this weekend.

A: Last a chance worth gold. Try to be there. We will enjoy our time.

B: I would like to come. I lived really a bad time last day, so I need this kind of moment, but you know that my mother is very ill and I spend and I spend all my time managing the house and take and must take care of her and I must take care of her, so I can't — I'm really sorry.

A: Please, don't refuse it. Your favourite band will be there and there is free drinks and free dishes, foods.

B: I'm really sorry, but I promise I will go out with you when I have free time. I will call you to organise another day, and I I'm so sorry again.

A: OK, no problem, take more care of your mother and I wish she will be fine.

B: Thank you, take care of you too. See you.

Pre-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 13

A: Hi!

B: Hello!

A: How are you?

B: I'm fine and you?

A: I'm fine, thanks. It's great to see you.

B: Yes, thank you.

A: You know I'm a freshman and I need someone to share with me my room. Would you mind to be my roommate?

B: I'm sorry but I already choose a roommate.

A: Oh, I'm a little bit disappoint because I know you before and I think you might be a great roommate for me because I can do so many things, so that you can be very proud of me and in fact I'm really good at cooking and something like this, you know, to make our room looks like suitable and appropriate one so that I can afford a very good air to so that you can study and —— and be very — and concentrate so that we can study very well.

B: Yes, yes, you look a very good student and I respect you, but what I'm going to do? I already chosen one. I will have second thought, maybe I will consider your demand you will be my roommate.

A: Oh, that's really great. Thank you so much because I'm sure I will never disappoint you and I will never make you let you down. I just want you to look at this very carefully and, you know, I will never disappoint you.

B: Yes, we think we are going to be good roommate, and actually I will tell my friend that I chose I find someone else, and you will be my roommate.

A: OK, thank you very much.

Pre-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 14

A: Hi, Randa! How are you?

B: I'm fine, thanks, and you?

A: I'm not fine because my new neighbours are disturbing me all the time.

B: Why do they, why do why you don't like them?

A: Because they have because they have a lot of kids and who keep playing in our garden and and they make noise crying screaming — screaming all the time.

B: I'm not agree with you, thanks God my neighbours are good.

A: How?

B: My new neighbours are sociable, kind and helpful one. My woman neighbour is very kind and helpful. She likes talking to me and she she always asked me for helping and I love their intelligent funny kids — I wish the best for you.

A: Thanks.

Pre-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 15

A: Sorry for disturbing you.

B: Don't worry, there is no problem.

A: I just want to ask you about the cafeteria.

B: Yeah, sure, come with me. I already go going there.

A: I guess that you are new here.

B: Yes, I am.

A: I feel myself not ready.

B: This is just in first year, but in second year everything is changed.

A: Really?

B: Yeah.

A: OK, I hope that.

B: I already was in your situation in last year — Anyway, which branch you are studying?

A: I'm study English.

B: Me too.

A: Really? Sorry, I have some questions. So things I want to ask about — if you are free of course.

B: Yeah.

A: I will ask you about modules and if they are difficult or not and how many modules you have.

B: We had eleven module modules.

A: You count them for me.

B: Oral Expression, Written Expression, Linguistic, Grammar, Phonetic, Culture, Literature, Informatique, Methodology and foreign language.

A: I guess that Linguistics for me is so difficult.

B: No, if you are present and revise your lessons you don't them very difficult. Just revise them.

A: So, what about the difficult?

B: In my first year, I don't find any modules that it's very difficult — because you be present, write your lessons, revise them and the most important things that you have make pay attention to the teacher.

A: So, you mean that everything every module is easy if I represent in the class?

B: Yes and try to go to the library and did more — lot of books. They help you to exams.

A: So, other question because I want to ask you about teachers, their relationships with student and how they teach and everything about them.

B: We find have found kinds of teachers. The first kind, they are very gentle and friendly with their students and you get the information to them very easy, and the other kind of teachers, they are they have difficult personalities. They come to the class to present their lessons and to go without any discusses with their students. They they don't give the students any chance to discuss with them.

A: Pardon.

B: Don't worry, just make your best.

A: OK, thank you for your helping, thanks for your time and thanks for your advices, but still one more question.

B: Yeah, sure.

A: What's your name?

B: Fayrouz, and you?

A: Fatima.

B: Thank you and great to meet you.

A: Nice to meet you.

Pre-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 16

A: Is that you, Amina?

B: I can't imagine that you are in front of me. I thought that I will never see you again.

A: Me too, Amina what are you doing here in life?

B: I carry on my studies at the university in my my last year. How about you?

A: Oh, I miss you, Amina. Let's go to cafeteria and talk more.

B: How about you? What are you doing in life?

A: Oh, Amina — how can I start? You remember that my father was ...

B: L Yeah, I remember.

A: was sick and after year for his death, I got married a humble man.

B: When I saw you I remember the date of studies and our fun together.

A: Remind me with the nice joy.

B: Of course do you remember when I pushed you on the stairs and you were wearing the high keels and you were very you were very embarrassing?

A: How can I forget it?

B: Because people were laughing on you.

A: You made fun of me in front of the classmate.

B: It was a great it was a great coincidence. Can you can you give me your phone number so that I can call you when I want to visit you?

A: Yes, and I hadn't enough of you. Call me and I tell you the address that you can visit me in any time.

B: Of course, it it will be my pleasure.

Pre-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 17

A: Everyday you face many problems, several problems starting from the noise of the outside world. The teachers can't understand you, the noise, and sometimes if you go out you find the air smoky and a lot of smoke of smoker students. I can't tell you, man, I can't tell you, I can't tell you.

B: But I feel we are used to these conditions.

A: When you come to the classroom, you are very motivated, but when you don't find a chair you start looking for a chair and sometimes, you can't find a chair. What do you do? You should go and sit on the floor? This is can't be happening.

B: That's right.

A: That's what I'm talking about. We have no chairs no tables.

B: But this is not our problem. We have to do our best to ...

A: This is what stresses me out, man, yeah.

B: And what can you say about the restaurant?

A: Oh, don't tell me about the restaurant, man. It smells, it stinks. Sometimes I have to stay all the day with an empty stomach making some noises.

B: By this you are telling me that I should quit.

A: I'm thinking about this.

APPENDIX IV

Transcripts of the Post-test Performances

- **The Control Group**
- **The Experimental Group**

Post-test: Control Group

Role Play 1

A: Good morning, dad! How are you?

B: Good morning!

A: I have something to tell you to ask you.

B: About what?

A: Today while I was reading my newspaper

B: ⌞ Yes.

A: ⌞ like everyday morning

B: ⌞ Yes.

A: I I have I have found announce which suggest a a job — yes, and they they have took the the phone number. I called them and one person answers me. I have take note. She told me that they offering a job for for students and it was very interesting. So, I took the the address and I I have — I went there ...

B: ⌞ But I understand that you stop your studies?

A: No, I listen before. I went there and they and they they told me about the job and ...

B: ⌞ I can't accept.

A: It's very interesting.

B: Because you have to to study before — when you finish your study it's it's easy to found job — I have an experience about this life.

A: But it's a good chance for me.

B: I am your father. It's very difficult In this life you have to to study before — because — I when you finish study job comes easily.

A: Yes, but people were very sympatic with me and they they have show me

B: L Yes, yes, but ...

A: L the office where I can work.

B: Yes, but ...

A: L But I have to tell you about the job. It's very interesting and I can learn from this job.
I have to delegate to to to talk about product of this company.

B: Yes, yes, you have to take an experience when the the holidays come the holidays

A: L Yes.

B: L you can work ...

A: L But they asked me to sign an a contract with them.

B: Ah, no, I can't accept this.

A: From why?

B: You have to finish.

A: I I told them that I have to to talk about with my parents and they will come back.

B: Yes, when you finish you can sign with them with them a contract.

A: OK.

Post-test: Control Group

Role Play 2

A: Hello, mum!

B: Hi!

A: I want to ask you for going to the party of of my friend's — birthday.

B: No.

A: Mum, why? Please, mum, please!

B: No the exam is very near and you must revise your lessons.

A: OK, but I've been revising my lesson a week ago, you know, I fed up of revising.
Please, let me go, please, please!

B: So, who is your friend?

A: Is Jane, my friend, you know her.

B: Yes, I know her parents and it's good go.

A: Yes, yes, she is good, I swear.

B: And who will to ...

A: I spoke to my, to dad, you know, he accepted.

B: So you can go.

A: Sure?

B: Yeah, but you must, but what time you will go?

A: OK, I think to go at 7 o'clock p.m.

B: Yes, you can.

A: OK, thank you, mum. You are the best mum in the world.

B: Thank you.

Post-test: Control Group

Role Play 3

A: Good morning!

B: Good morning!

A: How are you?

B: Fine, thanks, and you?

A: Today I'm going to I want to go to the shop to buy some clothes. I I trust trusted in your way of wearing. That's why I want to you to help me to to buy some clothes because we are students in the university and we need to be in good appearance, to be elegant.

B: Yes, of course, I want to help you. I want to change your style of wearing. I think that you your clothes are — so classic.

A: So traditional?

B: So traditional.

A: You know that there are some fashionable clothes which is unacceptable. We cannot wear anything.

B: Yes, I understand you, but you you you are you are young. You can you can you can wear something, something, something which go with your age, yes.

A: Yes, what about colour? You know that I have ...

B: ♪ We are in summer, in a hot weather, you you wear ...

A: ♪ I like this colour, you know, I like.

B: Yes, black is something fashionable, but you you must change to wear some happy colours pink.

A: It's more attractive, I cannot wear it.

B: No.

A: Attractive somehow.

B: You can break it with with black. Pink and black, they work together.

A: You know that summer is coming ...

B: L Yes.

A: L and there is a lot of party wedding. What kind of advice you can give me to to help me to wear to be exceptional in the party?

B: Your party is just with wowed?

A: Yes.

B: Yes, you can omit your veil. You can have a style of hair.

A: L Yes, it's a good idea.

B: You go to the hair dresser

A: L Yes.

B: L and you can wear something attractive, something red or pink

A: L Yes, yes.

B: L with some accessories

A: L Yes.

B: L some jewellery.

A: I think that the the blue colour is more suitable or

B: L You already wear

A: L I like this colour.

B: L wear the blue colour, but I want you to change this category — of blue. I want something something happy than that.

A: Mm, what about modern, modernity? Is there new clothes which is exclusive in this summer?

B: Yes there is some some degree of pink, not the pink in your mind, pink which is not attractive like, is not attractive but it is very very beautiful, to change your mind. It's affect your personality, to ...

A: ♫ Thank you for advice. You are, really you are helping me a lot because I know that style of wearing, it's somehow has a relationship with your personality, yes, so we cannot wear anything. We can be somehow strict because we are wearing a veil. There is a limit

B: ♫ Yes.

A: ♫ not wear anything. If we are, have a lot money, if we have there is a lot of things which is beautiful but there is a limit when you are want to buy something.

B: Yes, there is some coats which are very forbidden in our religion.

A: ♫ Yes I ...

B: ♫ I want I want to change your colours, just your colours with keeping the same the same style. Don't waste time. Let's go to the shopping.

A: Yes, it's time.

Post-test: Control Group

Role Play 4

A: Mum, do you think — you think that I enjoy studying English? What do you think?

B: Yes, I know that, but I have been dreaming of Medicine since your childhood since yes, since you have started school.

A: I prefer studying English because it is my favourite my favourite dream.

B: Yes, I know that, but I always see you with scientific mind and this scientific thought and and I expect that you will succeed in it the future.

A: — I like English I like studying English because I love it so much, I love it so much, I think that it is better me to study English, and I don't like Medicine — because I afraid from it. So, I choose English.

B: But if you see the advantages of Medicine you will certainly choose it because it's it has a power in our society and it deals with human with the with the humanity and and above above all, you will gain gain much much money.

A: — I choose English.

B: I I can't I can't I can't be an obstacle on your choice. So, I hope you good luck and I think that you will not you will not you will not — you will not regret on your choice.

A: Thank you, mum. I love it. I love it.

B: Good luck!

Post-test: Control Group

Role Play 5

A: Hello, Imene! How are you?

B: Hi, Soumya! I'm fine, and what about you?

A: I'm not very well, but thanks.

B: So, tell me what's, what is the matter with you?

A: You know these late elections made a big problem in in our country, especially in Algiers. Did you watch it?

B: In what channel because I am not interested in this elections?

A: In Annahar TV. It always inform us about about this kind or this new events.

B: Oh, this is why, because I dislike this kind of this kind of news.

A: So, what do you prefer?

B: I prefer watching cultural missions in in National Geography, if you know it, because it helps me more to build up my knowledge.

A: Did you watch only this kind?

B: No, in addition to this cultural missions, I prefer watching series and movies.

A: Like what?

B: Like romantic movies — and in addition to this, I watch cartoons.

A: Oh, come on, you are older than that.

B: No, but think this is not ...

A: ♪ I'm only joking [laughs].

Post-test: Control Group

Role Play 6

A: Good morning Assia! How are you?

B: Good morning! I'm fine, and you?

A: Fine, thanks, what about your party?

B: If you are so interested, why do you didn't come? Don't be sorry, the party is over now.

A: Believe me, I want to come but I couldn't.

B: Why you couldn't?

A: Because my car broken up and I first to wait for help until my brother came.

B: So, why you didn't call me?

A: Because I think explain it face to face is better.

B: It's OK, it may happen, no problem.

A: So, peace?

B: Peace.

Post-test: Control Group

Role Play 7

A: Marwa, what's the matter with you?

B: Nothing.

A: But you seem as if you want to say something.

B: That's right, but I am afraid from your reaction.

A: Why? Are you doing something wrong?

B: No, but I think that you will refuse and shout on me as usual.

A: No, just tell me.

B: OK, promise me that you will be calm.

A: OK, I promise you.

B: My friend Mouna has just invited me to her birthday party tonight.

A: But you know that I I'm always against you going to such parties.

B: But you know that Mouna is my best friend, and she insisted on me.

A: ^L Even she is your best friend, but I don't you to go to such parties.

B: But you know she does she lives near of at from us.

A: OK, and I don't know the people that are going to be there.

B: Just our classmates.

A: But but I don't know but you know that, but you know that I can't take you.

B: OK, she told me that her father will take me.

A: With whom are you come back?

B: With her father also. Please, please, mum, let me. I want to really to go. Come on, say yes.

A: OK, get your clothes and don't come back late.

B: OK.

A: Wait, don't switch your mobile. I will call you all the time.

B: OK, don't worry.

Post-test: Control Group

Role Play 8

A: Hi, good morning!

B: Good morning? Say good evening!

A: You seem to be really mad at me.

B: Of course, what do you think?

A: I mean, I er expected you to be angry at me, but not that angry.

B: I've been waiting for you for more than an hour. We had an appointment at 12. What's wrong with you?

A: Oh, no, I've I'm really late. I know I'm really late. I am sorry for that, but look, I have valid, a valid reasons, er, first of all, I had a terrible headache. Besides, my mother had no I had to wait for my mother, poor her, she had no keys. I couldn't possibly leave her.

B: But it's not an excuse, do you know?

A: I know.

B: You could have called me at least. You don't you have a mobile or what?

A: I have one, you know that, but I've looked for it everywhere. I couldn't find it, and when I did, its battery was very low, so well that I couldn't even turn it on.

B: You always have a lot of excuses.

A: I know, at least they are true, er, besides, I have a very bad luck and I'm a bit messy too, come on!

B: I don't know why you're always the one who wins in the end. Maybe because you know that I love you so much. So, you are excused.

A: Thanks, darling.

B: L But try not to do it again.

A: OK, I'll do my best to be more punctual next time.

B: So, good morning!

A: Good morning! I have really funny stories to tell you.

Post-test: Control Group

Role Play 9

A: Kenza, I cannot see it.

B: They are announcing on TV a young girl is missing.

A: Oh, dear, you know what's it reminds me of?

B: Oh, you mean the incident of last summer?

A: Yes, we were asked to take care of our neighbour's daughter.

B: She was five year old. She was very dynamic. We couldn't keep up with her. She was jumping and running all over that place.

A: And suddenly we couldn't find her.

B: Oh, my God, I felt — terrified and couldn't — I was really, I really I terrified.

A: But I was frightened. We started searching for her — we start searching for her and finally and ...

B: L Yeah, and we were screaming Maria, Maria, where are you? And — I started even wondering what I'm going to say to her parents.

A: Yes, and finally we found her on in the stairs sleeping and we took her to her bed.

B: I never forget that.

Post-test: Control Group

Role Play 10

A: Hi!

B: No, no, no, don't kiss me. What's this? What is this terrible mess?

A: Well sorry.

B: Is it my apartment? Is it my apartment? But I didn't recognise it at first.

A: Sorry, let me explain.

B: This is a terrible mess.

A: Let me explain. I was ...

B: ♪ Without caring.

A: I I didn't have much time to clean it and I thought that you are coming next week, not today.

B: I have finished my work and I

A: ♪ I'm really sorry, I didn't have too much time. I was having my exams and the job. I was really really tired. I was about to clean it and to to fix it.

B: Please, stop, but you gave me a promise, you promised me.

A: ♪ Sorry!

B: Promises are not meant to be broken.

A: But sorry, I didn't have much time and don't care, I will clean it in five minutes.

B: No, no, no, don't clean it, I will just call a maid, my maid.

A: ♪ Sorry, please, and it will be the last time that I stay in your apartment.

B: Don't you ever dream that I will let you next time in my apartment.

A: I'm really sorry.

Post-test: Control Group

Role Play 11

A: Last summer, there was a bad accident. Are you still remember it?

B: Yes, I do. The small girl was disappear.

A: Yes, it was your fault.

B: Yes, but I thought she was with you in the garden.

A: Yes, I went to watch the match and I was thought that you were you was take care of her.

B: This is the problem and I was was so afraid when you told me she she — she was lost.

A: Yeah, me too, and I tried to hide it from her mother.

B: But, when we found her I I had relaxed and bring it to her mother.

A: — Yeah, I have been told you, the responsibility is is something hard.

B: Yes, that's right.

Post-test: Control Group

Role Play 12

A: Hello, father!

B: Hello, son!

A: Can I ask you to go to the party this night?

B: Where it is to take place and for whom this party?

A: It's in the next street and it's my friend party.

B: No, you can't go.

A: Please, dad, I wants go.

B: OK, but in condition that I will take you and I will and I will come back to you to bring you after two hours.

A: Dear father, thank you.

B: OK, son.

Post-test: Control Group

Role Play 13

A: Hi, Miss! How are you?

B: I'm fine, thanks. What about you?

A: I'm fine. Please, could you help me?

B: Yes, of course, you are welcome.

A: I am a first-year student. I need your help about how is the study in this university.

B: Of course, take it easy. Do your best and try to be serious in your studies.

A: How about modules, department, teachers?

B: Modules are as usual, some difficult and others are normal. Teachers, some are serious while others not care. Department always serious and don't care about students.

A: OK, thanks Miss.

B: You are welcome. Do your best.

Post-test: Control Group

Role Play 14

A: Good morning, friend! How are you?

B: I'm fine, and you?

A: Fine. Can you help me?

B: Sure, you are you are welcome, but in what?

A: I have an research in Oral Expression about the bad about the conditions of our university. I choosed the bad the bad conditions of our — Tell me your opinion or your examples if you ...

B: ^L OK, I will try with you. Actually we have many condition or examples. First, you should speak about the noisy in the classroom and smokers.

A: Yes, this is a good idea. Sihem, you remember those group of boys that smoke in the classroom after the session?

B: Yeah, I have another example In the example the room that you study in.

A: Yes, this is another example. Any addition, please?

B: Finally, you speak about the bad food in the restaurant.

A: OK, thank you for your help. Now, let me finish my work to discuss in this this afternoon.

Post-test: Control Group

Role Play 15

A: Hi, Manel! How are you?

B: Fine, thanks, and you?

A: I'm fine, thanks, what about you, your studying?

B: I'm second year, and you?

A: I'm first year. Are you in university residency?

B: Yes.

A: Oh, so I have chance because I'm looking for a roommate and I think you are the best.

B: Me too, but I am sorry, I have already chosen my roommate.

A: Please, try, we still have a time and we are friends from long time.

B: Sorry, she already brings her bags this week.

A: Please, I will be your best roommate, helpful, calm, and I am I am good at cooking as you know.

B: I'm really, but I give her my word, sorry!

A: It's OK, no problem, next year.

Post-test: Control Group

Role Play 16

A: Good morning, dad! How are you? I want to say something.

B: Go on , my daughter.

A: I would like to travel in Jijel next week with my friends on school trip, but but

B: L OK, OK.

A: L but but

B: L What's your problem?

A: The problem my mother don't let me to go with them.

B: In fact, your mother is not wrong, but don't worry, I convince your mother.

A: Thanks, dad.

B: Wait, wait, I want to ask your some question.

A: Of course, I listen to you.

B: First, what are the name of your friends and how they, how they stay stay staying there?

A: The names of my friends my neighbour Lila and my best friend Radia and I will stay at least three days.

B: What I say? I hope to enjoy with your friend and you have good time in the trip.

A: Thank you so much.

Post-test: Control Group

Role Play 17

A: Hi, Imene! How are you doing?

B: I'm doing fine, thank you, and you?

A: I'm great. If the studies are good I'm superfine.

B: Please, don't talk about the studies because I feel I'm not ready for the exams.

A: Don't worry, it's the same for me. I'm frightening this week and my big matter is the final results. I really wanna succeed.

B: — All of us all of us — if the God will. Besides, I'm revising in a week, in a week in a weekends — a little bit. Sure after watching some movies I still worried.

A: Watching movies is one of the most methods to forget your stress and — entertain yourself.

B: — Tell me, have you seen the, have you seen the yesterday's film in mbc2 Ocean Eleven?

A: Yes, I saw it.

B: It's one of my my favourite films. I really like it, its story, its characters, its and all of it, all of it.

A: Yes, it's adorable.

B: I liked the most the presentation of George Clooney.

Post-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 1

A: Hello, my daughter! What's wrong?

B: Hi, mum! Nothing.

A: You seem confused and disappointed. What's wrong with you?

B: I said nothing.

A: But — you seem, I don't know, you're not normal and you should be happy because you've got your Baccalaureate, aren't you?

B: Sure, I am.

A: Then, what's wrong?

B: I lose my head. I'm very confused between between choosing Medicine and English.

A: Normally you know that I want you to to study in this branch, because since the first day I bring you to life I see in you all my dreams.

B: But I love English.

A: I know you love English and — you have many — capacities.

B: No, I can't study Medicine or anything else, just English.

A: Why? Can you tell me the reason why you choose English?

B: I really love it.

A: Loving something is not — a big reason to study.

B: I can't, mum.

A: I know that you love English and I want to tell you just something you have to keep it in your mind, that Medicine is a good branch for you since you're studying, you were studying — in scientific branch — and it's helpful, you help the others and there is

B: ⊥ English also is good.

A: I know that is good because you love it, but it's not — I don't believe in it.

B: So, mum?

A: So, what can I tell you? — If you choose English I will not be satisfied but what I will do? This is your choice and your life, but I hope that you can make a big success in it — and I will be proud of you, apple of my eyes.

B: So, I will choose it now?

A: Yeah, you choose it.

B: Thanks, mum, I

A: ^L Even if I'm not satisfied, but what I want to say? You're my daughter. I can't make you sad.

B: Thanks, I feel myself up in the air.

Post-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 2

A: Hello!

B: Hi, Sarah! How is it going?

A: I'm fine, thanks — Your voice, er, what's up? Your voice, erm, seems a bit gloom.

B: Well, I actually need your help for preparing a tasty cake cream.

A: Oh, don't worry. How about chocolate cup cakes?

B: Chocolate cup cakes? It sounds awesome!

A: Yes, I've got one recipe and it's very easy to make.

B: — I don't have any reception, don't you?

A: Yes, do you have — you have the recipe, don't you?

B: Do you, sorry, no, I don't have, that's why I brought you here to help me.

A: Oh, don't worry, honey, I will give you one and it's very easy to make.

B: Wait, Sarah, give me a pen or something that's to write the ingredients.

A: Yes, erm, here we are. They're a few ingredients, you've, you just need two a cup and half flour and two eggs and one cup of liquid cup of milk and teaspoon of baking powder.

B: Wow, this sounds easy and easy and delicious too. Thanks a million, Sarah.

A: Let's move on to the preparation. You just mix the the dry ingredients and pour and pour them into the liquid ingredients. Then, bake them into the oven on 35 degree and for a couple 20 minutes, that, and let them cool.

B: But it seems long to ...

A: ^LNo, no, it's very easy, yes, and at the end, you can decorate them with with some melt chocolate.

B: But, I have no decoration in my kitchen.

A: I'll bring you some chocolate.

B: OK, thanks a million.

A: Well, you're most welcome, honey.

Post-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 3

A: Hi, mum!

B: Hi, daughter! What's the matter?

A: Er, nothing, forget about it.

B: Nothing? But you as, but you as you want to tell me something.

A: Only my close friend is going to make a birthday party and she invited me and, you know, I will go.

B: Do you really?

A: Yeah.

B: No, you know that your exams begin the next week?

A: Please, mum!

B: I said no, no. Forget.

A: Sarah said I'm waiting for you, and you will put me in embarrassing situation, will you not?

B: Oh, my God! You have a stone head, haven't you?

A: Look, you're very severe.

B: Forget about the party and everything.

A: You're very severe.

B: Think so, but you will stay with me to revise to revise your lessons. You don't go to the party, OK?

A: Yeah.

Post-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 4

A: Hi! How are you?

B: I'm fine and you?

A: Good.

B: So, I called you last night but you didn't answer.

A: Oh, yeah, I was so busy — so, why did you call me?

B: Because I wanted you to watch Arabs Got Talent on mbc4.

A: Oh, I don't like it.

B: Why?

A: Well, I like Turkish movies.

B: Turkish movies? Don't make me laugh!

A: Why? It's the good ones.

B: — Don't make me laugh, always the same story.

A: Really? What's about Arabs Got Talent?

B: In my opinion, is a good show. Some people are making monkey out of themselves, and I think they haven't any talent.

A: No, not all of them. There're ones who have it.

B: And it, and and ...

A: ♪ So, forget it, what do you think about Arabs Got, Arab Idol?

B: I don't like it very much.

A: Really? Why?

B: Lots of them, they haven't beautiful voice.

A: Anyway, good or bad, it's not a big deal.

B: OK, I have to go now. So, see you later.

A: OK, see you.

Post-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 5

A: Mira, come here now.

B: Yes, mum.

A: Help me to prepare dinner.

B: Of course, mum, what I suppose to do?

A: Er, prepare salad and table.

B: OK — Mum, I want to tell you something, but promise me to be agree with me.

A: Not now, after finishing our works.

B: OK, as you like.

A: ——— What you want to tell me?

B: My friends are organise a trip, and they asked me to go with them.

A: Trip? Are you killing me?

B: Please, mum, I finished my examinations and all my friends are going and I reassuring you that everything will be OK.

A: Where're you going and when?

B: We are going to the park of Setif in this weekend.

A: How long do you stay there?

B: We stay all the day and we will turn back at at the afternoon.

A: With who?

B: With my friend Sarah, Djihan and his sister Maya.

A: OK, but be careful and take care.

B: OK, thank you, mum. You're the most beautiful mum in the world and I love you so much.

A: I love you too, honey.

Post-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 6

A: Hi, brother!

B: Hi, Danny! What's up?

A: That's funny because I just remember the last summer incident.

B: ——— When we lost the girl little Kathy?

A: Yeah, man, that was troublesome.

B: ♪ And funny at the same time, remember?

A: Yeah, I remember that you are about to choke when we found out that we lost the little Kathy.

B: Man, do you know how much noise my ears will suffer from, if Mrs Smith finds out?

A: Mrs Smith, I hate her when she scream.

B: So, how did we, how did we lost her?

A: I remember that you were in your room chatting, right?

B: Yes, I remember. I also remember that you slept on the couch while watching TV, and she was right beside you.

A: Come on, kids' movies are boring.

B: So, I searching, I searching for the girl in in toy section in the biggest mall of the city.

A: — We found her, we found her sleeping in the arms of that big bear.

B: Yes, girls love dolls.

A: Thank God that you didn't harm herself.

B: Yeah, that's when I learned something important.

A: What is it?

B: Never get your eyes away from a child.

Post-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 7

A: I'm going off on holiday during fifty days.

B: So, do you wish you keep me your room?

A: Yes, you can, but you have to to to to keep it tidy.

B: OK, it's not a very big deal. I'm gonna do my best.

A: OK, take care of yourself.

B: OK, see you! Have a nice holidays!

[A is back from the holidays and meets B.]

A: Hello, friend! How are you?

B: How're you? How was your holidays?

A: What's this noisy? The room is too disgusting!

B: Disgusting? Are you talking seriously?

A: Yes.

B: There is ...

A: ^L It was, it was too tidy. What's this noisy about?

B: There's nothing about the room, er, all it needs is to wash some dishes and clean the room, er, you know, tide up the furniture and that's all.

A: Don't make me laugh.

B: Yes, the room, the room is as you left it. It is as tidy as you left it before. I didn't do anything. I just had a party and I invited maybe twenty of my friends and we had a party. It's Ok, er, there's nothing about the room.

A: I didn't find anything to to tell you. I'm too shy with you.

B: OK, next time, try to keep your room as tidy as you want, and don't play mother for something you did. The room is disgusting because of you. You're the one who didn't tidy it up.

A: But, but, but I tell you to to keep it tidy.

B: It's not my problem. I did everything I could. This is your responsibility.

A: OK, I will I will — I will never let my room to anyone again, especially you.

Post-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 8

A: Hi, mum! How do you feel? Are you tired?

B: Hi, honey! I feel tired.

A: Is there something makes you tired?

B: — No, I just clean the home, house and everything, you know.

A: Why, mum? Don't why have don't wait the weekend to help you?

B: I know that you are studying for long time and don't like to interrupt you.

A: By the way, mum, I have very important news to tell you about.

B: Ah, it must be good thing, isn't it?

A: I don't know I don't know, mum — I don't know, I don't know, mum. I'm afraid that you, I'm afraid that you don't like it at all, but I I decide to leave the school to get a job to work.

B: Oh, my God, you really shocked me. Why you do that? The, I wondering you to study and to graduate and to get a high degree to proud of you in front of my family and neighbour.

A: I don't know, but it's such, but it's such shame that you waste it like that. Beside that our condition life are very — bad. We need the money, you know.

B: Oh, my dear, don't care about that. I can ensure to you all what you need. Do I let you down, do I?

A: No, mum, I don't mean that, erm — we need the money, we need the money and the job. It gives me the an experience.

B: Be sure, my daughter, I want my my daughter to be successful and not rich.

A: OK, mum.

Post-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 9

A: Hi, Ayoub! How are you?

B: Hi, Houda. I'm very fine, how about you?

A: I'm well too — but it seems like we have new neighbours, and I don't like them.

B: Why? Do you mean the neighbours that, who are living next to your door?

A: Yes because of the children who keep playing in my my garden all the day, also the too many visits our neighbours bother me.

B: No, I totally disagree with you because I like their children a lot and they just like to have fun and their parents are very sociable and helpful. I remember, once before, their father help me when when the car broken down and they're very cute and I like them a lot. I don't know why, do you, do you really like them?

A: I don't know, maybe I judge them before I know them.

B: So, what do you say if you and I go and visit them? Maybe just to get used to them and know them better much better?

A: OK, it's a good idea. Let's go.

B: OK, I'll tell you the hour or the place where do do we meet and go to them.

A: OK.

B: OK.

Post-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 10

A: Hello, sister! How are you?

B: Hello, sister! Fine.

A: Where are you?

B: At home.

A: Great, open the door.

B: Oh, my Gosh! — Good morning! How are you?

A: Fine, and you?

B: Fine.

A: Oh, I think there is a bad smell in my flat.

B: I don't think so.

A: OK, I'll see. First, we start with the kitchen — Dear, this is not my kitchen, this is a pigsty.

B: This is how you answer back my favour? The, what's the problem with the kitchen? There's nothing to eat. All it needs is to wash some dishes and clean the floor and to remove the dust as well from the ceiling.

A: Oh, don't make me laugh, the kitchen? What have you left? Oh, it's all disgusting! You must be responsible when someone trusts you on something.

B: Oh, please, stop preaching at me like Oh, please, stop preaching at me, you're not better, you're not better than I am.

A: Really? It's better to pick up your things and go out.

Post-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 11

A: [On the phone] Hi! How are you doing?

B: Fine, thanks, and you?

A: Thanks, fine. Are you at home?

B: Yeah, I am.

A: I'm just miss you too much. I want to see you if you mind.

B: Welcome, any time.

[A and B meet.]

A: Hello, good morning!

B: Hello, good morning! — Thank you for for beautiful flower.

A: I'm glad you like them.

B: Please, have a seat.

A: Thanks — When your wedding party will take place?

B: Next month.

A: What? Next month? Really? Did you prepare anything?

B: Of course, I have prepared everything, but I still have a problem with invitation. Can you do a favour for me?

A: Yeah, where is the problem?

B: I want I want you to bring to bring me from the Sidi-Mabrouk Mabrouk magazine.

A: Just tell me about the number of people.

B: One hundred.

A: What about cakes?

B: About cakes, my sister said I will be happy if I make them by myself. Oh, sorry, something to drink?

A: Tea, please.

B: OK.

Post-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 12

A: Hello, Bobby! How are you? It's been a long time I haven't seen it? How it is going with you?

B: Hi, Romaissa! It's great to see you it's really a long time. I'm being well, what about you?

A: I'm very well. I have now lots of progress, you know, I'm getting old.

B: I miss our moment together. Oh, yeah, I remember there is a big show today. Can you come with me? We will enjoy our time.

A: Today? Oh, I'm so sorry Bobby because I am invited to my cousin wedding.

B: Could you figure out something something just to see you for a while?

A: OK, I will see, I would like to see, I passed to a very bad moment last month. I want to have some fun.

B: Your favourite musical band will be there. It's a a missable opportunity. I've got to say this.

A: Yes, I will try Bobby. Give me your number to call you and to confirm that I will come.

B: Thank you.

Post-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 13

A: Hello, Ayoub! How are you?

B: Hello, Adlan! I'm fine, how about you?

A: You know, I'm new here in this university. It's my first year and I would like to share a room if you don't mind of course.

B: Well, I have already a roommate, but I, this, can't take this offer I don't know what he would say about this, but I try to talk to him about about this.

A: Yes, that will be good of you and I will be better for roommate, better than him because I know you already and I'm calm and quiet, and I will be good in cooking and helping you in other stuff, and also we can have a good discussion, we have also many things in common. We can share really good things.

B: Yes, I really know that because I know you and that would be great, but accepting this offer will really disappoint him, and I don't know if he could find another roommate because he really got used to me, and I will think about this.

A: Thank you, that is nice of you to that is something good. I will look for other roommates. Thank you.

B: Thank you, I'm very, I'm very sad.

Post-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 14

A: Hi, Randa! How are you?

B: Fine, thanks, and you?

A: Not fine. I'm upset. I'm looking for a new house.

B: Really? Why?

A: Yeah, my new neighbours disturbing me they have a lot of kids who keep playing in our garden and make noise at all the time.

B: Oh, thanks God my new neighbours are good. They are sociable, kind and helpful and intelligent and funny kids. They enjoy me sometimes.

A: Oh, you are very lucky.

B: If I found a house near to me I will I would tell you.

A: Well, let's go — now. Thanks.

Post-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 15

A: Good morning, Miss! Can I ask you?

B: Yes, no problem at all. What do you want to know?

A: It doesn't matter. I just want to show me where is the cafeteria of the university.

B: Yes, it's in my way. Just come with me.

A: Yes, sure.

[A and B go and sit at a table.]

B: You are a first-year student, aren't you?

A: You are right, and you?

B: I am second year.

A: I think that I am very lucky to meet you, because I didn't find myself in this great university.

B: Why? What's your problem?

A: — First, I want to know the characteristic of English teachers.

B: The, there are a lot kind of teachers. The most of them, they are very gentle and very kind with students, and the other kind, they're very severe and specially the old ones.

A: Then, concerning the module, how many, concerning the programme, how many module we have in this year?

B: If I didn't forget, you have — you have 11 module in first year.

A: What about the planning of exams? It is adequate for any persons or not?

B: It's in general it is, but sometimes you feel you feel that you are very tired because the number of these modules.

A: Yes, finally, please, could you give me me your name?

B: Yes, of course.

A: L Because with great pleasure, I want to know you more about you.

B: Yes, of course, my name is Fayrouz, and you?

A: I am Meriem.

B: Nice to meet you, Meriem.

A: Glad to meet you, Fayrouz. Thank you very much.

Post-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 16

A: Are you Ahlem, aren't you?

B: Oh, my God, Amina, what a beautiful surprise! I thought that we will never meet again. Our destiny gathered us again. I miss you very much.

A: I miss you too. Would you like to go to another place? It is, it is so crowded in here.

B: I miss you so much.

A: Me too.

B: I can't describe my emotion by words when I, when I saw you.

A: The same feeling. Would you like to go to another place? It's so crowded in here.

[A and B go and sit at a table.]

B: Some tea?

A: Yeah, and some cakes as well. — What are you doing in life?

B: — You remember that my father was sick, don't you remember?

A: Of course, how could I forget the day that you were suffer, you were suffering?

B: Yeah, after year for his dead I got married with a humble man, and you, what what what are you doing in life?

A: I carried on my studies. I am in, I am second-year English student. You know that my older brother got married and he has cute baby.

B: Oh, very nice.

A: By the way, do you remember days of joy and play?

B: How can I forget it?

A: Do you remember our days together, especially in the Mathematic session? And and also when I pushed you on the stairs and you were wearing the high heels? And ...

B: L How can I forget it? You made fun of me in front on the classmate — Oh, Amina, I hadn't I hadn't have enough of you. Give give me your phone number to call and visit you.

A: OK, OK and give me your address to visit you.

B: Yes, you're welcome.

Post-test: Experimental Group

Role Play 17

A: So, how was your studies?

B: Don't talk to me about the university. I think it's a garbage, isn't it?

A: Well, if you see other universities — on the Net, I feel like I'm studying in a place is like trash.

B: — I thought when I came first to university is that I study very hard and I find all the circumstances. Instead of burying myself in into my books I I have to find solution of the noise, and at the end of the day, I start think about the transport and how I'm going to get home because everything is low-leveled, is, the transport. And the administration, they don't tell you what you should do. As a student, I don't think it's very good to be a student here.

A: Well, sometimes, you find things special here, but not everything.

B: There is nothing special here in this university. I hope I finish my study, my studies as soon as possible.

A: Well, what about the good teachers here?

B: There is, the thing is there is a good teachers and others are not. There are teachers who don't even know how to give you the right information, and the others are, you find experienced teachers and others don't have a clue about what are they're doing.

A: Well, we suffer from teachers here because sometimes, as you said, there are teachers, they even don't know what they're doing, but you find some teachers, I mean, they're excellent.

B: Yeah, I told you I can can say nothing about this. But — I don't think it is, I don't think that that this is the way it should be. I think that a teacher who's teaching in the university should have a very promoted level, should how, should know how to communicate with students and should know everything without, should know everything about the teaching and about dealing with students, giving marks and feedback and all things. There is a lot of things that can be counted as minus.

A: Actually, I totally agree with you in that in — What about the conditions, the university itself?

B: I told you before, conditions of our university are not very good, are not very good as they should be for example, sometimes when the rain, when it is raining you find a water come the ceiling. You can't study while thinking the water coming from the ceiling, yes. Something, there is a lot bad things here.

A: OK, so, you want to study abroad?

B: Ah, I wish that, I wish I can do that, but I don't have any money.

A: I hope so.

B: Er, maybe in the future, after getting after getting my scholarship from from the authorities, maybe I would be happy to go abroad.

A: OK, that's good, man.

APPENDIX V

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

This questionnaire is part of a research work. It aims at investigating whether and to what extent the teachers of Oral Expression present spoken grammar, the methodology they adopt in teaching it, as well as their views about incorporating it into the Oral Expression syllabus.

You are kindly requested to answer the following questionnaire. Please, tick (✓) the appropriate box (or boxes) and make full statements whenever necessary.

Your answers will be valuable for the completion of this work.

May we thank you in advance for your collaboration.

Miss Fatima-Zohra SEMAKDJI
Department of Letters and English
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Section One: General Information

1. What is your degree?

- a. Licence
- b. Master
- c. Magister
- d. Doctorat

2. How long have you been teaching Oral Expression?

..... years

3. Which year(s)?

- a. First
- b. Second
- c. Third
- d. Master

Section Two: Teaching Spoken Grammar

Informal spoken English is mainly characterised by the use of Heads, Tails, Conversational ellipsis, Vague language, Spoken discourse markers, Informal reported speech and Question tags.

4. Have you taught these aspects?

| Aspects | Examples | Yes | No |
|----------------------------|---|-----|----|
| a. Heads | A friend of mine , his uncle bought a Ford Escort. | | |
| b. Tails | It's really nice, this dress . | | |
| c. Conversational Ellipsis | Seems nice . I like the place, very exciting there , and honestly never seen so many people! | | |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--|--|
| d. Vague Language | <u>Speaker A:</u> Are you upset or something ? <u>Speaker B:</u> I'm afraid I've a bit of a stomach ache. I guess I'm going to a sort of throw up. | | |
| e. Spoken Discourse Markers | <u>Speaker A:</u> Well, I mean in some ways, you should make the difference but, you know , it's complicated as well. <u>Speaker B:</u> Yeah, I see. | | |
| f. Informal Reported Speech | <u>Mary:</u> ... So she said, 'Well, go in the queue, Mary,' she said, 'and find out what's happening.' So I went back to Dulcie and she says, 'All right Mary, will the bingo be starting soon? I can't see any chairs and tables.' 'Oh, no,' I said, 'we're in the wrong place!' | | |
| g. Question Tags | Jimmy's a very nice boy, isn't he? He never says 'no' to someone who needs his help, does he? | | |

5. If "Yes", which teaching method(s) have you used?

- a. Implicit / Inductive
- b. Explicit / Deductive
- c. Both

| Aspects | Teaching Method |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| a. Heads | |
| b. Tails | |
| c. Conversational Ellipsis | |
| d. Vague Language | |
| e. Spoken Discourse Markers | |
| f. Informal Reported Speech | |
| g. Question Tags | |

6. If “Yes”, please, list some activities you have used.

(You may choose more than one answer.)

| Aspects Types | a. Listening-based Activities | b. Speaking-based Activities | c. Writing-based Activities |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. Heads | | | |
| b. Tails | | | |
| c. Conversational Ellipsis | | | |
| d. Vague Language | | | |
| e. Spoken Discourse Markers | | | |
| f. Informal Reported Speech | | | |
| g. Question Tags | | | |

Section Three: Views about Spoken Grammar

7. When teaching conversation, one should not refer to standard grammar, but rather to spoken grammar as characterised by the seven aspects covered in Q4, Q5 and Q6.

– Yes

– No

8. If “No”, which spoken grammar aspects should NOT be taught?

a. Heads

b. Tails

c. Conversational Ellipsis

d. Vague Language

- e. Spoken Discourse Markers
- f. Informal Reported Speech
- g. Question Tags

9. Why should each of these aspects NOT be taught?

(You may tick more than one answer.)

| Aspects Reasons | a. It is difficult for the students. | b. It deviates from standard grammar. | c. It is less familiar to you. | d. There is no clear teaching methodology. | e. Other: Please, specify. |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| a. Heads | | | | | |
| b. Tails | | | | | |
| c. Conversational Ellipsis | | | | | |
| d. Vague Language | | | | | |
| e. Spoken Discourse Markers | | | | | |
| f. Informal Reported Speech | | | | | |
| g. Question Tags | | | | | |

Section Four: Further Suggestions

10. Please, add any further suggestion or comment.

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المخلص

على ضوء التقدم التكنولوجي الذي أضحى يشجع التواصل بين شعوب العالم، أصبحت مهارات المحادثة باللغة الأهمية. "ماكارثي" و"كارتر" (1995، 2002) يبرهنان على أن المحادثة بشكل طبيعي تستدعي استعمال عناصر نحوية معينة تضعها في المتناول قواعد المحادثة، وتساهم هذه العناصر في إبراز طبيعة العلاقة التفاعلية بين أطراف المحادثة. ولكنهما يشيران إلى أن معظم مصادر المعرفة الخاصة بقواعد النحو للغة الانجليزية تركز على اللغة الفصحى. يهدف هذا البحث إلى تسليط الضوء على الدور الجوهرى الذي تلعبه قواعد المحادثة في تعليم و تعلم اللغة الشفوية الانجليزية في قسم الآداب و اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة قسنطينة 1، و بشكل خاص يسعى هذا البحث إلى معرفة ما إذا كانت قواعد المحادثة تستعمل من طرف الطلبة، و إلى أي مدى. بالإضافة إلى تحديد أهمية تدريس عناصر منتقاة من قواعد المحادثة للمساهمة في تنمية قدرة الطلبة على المحادثة بشكل طبيعي أكثر. من الأهداف الأخرى لهذه الدراسة، و التي لا تقل أهمية عن الأهداف السابق ذكرها، محاولة التحقق مما إذا كان يتم تدريس قواعد المحادثة و الكشف عن طرق تدريسها. كما تم تناول آراء أساتذة التعبير الشفوي حول ضرورة إدماج عناصر منتقاة من قواعد المحادثة في المقرر الدراسي. وانطلق هذا العمل من فرضيتين أولاهما انه إذا ما خضع الطلبة المنخرطون في تجربة البحث لفترة تعليمية يتم فيها تلقينهم عناصر منتقاة من قواعد المحادثة؛ فان مهاراتهم اللغوية الخاصة بالمحادثة ستشهد تحسناً. أما الفرضية الثانية فمفادها أن أساتذة التعبير الشفوي المقتنعين بأهمية تدريس العناصر البارزة لقواعد المحادثة سيركزون بشكل أقل على قواعد اللغة الفصحى في تدريسهم للمحادثة. للتحقق من مدى صحة الفرضية الأولى، قمنا بإجراء تجربة شملت على اختبار قبلي و آخر بعدي قام باجتيازهما فوجين من الطلبة كانوا قد قسموا من قبل إلى فوج تجريبي و آخر ضابط. أما في ما يخص الفرضية الثانية، فللتحقق من مدى صدقها قمنا بالاعتماد على استبيان للأساتذة. وقد خلص البحث إلى جملة من النتائج لعل أهمها تأكيد للفرضية الأولى. أما الفرضية الثانية فلم يتم تأكيدها إلا بشكل جزئي، حيث تمت ملاحظة نقص المعرفة لدى أغلب الطلبة لمعظم العناصر البارزة لقواعد المحادثة. كما تبين أن تلقين الطلبة لعناصر منتقاة من قواعد المحادثة له أثر ايجابي على قدرتهم على إتقان المحادثة بشكل طبيعي أكثر. كما خلصت نتائج البحث إلى أن أكثر من نصف عدد الأساتذة لا يأخذون بعين الاعتبار تدريس معظم العناصر الأساسية لقواعد المحادثة، و إنما يركزون بشكل أساسي في تدريسهم للمحادثة على قواعد اللغة الفصحى رغم أن هؤلاء الأساتذة على علم بفاعلية إدماج عناصر من قواعد المحادثة في المقرر الدراسي. على ضوء النتائج السابق ذكرها، توج البحث بإسداء توصيات لمعدي البرامج وكذا أساتذة التعبير الشفوي لايلاء الاهتمام المرجو لقواعد المحادثة.

RESUME

A la lumière de l'évolution rapide des techniques de communication qui encouragent la communication globale spontanée, les compétences de conversation sont devenues un atout inestimable. McCarthy et Carter (1995, 2002) font valoir que la conversation naturelle réclame l'utilisation de certains aspects interactifs et interpersonnels que seule la grammaire orale (la grammaire de la conversation) peut offrir. Toutefois, ils précisent que presque tous les ouvrages, sur la grammaire en anglais, ont été basés sur la version standard de la langue. Cette recherche a pour but d'identifier avec précision la place de la grammaire orale dans l'enseignement et l'apprentissage de la parole au niveau du Département des Lettres et Langue Anglaise, Université Constantine 1. De façon plus précise, nous nous intéressons d'une part à la question de savoir si et dans quelle mesure la grammaire orale est utilisée par les étudiants; d'autre part, à l'utilité d'enseigner une gamme sélectionnée d'aspects de grammaire orale afin de rendre la conversation des étudiants en anglais le plus naturel possible. Un autre aspect également significatif de cette étude est de vérifier si la grammaire orale est enseignée, la manière dont elle est présentée et les vues des enseignants quant à la viabilité de l'inclure dans le programme de l'expression orale. Nous formulons l'hypothèse que si les étudiants, durant leur cursus de formation, étudient une gamme sélectionnée d'aspects de grammaire orale, leur anglais conversationnel sera plus naturel. Nous formulons également l'hypothèse que les enseignants de l'expression orale, qui sont convaincus de l'importance d'enseigner des aspects intrinsèques à la grammaire orale, se référeront moins à la grammaire standard dans l'enseignement de la conversation. La première hypothèse est vérifiée au moyen d'une expérimentation avec un groupe témoin et pré-test post-test, tandis que la seconde hypothèse est évaluée par un questionnaire des enseignants. Les résultats obtenus permettent de valider la première hypothèse et confirmer en partie la deuxième. Ils révèlent également que la majorité des étudiants n'étaient pas au courant de la plupart des aspects de la grammaire orale, et le traitement prévu (enseignement d'une gamme sélectionnée d'aspects de grammaire orale) a connu un impact positif sur la production conversationnelle des étudiants. Les résultats révèlent également que plus que la moitié des enseignants n'enseignent pas les aspects les plus saillants de la grammaire orale, mais tendent plutôt à se référer aux aspects de la grammaire standard, dans l'enseignement de la conversation, malgré qu'ils soient conscients de l'importance d'incorporer des aspects de la

grammaire orale dans le programme. Sur la base de ces résultats, des recommandations sont suggérées aussi bien aux concepteurs de programmes qu'aux enseignants d'expression orale afin d'accorder une importance suffisante à l'enseignement de la grammaire orale.