Classroom Interaction in English Language Learning: Perspectives of Libyan Secondary School Students and Teachers

Senussi Orafi [1*], Marwa Adel Ali Abdul qadir [2]

[1] Department of English Language, Faculty of Arts and Sciences- Al-Marj, University of Benghazi, Libya

[2] Ministry of Education - Jebel Akhdar Coast, Libya

التفاعل الصفي في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية: وجهات نظر طلاب ومعلمي المدارس الثانوية الليبية

السنوسي العرفي [1]*، مروة عادل علي عبد القادر [2]

[1] قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، كلية الآداب والعلوم- المرج، جامعة بنغازي، ليبيا

[2] وزارة التربية والتعليم ـ ساحل الجبل الأخضر، ليبيا

*Corresponding author: mero.a569@yahoo.com

Abstract:

This study investigates the dynamics of classroom interaction in Libyan secondary school English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. It specifically examines students' perceptions, the obstacles hindering their participation, and the strategies employed by teachers to foster engagement. Adopting a mixed-methods research design, data were collected through an online questionnaire administered to 100 students and semi-structured interviews with three experienced female teachers. The quantitative findings revealed that students highly favor interactive techniques, particularly pair and group work (44.9%) and discussion activities (35.7%), which provide a non-threatening environment for language practice. However, significant barriers to effective interaction were identified, including a lack of student motivation, shyness (39.1%), fear of mispronunciation (32.6%), and low self-confidence (27.1%). Contextual factors such as large class sizes and mixed-ability groups also pose substantial challenges. Qualitative insights from teacher interviews emphasized the importance of creating a supportive classroom atmosphere. Teachers reported using various pedagogical interventions, such as modeled talk, selective use of Arabic translation to clarify complex concepts, and implementing "wait-time" to allow students to process information. The study concludes that while communicative approaches are officially adopted in Libya, traditional teacher-centered methods still persist due to psychological and environmental constraints. To enhance communicative competence, it is recommended that teachers provide more opportunities for student autonomy, utilize collaborative learning structures, and receive training in addressing individual learner differences and pronunciation.

Keywords: classroom interaction, students' obstacles, teachers' teaching strategies, EFL, Libya.

الملخص

تقصت هذه الدراسة ديناميكيات التفاعل الصفي في سياق تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في المدارس الثانوية الليبية. وبحثت بشكل خاص في تصورات الطلاب، والعقبات التي تحول دون مشاركتهم، والاستراتيجيات التي يتبعها المعلمون لتعزيز التفاعل. اعتمدت الدراسة منهجية البحث المختلط، حيث جُمعت البيانات عبر استبيان إلكتروني شمل 100 طالب ومقابلات شبه منظمة مع ثلاث معلمات ذوات خبرة. كشفت النتائج الكمية أن الطلاب يفضلون بشدة تقنيات التفاعل، لا سيما العمل الثنائي والجماعي (44.9%) وأنشطة المناقشة (35.7%)، لما توفره من بيئة آمنة لممارسة اللغة. ومع ذلك، تم تحديد عوائق كبيرة أمام التفاعل الفعال، شملت ضعف الدافعية، والخجل (39.1%)، والخوف من النطق الخاطئ (32.6%)، ونقص الثقة بالنفس (27.1%). كما فرضت العوامل السياقية مثل كثافة الفصول وتفاوت مستويات الطلاب (الفروق الفردية) تحديات جوهرية. وأكدت الرؤى النوعية من مقابلات المعلمات على أهمية خلق مناخ صفي داعم؛ حيث أفدن باستخدام تدخلات تربوية متنوعة، مثل الحديث النمذجي، والاستخدام الانتقائي للترجمة العربية لتوضيح المفاهيم المعقدة، ومنح "وقت انتظار" كافٍ للطلاب لمعالجة المعلومات. تخلص الدراسة إلى أنه رغم الاعتماد الرسمي للمداخل التواصلية في ليبيا، إلا أن الأساليب التقليدية المتمحورة حول المعلم لا تزال قائمة بسبب قيود نفسية وبيئية. ولتعزيز الكفاءة التواصلية، توصي الدراسة بضرورة توفير المعلمين لمساحة أكبر لاستقلالية الطالب، واستخدام هياكل التعلم التعاوني، وتلقي تدريبات حول كيفية التعامل مع الفروق الفردية ومشكلات النطق.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التفاعل الصفي، معوقات الطلاب، استراتيجيات تدريس المعلمين، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، ليبيا.

1. Introduction

Modern educational institutions emphasize the development of communication skills over passive learning. In the era of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), classroom interaction is central, as it facilitates the development of learners' communicative competence (Brown, 2001). Interaction enables students to process input and produce output, thereby enhancing their language skills through the exchange of ideas, feelings, and concepts.

Classroom interaction often involves teacher-guided questioning, which effectively engages students and promotes discussion (Adedoyin, 2015; Brown, 2006; Dalton-Puffer, 2007). Foreign language learning necessitates active participation, and social interaction within the classroom serves as a valuable tool for linguistic development (Gillies, 2004; Kumpulainen & Wray, 2002). Teachers play a pivotal role in facilitating this interaction, guiding students toward greater engagement, and measuring their academic progress (Nunan, 1991; Van Lier, 1988).

Fluency-focused activities, typically conducted in pairs or groups, provide students with more time to express their ideas while reducing teacher-talk time (Toni & Parse, 2013). Classroom interaction encompasses teacher-student, student-student, and group discussions; all of which enhance communication, cognitive, and social skills (Al-Zahrani & Al-Bargi, 2017; Harvey & Light, 2015).

1.1 ELT in Libya

English is a mandatory subject in Libya, taught from the first grade (age 7), with the primary goal of improving learners' communication skills. Current textbooks, selected by the Ministry of Education, were published in the UK in 1999 by Garnet and focus on learner-centered communication and reading skills (Saleh, 2017).

Despite curricula that emphasize active student participation, research indicates that classrooms remain largely teacher-centered, with students often remaining passive and silent—primarily listening and memorizing (Aldabbus, 2008; Saleh, 2002). Even though a

communicative, learner-centered approach is officially adopted, student participation remains limited, thereby reducing opportunities to practice English and hindering the development of communicative competence (Ben Hamid, 2010).

English is taught as a foreign language in Libya, while Arabic remains the primary language of communication. Traditional methods, based on rote memorization and repetition, continue to dominate classrooms (Abdulhamid, 2011; Shihiba, 2011). Limited access to technology, such as computers, smart boards, and language laboratories, further restricts effective English teaching, as teachers often lack the skills to integrate technology into their instruction (Abukhattala, 2016; Salem & Mohammadzadeh, 2018). Considering the situation of English language teaching in Libya discussed above, this study explores Libyan students' perspectives on classroom interaction, the challenges they encounter when participating in English during classroom activities, and the strategies teachers employ to support and improve students' effective interaction.

1.2 Implications and Recommendations

The findings of this study highlight several recommendations for language teaching and learning, which are summarized as follows:

- Teachers are required to provide opportunities for learners to increase student motivation and involvement during classroom activities.
- Teachers and students must recognize that classroom interaction is essential for enhancing language proficiency.
- Teachers should adopt flexible approaches to instruction to increase student confidence. Furthermore, students should be encouraged to trust their responses and attempt to participate repeatedly.
- Teachers should be diligent in addressing the diverse capabilities of learners, encouraging proficient students to assist those who may be struggling with the lesson content.
- Teachers should provide individual training to learners regarding correct word pronunciation, ensuring that students repeat vocabulary multiple times to achieve accuracy.
- Teachers should organize students into groups to foster collaboration. Students should capitalize on these opportunities to derive maximum benefit.

Students must also understand that language learning is not merely a matter of memorization and grammatical analysis; they need to realize that classroom interaction is a crucial aspect of developing their English language skills. Therefore, they need to take risks to assume more active roles during classroom activities.

2. Literature Review

This section reviews the key concepts relevant to this research, including the definition and importance of classroom interaction, the obstacles facing students during classroom interaction, and the strategies teachers employ to enhance it.

2.1 What is Classroom Interaction?

Classroom interaction refers to the communication occurring between teachers and learners during instructional time, which may be either collaborative or conflictual. Malamah-Thomas (1987) argues that every interactional situation carries the potential for either cooperation or struggle. Rivers (1987) emphasizes that effective classroom interaction requires teachers to shift from a teacher-centered role to one that allows students to actively participate, express diverse viewpoints, and make errors as part of the learning process. Similarly, Douglas and Frazier (2001) suggest that lesson planning must be followed by the active stimulation of interaction in the classroom.

Researchers have highlighted the significant impact of classroom interaction on the teaching-learning process. Allwright (2000) notes that interaction can either facilitate or hinder language learning outcomes. Tsui (1995) views classroom interaction as a collaborative process in which both teachers and students shape the direction and outcome of learning. However, the teacher plays a central role, particularly through linguistic input. The language used by the teacher influences students' output, the nature of classroom interaction, and, ultimately, the quality of learning that occurs (Tsui, 1995).

Interaction is not limited to verbal communication. Robinson (2005) underscores the importance of non-verbal interaction, including body language, facial expressions, and gestures, which convey emotions, attitudes, and support verbal communication. Hall (2017) defines classroom interaction as the processes occurring among individuals in the classroom where language—whether verbal or non-verbal—is involved.

In Second Language Acquisition (SLA), input and interaction are closely related. Ellis (1990) distinguishes input as exposure to language that does not necessarily require active learner involvement, whereas interaction involves active learner participation. He argues that while input is essential, successful language acquisition requires active engagement. Tsui (1995) further suggests that teachers facilitate comprehensible input by modifying their speech—for example, by speaking more slowly, using clear intonation, emphasizing key vocabulary, and simplifying grammatical structures. Overall, classroom interaction—both verbal and non-verbal—plays a crucial role in promoting meaningful participation and effective language learning.

2.2 The Importance of Classroom Interaction

Communicative competence theories emphasize the central role of interaction in language learning, as learners use language in various contexts to negotiate meaning and construct understanding. Rivers (1987) argues that through interaction, students expand their linguistic repertoire by engaging with authentic input and participating in activities such as debates, problem-solving tasks, and discussions. Such interaction enables learners to utilize the language they have acquired in meaningful exchanges.

Research has consistently highlighted the importance of effective classroom interaction in promoting communicative competence. Kramsch (1986) suggests that learners should be provided with opportunities for turn-taking, responding, requesting clarification, and initiating communication. Similarly, Astin (1984) and Tatar (2005) note that active participation enhances both academic achievement and learner confidence.

Interaction between teachers and students is particularly essential in Communicative Language Teaching, as it sustains meaningful communication and facilitates the teaching-learning process. Moreover, interaction makes input more comprehensible and supports its transformation into intake and output (Gass, 1997; Krashen, 1985; Long, 1996; Lucka & Berhanu, 2015; Swain, 1995). Without interaction, input is unlikely to lead to language production. Therefore, increasing opportunities for classroom interaction is crucial for developing learners' communicative competence, although it remains a challenge in many EFL contexts.

2.3 Obstacles Facing Students During Classroom Interaction

Classroom interaction plays a crucial role in language learning; however, many EFL learners face challenges that hinder their participation and fluency in oral expression classes. Effective interaction requires strong linguistic competence, yet students often encounter psychological and contextual obstacles. Lack of self-confidence, for instance, leads learners to perceive themselves as influenced by external factors, negatively affecting their participation (Coffee et al., 2009; Gilbert & Malone, 1995). Similarly, insufficient understanding of lesson content can result in low motivation (Barse, 2015). Shyness and hesitation are also common psychological barriers, particularly when students are required to speak in English (Gebhard, 2000).

Additionally, contextual factors such as large, overcrowded classes (Harmer, 1983) and mixed-ability groups, which may reinforce perceptions of success and failure (Boaler et al., 2000), further impede effective classroom interaction.

2.3.1 Lack of Self-Confidence

Self-confidence is a substantial factor that significantly affects a learner's progress and accomplishment in the classroom. According to Adalikwu (2012), "self-confidence could be summarized as the faith which an individual has in their capability to succeed at exams, and it relies upon whether or not they have been capable of undertaking such exams" (p. 5). The counter-impacts of low self-confidence also affect how individuals influence their peers. Students experiencing low self-confidence regarding a task have been found to perform more poorly (Bandura, 1993; Bouffard-Bouchard, 1990).

2.3.2 Lack of Motivation

Lack of motivation refers to the extent to which a person is willing to undertake efforts to acquire a language (Gardner, 1985). Motivation has an immediate impact on language acquisition. According to Lennartsson (2008), motivation and the desire to acquire a second language are factors deemed more substantial than social ones. By fostering positive behavior among learners, we can increase learner motivation. Mauliya et al. (2020) define a lack of motivation as "having a deficient standard of affection and enthusiasm in performing a task" (p. 73). Mauliya et al. (2020) claim that a lack of motivation is experienced by many learners, particularly when they do not intend to learn because of the difficulty in following the lesson.

2.3.3 Shyness and Hesitation

Shyness and hesitation are considered primary factors that negatively influence second language students. Henderson (1992, as cited in Hofmann & Dibartolo, 2010) defines shyness as "a fear of negative evaluation which was enough to prevent interaction in desired activities and which significantly overlapped with professional objectives" (p. 68). Shyness causes learners to hesitate to participate in conversations. Pilkonis (1977) states that shyness is a tendency to avoid interaction and to neglect participation in public situations. Many studies have provided evidence that shy learners typically report more negative impacts and minimal positive impacts (e.g., Findlay & Coplan, 2008; Findlay et al., 2009; Twenge, 2002; Vahedi, 2011; Zhao et al., 2013). Juhana (2012) refers to shyness and hesitation as an affective factor that many learners suffer from when asked to speak in English. Ahsan et al. (2020) claim, "Students feel shy while they speak in the English language because they think that they will make errors when they have to communicate with their teachers and friends about learning activities" (p. 109).

2.3.4 Large Classes

A large class is another factor that can hinder student classroom interaction. Defining a "large class" is difficult, as interpretations vary. Large classes are becoming common in most instructional organizations, particularly in developing countries, including Libya. According to Benbow et al. (2007), the expansion of large classes in developing countries is a consequence of international initiatives for global education and rapid population growth. Teachers are often concerned that, especially in large classes, students may exacerbate each other's errors, and the teacher may be unable to address these issues immediately. Other researchers have supported the concept that large classes negatively influence teaching and learning by focusing on the problems teachers and learners encounter. Issues such as learner apathy, poor interaction with the lesson, and low motivation are consequences of teaching in large classes (Biggs, 1999; Carbone & Greenberg, 1998; Ward & Jenkins, 1992).

2.3.5 Mixed Abilities

Another challenging factor that inhibits student participation is the presence of mixed abilities, which refers to students' varying background knowledge and levels of motivation. Classrooms today are highly diverse; students possess different learning styles stemming from their cultural

backgrounds and arrive at school with different levels of emotional and social maturity. Their interests in both topics and intensity vary significantly. While placement tests provide valuable information, they cannot create homogeneous classes. Indeed, even two students who achieve the same grade on an exam may possess different learning strengths and remarkable preferences for specific aspects of language acquisition. Scrivener (2005) points out, "Every learner has an individual range of levels. Every class is a mixed-level class" (p. 69).

In summary, various obstacles can prohibit students' abilities to interact effectively during classroom activities in English language teaching and learning. In the next section, the researcher reviews the different strategies teachers use to address these obstacles.

2.4 Teachers' Strategies to Enhance Students' Classroom Interaction

As explained in the previous section, classroom interaction is a vital aspect of the English language teaching and learning process. Teachers frequently employ diverse strategies to enhance students' communicative abilities within the language classroom.

The significance of teaching strategies in English Language Teaching (ELT) is closely linked to the measurement of learner achievement, which is often contingent upon the teacher's success in managing classroom instruction and delivering activities (Merry, 1998; Stern, 1992). Palmer et al. (2005) indicate that "a perfect teacher will perform functional education strategies" (p. 3). A teacher's strategy may consist of a method, approach, procedure, technique, or a combination thereof, designed to improve student learning outcomes. These are specific activities selected by teachers to facilitate learning within the classroom (Palmer et al., 2005; Stern, 1992).

To support students during classroom interaction, teachers may utilize role-play. However, Küçüker (2004) argues that role-play requires substantial time for organization, execution, and evaluation. Furthermore, teachers can apply technology as a medium for increasing learner engagement with classroom activities. According to Wu et al. (2011), "the application of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) is helpful to improve participation when connecting with native speakers" (p. 118). Common strategies used by teachers to enhance interaction include:

2.4.1 Modeled Talk

According to Herrell (1999), modeled talk involves "synchronous oral clarification and physical description of ideas" (p. 29). It is considered one of the simplest yet most effective strategies for English language learners. While it requires prior planning and practice, it can quickly become a habit for effective teachers. The use of visuals, gestures, and demonstrations in modeled talk helps clarify explanations (Echevarria et al., 2012). Planning and gesturing provide paradigms for students to follow, which reduces anxiety as they understand precisely what is expected through observed demonstrations (Peregoy et al., 2014).

2.4.2 Reporting Back

Reporting back is a strategy that assists learners in bridging the gap between spoken and written language (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2001; Gibbons, 1993). This strategy can be applied as a follow-up to active learning experiences. Learners describe their experiences using vocabulary linked to the task, ensuring that their peers have a clear understanding of the sequence of actions involved. Subsequently, learners may write their reports to be included in a classroom daily news format.

2.4.3 Generating Interaction between Schemata and Text (GIST)

Generating Interaction between Schemata and Text (GIST) is a strategy designed to support the comprehension of informational texts (Cunningham, 1982). GIST is particularly useful when learners are required to read long texts containing complex information. Learners practice in collaborative teams; they read segments of the text silently and work together to produce a single sentence that summarizes the main point of the passage. This summary is constructed

paragraph by paragraph, with the teacher circulating to provide support and clarification. This is an especially effective strategy for English language learners because group members must debate and negotiate meaning to determine the most accurate summary (Echevarria et al., 2008; Goldenberg, 2008).

2.4.4 Cohesion Links

Cohesion links are essential elements in spoken and written English that connect sentences to form a coherent whole. These often appear as pronouns that refer back to people, places, or things mentioned earlier, requiring the reader to recall previous information (Herrell & Jordan, 2006). Other cohesion links include sequence words such as *first, second,* and *third*, which help students understand the chronological order of a text. Words that add, contrast, or limit ideas— such as *moreover, nonetheless,* and *nevertheless*—can be challenging for learners and require targeted practice (Peregoy et al., 2014). Teaching cohesion links improves both oral and written English proficiency.

2.4.5 Total Physical Response and Total Physical Response Storytelling (TPR and TPRS)

Total Physical Response (TPR), based on first-language acquisition theories, emphasizes listening and comprehension before speaking, allowing learners to respond physically before they are linguistically ready to speak (Asher, 1982, 2009). Repetition and active involvement are crucial for vocabulary retention (Nation, 2005). In TPR, teachers provide commands and demonstrate actions that students initially mimic; over time, students respond to verbal cues alone, thereby building confidence in classroom interaction (Diaz-Rico, 2013). TPR is also effective beyond basic vocabulary, supporting orientation, procedures, and storytelling, which has been shown to enhance fluency (Seely & Romijn, 2006).

2.4.6 Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning involves students working together to complete a group task (Johnson et al., 2002). Research indicates that for group work to be successful, it must be well-structured, incorporate social skill-building, involve open-ended assignments, and necessitate collaboration (Leki, 2001). Tasks should be clearly organized with designated roles, as structured cooperative learning is significantly more effective than unstructured group work. Building group cohesion helps students appreciate collaboration and recognize each other's strengths. Furthermore, teachers must establish clear expectations for success.

In summary, teachers employ various strategies to enhance classroom interaction. This study examines the challenges students face in interaction and how teachers address them. The following section outlines the research methodology used to investigate these issues.

3. Research Methodology

This section details the methodology adopted for the study. It begins by identifying and justifying the chosen research design, followed by the research questions that informed data collection and analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design to examine students' perspectives on classroom interaction, obstacles encountered in classroom activities, and teachers' strategies for enhancing participation. Mixed methods combine qualitative and quantitative approaches, allowing data to be collected, analyzed, and interpreted in an integrated manner (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007).

The mixed-methods approach provides a comprehensive understanding of research problems, as results from different methods complement and enrich one another (Molina-Azorin, 2007, 2011, 2012; Molina-Azorin & Cameron, 2015; Molina-Azorin & Lopez-Gamero, 2016). It also supports both inductive and deductive reasoning, enabling more robust conclusions than using either method in isolation (Lincoln, 2000). Key advantages of mixed methods include:

1. Addressing complex research questions more effectively.

2. Combining qualitative and quantitative insights to meet multiple objectives.
3. Enhancing the validity of research conclusions.

3.2 Research Questions

To achieve the aims of this study, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What are students' perspectives regarding classroom interaction?
2. What are the obstacles that may prohibit students from becoming involved in classroom interaction?
3. What are the different strategies teachers use to facilitate students' involvement in classroom interaction?

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

As highlighted above, a mixed-methods design provides the most effective framework for supporting scientific research. According to Morgan (1998), "the strengths of qualitative and quantitative approaches can be combined to provide richer responses to research questions" (p. 362). Consequently, two data collection tools were utilized in this study: questionnaires and interviews.

3.3.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a standardized set of questions designed to gather information from participants (Brown, 2001). One hundred secondary school students were randomly selected to participate. Random sampling is particularly suitable for participants distributed over a wide geographical area, especially when utilizing online, postal, or telephone formats (Saunders et al., 2009).

Because the students were on holiday during the data collection period, an online questionnaire was utilized to reach them efficiently. Students were contacted personally via Facebook and WhatsApp, and social networks helped distribute the questionnaire link to classmates. Before the main study, a pilot questionnaire was conducted at the Arab Unity School in the Batah district to refine the tool. Although challenges such as student availability and exam preparations were encountered, the pilot study successfully improved the quality of the data collection instrument. Quantitative data were analyzed using percentage-based descriptive statistics.

3.3.2 Interviews

As previously mentioned, this study also aimed to understand teachers' strategies for enhancing classroom interaction. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were conducted to uncover teachers' perspectives on this issue. In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer follows a list of predefined themes, yet the interviewee retains the flexibility to elaborate on their responses (Bryman, 2016). This approach allows for a mix of open and closed questions depending on the flow of the discussion.

While themes such as teaching strategies, obstacles to interaction, and types of activities were prepared, teachers were given the freedom to provide additional information. Three female teachers were selected through purposeful sampling. According to Patton (1990), "purposeful sampling is essential to select information-rich cases for in-depth study" (p. 169). This involved selecting participants from whom the investigator could gain significant knowledge based on their professional experience. The participants' ages ranged from 33 to 51, all held a Bachelor of Arts degree, and their teaching experience ranged from 12 to 30 years.

Table 1: Teachers' Background Information

Name (Pseudonym)	Age	Qualification	Experience
Fatima	51 years	Diploma & B.A.	30 Years
Rabha	43 years	Bachelor of Arts	22 Years
Eman	33 years	Bachelor of Arts	12 Years

Two interviews were conducted with each teacher at their respective schools, lasting approximately 80 minutes in total. The interviews were conducted in Arabic, transcribed, and back-translated to ensure accuracy (Brislin, 1970, 1980). Pilot interviews were also conducted with two teachers (aged 30–36, with 6–11 years of experience) to refine the protocol. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically, focusing on strategies, the use of translation, interactive activities, classroom challenges, question types, wait-time, and student motivation.

4: Findings

I present the findings of this research study in relation to the study's research questions. I start by presenting the questionnaire findings. I then move to present the interview findings.

4.1 Questionnaire findings

The questionnaire is divided into two parts. Part A discusses students' ideas about classroom interaction. Part B examines students' obstacles during classroom interaction. I will begin with part A. The first question,

How often does your teacher let you share ideas in the classroom?

Table 2. Sharing ideas in the classroom.

Opinions	Numbers	Percentage
Always	34	34%
Sometimes	47	47%
Seldom	14	14%
Never	5	5%
Total	100	100%

Shows the table that *sometimes* rising to 47 %, 34 % for *always*, after that *seldom* taken 14 %, the lowest one was 5 % *never*.

Which of the following interaction techniques do you enjoy the most?

Table 3. Interaction techniques.

Interaction techniques	Number	Percentage
Pair and group work	44	**44.9 %**
Communication games	16	**16. 3 %**
Discussion activities	35	**35. 7 %**
Oral presentations	16	**16. 3 %**
Role- play	9	**9. 2 %**

This question was an open selection for students. Therefore, they had chosen more than one. From the table, in a top was *pair and group work* 44. 9 %, then *discussion activities* was 35. 7 %. *Communication games and oral presentations* have the same rate 16.3 %, the lowest thing was *Role-play* 9.2 %. Look at the figure 1.
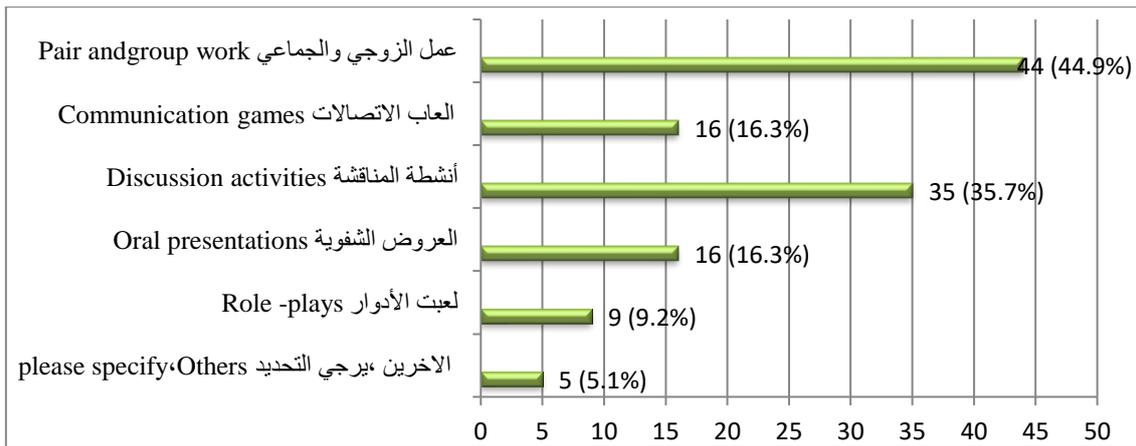
Figure1 . Interaction techniques that students enjoy in classroom.

In the other part, students' obstacles during classroom interaction.
I felt bored during class and therefore I had a problem staying alert.

Table4 . Boring during class.

Answer	Number	Percentage
Agree	55	**55 %**
Neutral	24	**24 %**
Disagree	21	**21 %**
Total	100	**100 %**

Shows the table that most of the students picked out *agree* 55 %, others selected *neutral* 24 % and minimal voted was 21 % for *disagree*.
Are you afraid of participating in speaking activities?

Table5 . Fearing of participating in the speaking activities.

Answer	Number	Percentage
Yes	49	**49 %**
No	51	**51 %**
Total	100	**100 %**

The table illustrates that the votes were equivalent 51 % *no* and 49 % for *yes*.
If yes, is it because: -

Table6 . Fearing of participating in the speaking activities.

Answer	Number	Percentage
Lack of vocabulary	13	**14.1%**
Fear of making grammatical mistakes	27	**29.3 %**
Fear of mispronunciation	30	**32.6%**
Shyness and hesitation	36	**39.1%**
Anxiety	16	**17.4%**

In addition, this question was an open selection for students. Therefore, they had chosen more than one. It is clear through the previous table data that the most of students selected *shyness*

and hesitation took 39.1, then 32.6 % *fear making pronunciation mistakes*, after that 29.3 % for *fear of making grammatical mistakes*, the lowest two things were 17.4 % *Anxiety* and 14.1 % for *lack of vocabulary*. Look below at figure 2.
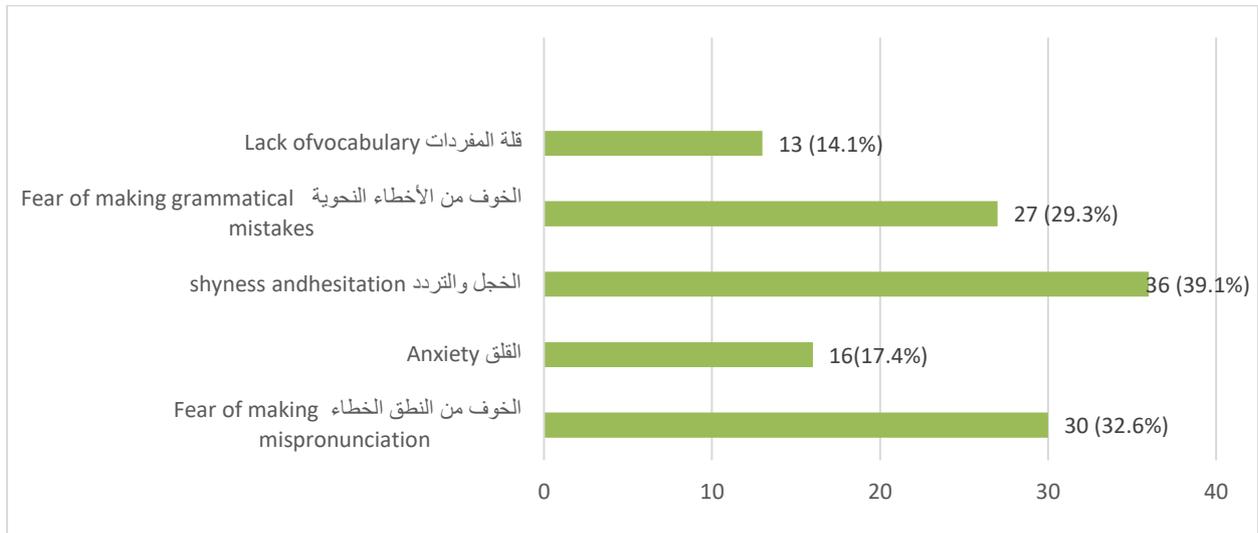

Figure 2. Problems that prevent students from interaction in class.

There are other reasons prevent you from interaction, such as:-

Table 7. Other reasons that prevent students from interaction.

Answer	Number	Percentage
Lack of self – confidence	26	**27. 1 %**
Lack of motivation	20	**20. 8 %**
Lack of self – consciousness	4	**4. 2 %**
Mixed abilities of students	7	**7. 3 %**
Large class of students	15	**15. 6 %**
Or all of the above	24	**25 %**
Total	96	**100 %**

From the table, *Lack of self- confidence* taken high ranges of votes 27.1%, then, *all of the above* 25%. After that 20.8 % *lack of motivation*, 15.6 % for *large class of students*, the lowest two things 7.3% *mixed abilities* of students and 4.2% for *lack of self-consciousness*. Look at figure 3.
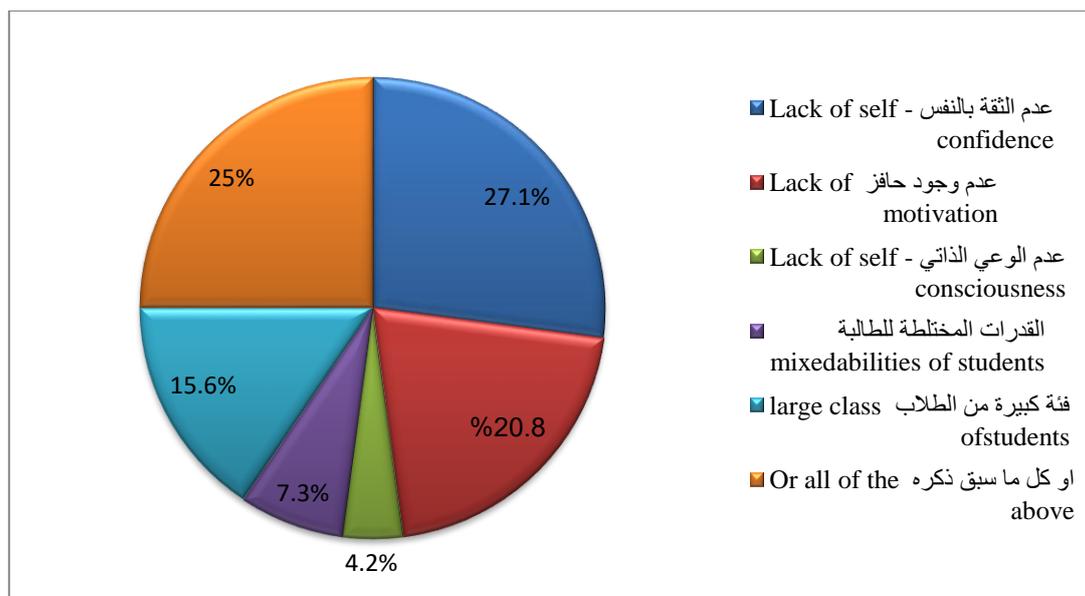
Figure 3. Other problems that prevent students from interaction**.**

4.2 Interviews findings

During the interviews, the teachers talked about their ideas and strategies to enhance students' classroom interaction. These ideas and strategies can be summarized in the following themes.

4.2.1 Teachers' strategies

4.2 Interview Findings

Teachers shared various strategies to enhance students' classroom interaction, which can be summarized into four main themes: teaching strategies, translation, interactive activities, and motivation.

4.2.1 Teaching Strategies

Teachers emphasized creating a supportive classroom environment. Fatima encourages independent learning and respects students' ideas, aiming to guide rather than control them. Eman follows a structured approach with board work, brief lesson revision, and guided reading. Rabha activates prior knowledge orally and simplifies vocabulary contextually.

4.2.2 Use of Translation

Translation was employed selectively to support understanding, particularly for lower-proficiency students. Fatima and Eman use Arabic to clarify difficult words or sentences, while Rabha prefers contextual explanations over direct translation. Teachers agreed that translation aids participation, especially for weaker students.

4.2.3 Interactive Activities

Pair work, dialogues, and real-life tasks were commonly used to promote interaction. Fatima uses pair work aligned with the textbook, Eman engages students in dialogue with attention to intonation, and Rabha incorporates practical activities like designing invitation cards or imagining social media posts. These activities encourage active participation and communication.

4.2.4 Classroom Obstacles and Motivation

Teachers identified shyness, weak foundations, poor pronunciation, and writing skills as major barriers to interaction. To overcome these, they emphasized motivation. Fatima encourages students to focus on understanding rather than marks, while Eman uses cooperative group work to foster discussion and peer support.

4.2.5 Role of Teaching Experience

Experience enhances teachers' ability to engage students effectively. Fatima records and reflects on past errors to improve her practice, and Rabha noted that experience helps, although student weaknesses sometimes lead to frustration.

Overall, teachers use a combination of supportive strategies, targeted translation, interactive activities, and motivation to facilitate classroom interaction, with experience shaping their effectiveness.

5. Discussion

This study examined various factors influencing classroom interaction in English Language Teaching (ELT). The results indicated that pair and group work were the most preferred techniques among students (44.9%), a finding that is consistent with the work of Nunan (2003) and McDonough (2004), who noted that such activities significantly increase speaking time and provide diverse interaction opportunities. These collaborative structures create a non-threatening environment that fosters peer learning and learner autonomy (Harmer, 2007, 2009; Watcyn-Jones, 2002). Furthermore, Riofrio (2019) adds that pair work enhances lesson variety and provides students with a sense of achievement, although researchers such as Bellil (2020) and Uysal and Yavuz (2015) caution that low-proficiency students may occasionally find these settings distracting.

Discussion activities were favored by 35.7% of the participants. These activities facilitate the negotiation of meaning, the practical application of language skills, and collaborative problem-solving (Celce-Murcia, 2001; Matthew, 2006; Mohammed & Ahmed, 2021). Adequate pre-task preparation has been shown to increase student confidence and motivate interaction (Han, 2007), while active participation promotes a valuable exchange of knowledge (Blumberg, 2008; Sybing, 2015).

Role-play was found to be less popular (9.2%), with some students reporting experiences of anxiety (Pellegrin, 2019). However, existing literature continues to emphasize its value for experiential learning and skill development (Adams & Mabusela, 2013; Adinugraha, 2018; Blatner, 2005; Nestel & Tierney, 2007). The success of role-play activities often depends on clear goals, robust structure, and consistent teacher guidance (Snodgrass & Blunt, 2009; Teed, 2008).

Several learner-related factors were identified as hindrances to interaction. Motivation remains a crucial element; a lack of intrinsic interest or engagement typically leads to reduced participation (Carnegie, 2019; Dişlen et al., 2013; Huitt, 2011). Mixed-ability classes also present significant challenges due to the diverse proficiency levels, learning styles, and motivation present in a single classroom (Baker & Westrup, 2000; Bremner, 2008; Elizondo, 2013; Hess, 2001; Meyer, 2008; Syathron et al., 2019; Valentic, 2005). Additionally, shyness limits communication and is often influenced by both personality traits and socioeconomic factors (Carducci, 1999, 2009; Findlay & Coplan, 2008; Gebhard, 2006; Reamy, 2003; Zimbardo et al., 1981). Pronunciation difficulties were also found to affect student confidence and their willingness to speak, highlighting an urgent need for targeted phonological training (Burns & Claire, 2003; Harmer, 2005; Kralova, 2010; Redmond & Vrchota, 2007; Segalowitz & Hulstijn, 2005).

Teacher strategies play a central role in the interactive process. Effective questioning and the provision of "wait-time" have been shown to increase student participation and cognitive engagement (Blosser, 2000; Brown, 2001; Chin, 2007; Cotton, 2003; Crowe & Stanford, 2010; Jegede & Olajide, 1995; Mahmud, 2019; Mak, 2011; Rowe, 1974a, 1974b, 1986, 1996). Providing learners with sufficient time to think encourages more accurate and thoughtful responses.

Finally, teacher-led motivation strategies positively influence student engagement and learning outcomes. Enthusiastic teaching, granting student autonomy, and providing structured support

enhance student interest and sustain long-term participation (Bellil, 2020; Brophy, 2010; Glynn & Koballa, 2006; Guay et al., 2010; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; McKeachie, 1999; Saville-Troike & Barto, 2016; Tuan et al., 2003).

In summary, classroom interaction is dynamically shaped by teaching strategies, learner-specific factors, and teacher facilitation. The effective implementation of pair and group work, discussions, role-play, and appropriate questioning techniques—alongside careful attention to student motivation, shyness, mixed abilities, and pronunciation—can significantly enhance student engagement and language development.

6. Conclusions

The final section summarizes the main findings of this study, acknowledges its limitations, offers suggestions for future research, and provides pedagogical implications and recommendations.

6.1 Summary

As detailed throughout this study, the research examined students' perspectives and the obstacles they encounter regarding classroom interaction. It also shed light on the various strategies employed by teachers during these interactions. The primary findings indicate that the interaction techniques most enjoyed by students are pair and group work, communication games, discussion activities, and oral presentations. Conversely, the barriers preventing learners from interacting effectively include a lack of motivation, shyness, pronunciation difficulties, large class sizes, mixed-ability groups, and a lack of self-confidence. Furthermore, the results demonstrated that teachers utilize several strategies to develop their students' communicative competence, such as employing interactive activities, the judicious use of translation, focused pronunciation practice, varied question types, the implementation of wait-time, and targeted motivation strategies.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire for Students

الملحق (أ): استبيان الطلاب

Investigating Students' Obstacles and Teachers' Teaching Strategies in Relation to English Language Classroom Interaction التحقيق في معوقات الطلاب واستراتيجيات تدريس المعلمين المتعلقة بالتفاعل الصفي في لغة الإنجليزية

Dear Students, أعزائي الطلبة،

This questionnaire is an investigative tool for gathering data required for the fulfillment of a Master's dissertation. It aims to investigate students' obstacles during classroom interaction. I would be grateful if you could answer these questions to help accomplish this research. يعد هذا الاستبيان أداة بحثية لجمع البيانات اللازمة لاستكمال رسالة الماجستير؛ حيث يهدف إلى استقصاء العقبات التي تواجه الطلاب أثناء التفاعل الصفي. سنكون ممتنين لو تكرمتم بالإجابة عن هذه الأسئلة للمساعدة في إنجاز هذا البحث.

Please, use a tick (✓) to indicate your chosen option, and justify your answer wherever required. من فضلك، ضع علامة (✓) أمام الخيار الذي تختاره، مع تبرير إجابتك كلما لزم الأمر ذلك.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation. شكراً لكم مقدماً على حسن تعاونكم.

Part A: Idea about Class Interaction

الجزء (أ): فكرة حول التفاعل الصفي

1. Who conducts the talk in the class mostly? 1. من الذي يهيمن على الحديث في الفصل غالباً؟ [ ] Teacher (المعلم) [ ] Student (الطالب) [ ] Teacher and students (المعلم والطلاب)

2. Which language does your teacher use in the classroom? 2. ما هي اللغة التي يستخدمها معلمك في الفصل؟ [ ] English and Arabic (الإنجليزية والعربية معاً) [ ] Arabic only (العربية فقط) [ ] English only (الإنجليزية فقط)

3. How often does your teacher let you share ideas in the classroom? 3. كم مرة يتيح لك أستاذك مشاركة الأفكار في الفصل؟ [ ] Never (أبداً) [ ] Seldom (نادراً) [ ] Sometimes (أحياناً) [ ] Always (دائماً)

4. Which of the following interaction techniques do you enjoy the most? (You can tick more than one answer). 4. أي من التقنيات التالية تستمتع بها أكثر؟ (يمكنك اختيار أكثر من إجابة) [ ] Pair and group work (العمل الثنائي والجماعي) [ ] Communication games (ألعاب التواصل) [ ] Discussion activities (أنشطة المناقشة) [ ] Oral presentations (العروض الشفوية) [ ] Role-plays (لعب الأدوار) .... (أخرى، يرجى التحديد): Others, please specify

5. Does regular interaction in the classroom help you improve your learning? Why, please? 5. هل يساعدك التفاعل المنتظم في الفصل على تحسين تعلمك؟ ولماذا؟ [ ] Yes (نعم) [ ] No (لا) .... (التبرير): Explanation

Part B: Students' Obstacles During Classroom Interaction

الجزء (ب): معوقات الطلاب خلال التفاعل الصفي

Please, circle the most appropriate option :يرجى وضع دائرة حول الخيار الأكثر ملاءمة

1. I enjoyed listening to his/her class. 1. استمتعت بالاستماع إلى الحصة. (1) Disagree (غير موافق) (2)
(محايد) Neutral (3) Agree (موافق)

2. I felt frustrated during the class. 2. شعرت بالإحباط خلال الحصة. (1) Disagree (غير موافق) (2)
(محايد) Neutral (3) Agree (موافق)

3. I felt bored during class and therefore I had problems staying alert. 3. شعرت بالملل أثناء
(موافق) Agree (3) (محايد) Neutral (2) (غير موافق) Disagree (1). الحصة، وبالتالي واجهت صعوبة في الانتباه

4. The physical environment in the classroom is not suitable for study. 4. البيئة المادية في
(موافق) Agree (3) (محايد) Neutral (2) (غير موافق) Disagree (1). الفصل الدراسي غير مناسبة للدراسة

5. Passive students have an effect on your interaction in the classroom. 5. الطلاب السلبيون
Agree (3) (محايد) Neutral (2) (غير موافق) Disagree (1). يؤثرون على مستوى تفاعلك في الفصل الدراسي
(موافق)

Part C: General Interaction Factors

الجزء (ج): عوامل التفاعل العامة

Please, tick (✓) Yes or No: لا أو نعم أمام (✓) علامة وضع يرجى:

1. **Does the teacher give you wait-time to think and arrange your answers?** هل يعطيك
المعلم وقتاً كافياً للتفكير وتنظيم إجابتك؟ [ ] Yes (نعم) [ ] No (لا)
2. **Does the type of questions affect your interaction?** هل يؤثر نوع الأسئلة على مستوى
تفاعلك؟ [ ] Yes (نعم) [ ] No (لا)
3. **Are you afraid of participating in speaking activities?** هل تشعر بالخوف من المشاركة في
أنشطة التعبير الشفوي؟ [ ] Yes (نعم) [ ] No (لا)
4. **If "Yes", is it because:** إذا كانت الإجابة "نعم"، فهل السبب هو: [ ] Lack of vocabulary (نقص
Fear of [ ] (المفردات) Fear of making grammatical mistakes (الخوف من الأخطاء النحوية)
making pronunciation mistakes (الخوف من أخطاء النطق) [ ] Shyness and hesitation (الخجل
والتردد) [ ] Anxiety (القلق) [ ] Others, please specify (أسباب أخرى، حددها): ....
5. **Are there other reasons preventing you from interaction, such as:** هل هناك أسباب
أخرى تمنعك من التفاعل، مثل: [ ] Lack of self-confidence (نقص الثقة بالنفس) [ ] Lack of
Mixed [ ] (نقص الدافعية) Lack of self-consciousness (نقص الوعي الذاتي) [ ] motivation
abilities of students (تفاوت مستويات الطلاب) [ ] Large class sizes (كثافة الطلاب في الفصل) [ ]
All of the above (كل ما سبق)
6. **Please, add any other comments:** 6. من فضلك، أي تعليقات أخرى:
....

(I = Interviewer, T = Teacher)

First Teacher Interview

I: What strategies of teaching do you use in class? **T:** I rely on the teacher's book. I focus heavily on writing vocabulary on the board and explaining grammar. I also emphasize reading passages, especially those about scientists and inventions. **I:** Do you let the students read the passages? **T:** Yes, absolutely. It depends on the class time, but I try to let them read more than once. **I:** Which language do you use when teaching? **T:** I use a combination of both English and Arabic. **I:** What interactive activities do you involve your students in? **T:** I use oral presentations and discussion activities in small groups (2 or 3 students). **I:** In your experience, what problems prevent students from interacting? **T:** The main obstacles are pronunciation and translation. Some students have good pronunciation because they listen to English media, while others lack the desire to learn. Translation is also a hurdle; those who don't follow step-by-step end up lost. **I:** Do question types affect interaction? **T:** Yes, questions outside the textbook usually intimidate them. To keep them engaged, I often stick to questions similar to the ones in the book. **I:** How often do you give students wait-time? **T:** It depends on the complexity of the question. Sometimes I wait, and sometimes I assign it as homework. **I:** Do you actively listen to your students? **T:** Yes, and I encourage them to visit the teacher's room after class if they face any difficulties.

Appendix C: Actual Interviews

First Teacher

I: What are your teaching strategies? **T:** I avoid punishment and treat students as mature individuals, respecting their ideas. I prefer a flexible environment and encourage individual work and participation. **I:** How do you explain the lessons? **T:** In reading lessons, I let them attempt the text first. They translate meanings rather than literal words, and I assist them only when they get stuck. I want to build their courage to speak even if they make mistakes. **I:** Do you think question types play a role in interaction? **T:** Definitely. Encouragement is key. Some students are self-taught via the internet, which makes education more accessible than the old ways.

Second Teacher

T: I start by writing the topic and definitions on the board. I spend 5 minutes reviewing the previous lesson. **I:** What problems prevent interaction? **T:** Weakness in pronunciation and writing. Also, the lack of a proper schedule for exams. I use auditory exams (dictation) to improve their writing and listening. **I:** Why is translation necessary for you? **T:** The students' foundation is very weak. Some struggle even with basic letters. If I spoke English only, they would be completely lost. **I:** What about classroom environment? **T:** A poor environment (broken windows, heat, cold) gives negative energy and impedes learning. Also, large classes (40+ students) cause dispersion. I prefer 15–20 students.

Appendix D: Figures of Questionnaire Results

الملحق (د): أشكال نتائج الاستبيان
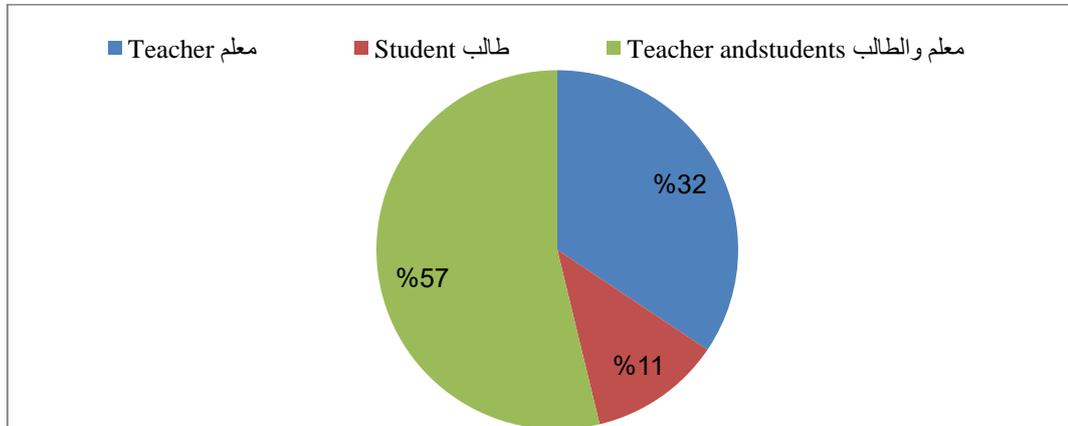
Part A: Idea about Class Interaction

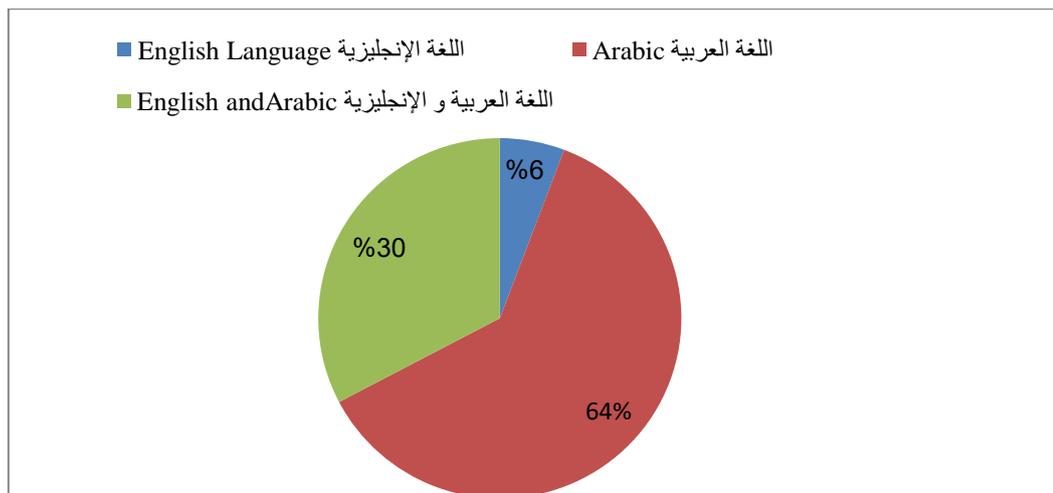**Figure 4:** Conducting classroom talk (الطرف المهيمن على الحديث).

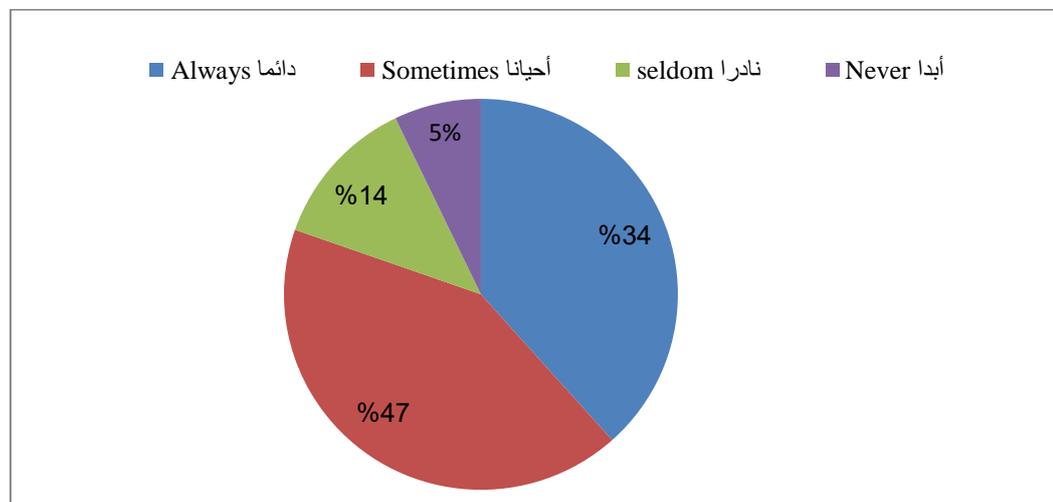**Figure 5:** Language use in the classroom (اللغة المستخدمة في الفصل).

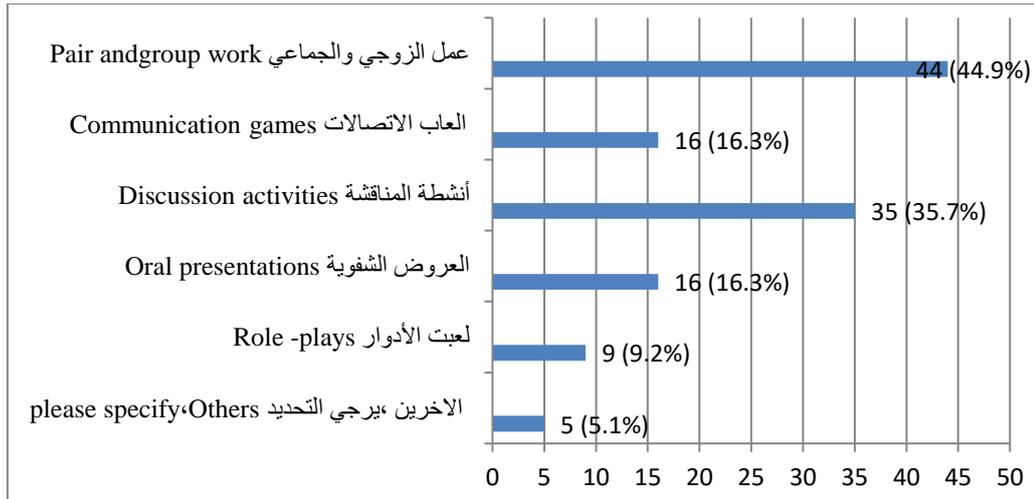**Figure 6:** Sharing ideas in the classroom (مشاركة الأفكار).

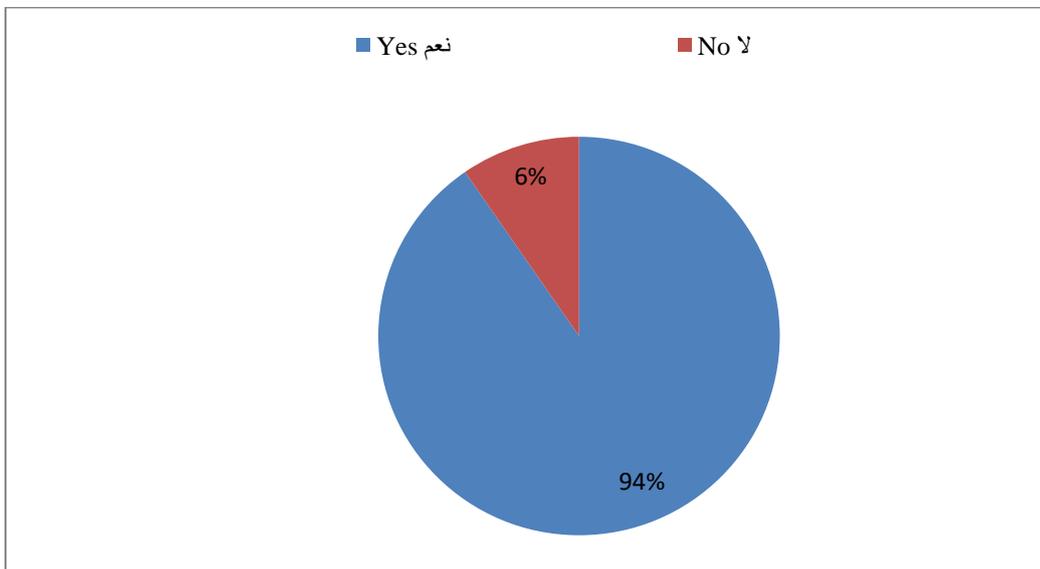**Figure 7:** Interaction techniques (تقنيات التفاعل).

Figure 8: Regular interaction and learning improvement (التفاعل المنتظم وتحسين التعلم).

Part B: Students' Obstacles
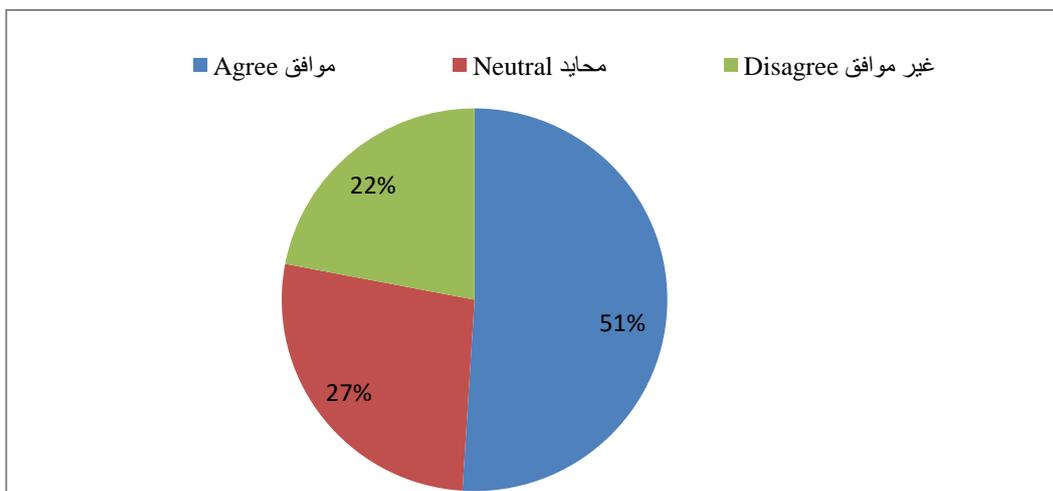
Figure 9: Enjoyment of listening (الاستمتاع بالاستماع).
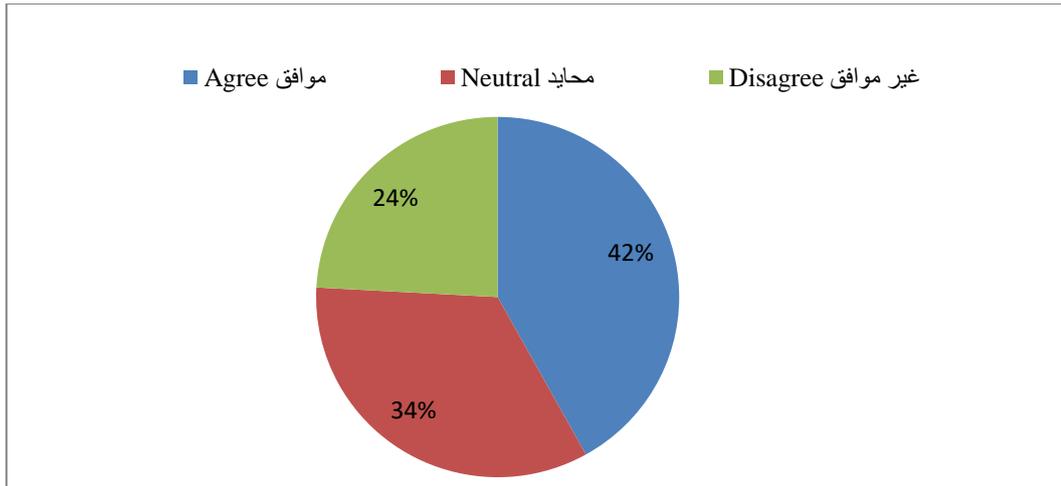
Figure 10: Classroom frustration (الإحباط الصفي).
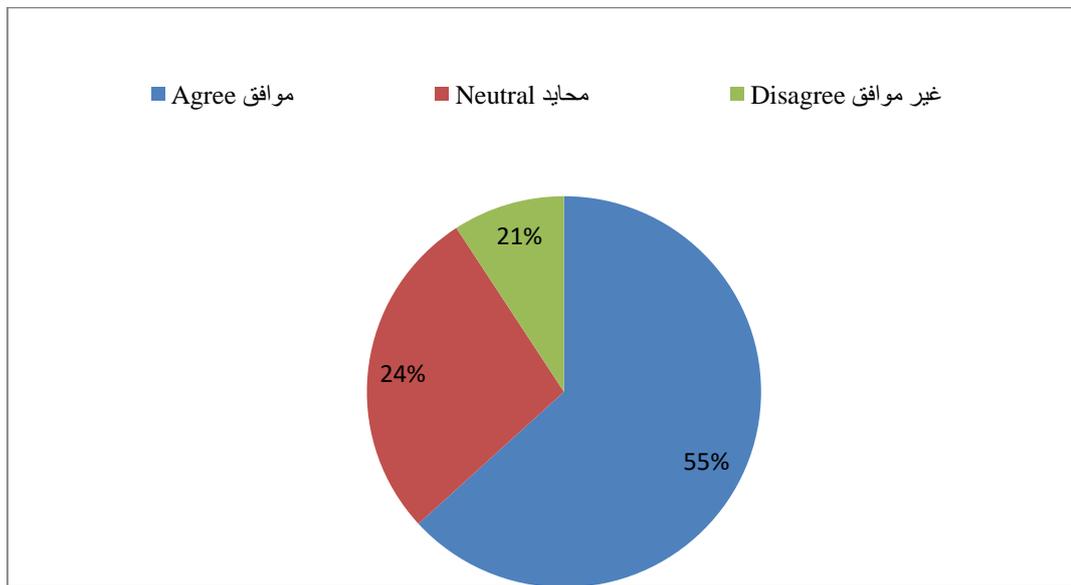
Figure 11: Boredom and alertness (الملل واليقظة).
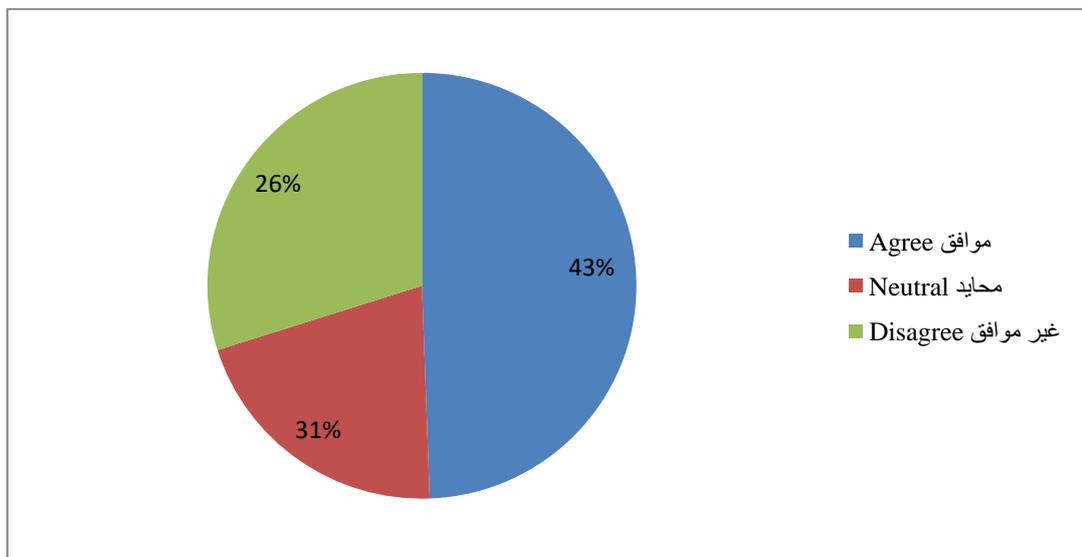
Figure 12: Suitability of physical environment (ملائمة البيئة المادية).
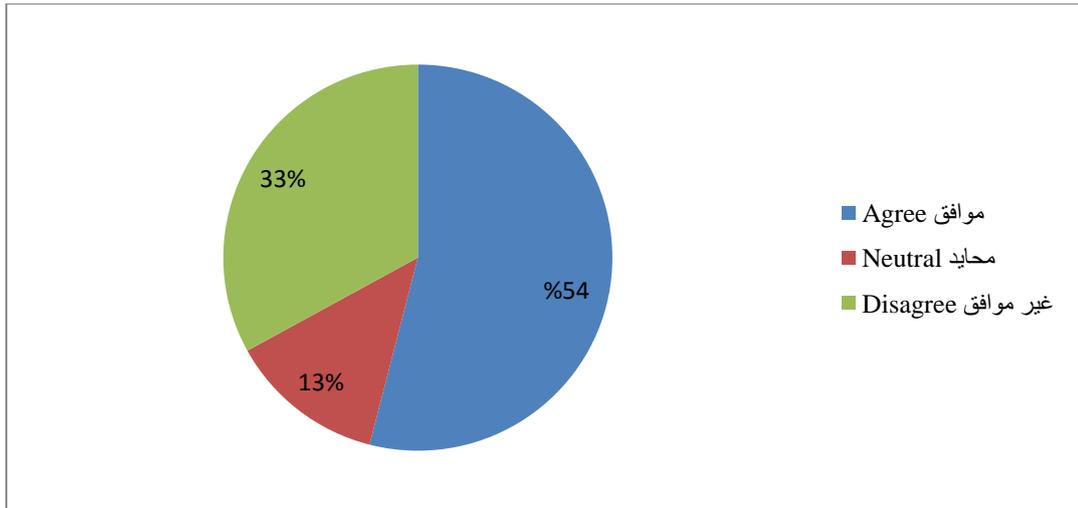
Figure 13: Effect of passive students (تأثير الطلاب السلبيين).

Part C: Interaction Factors
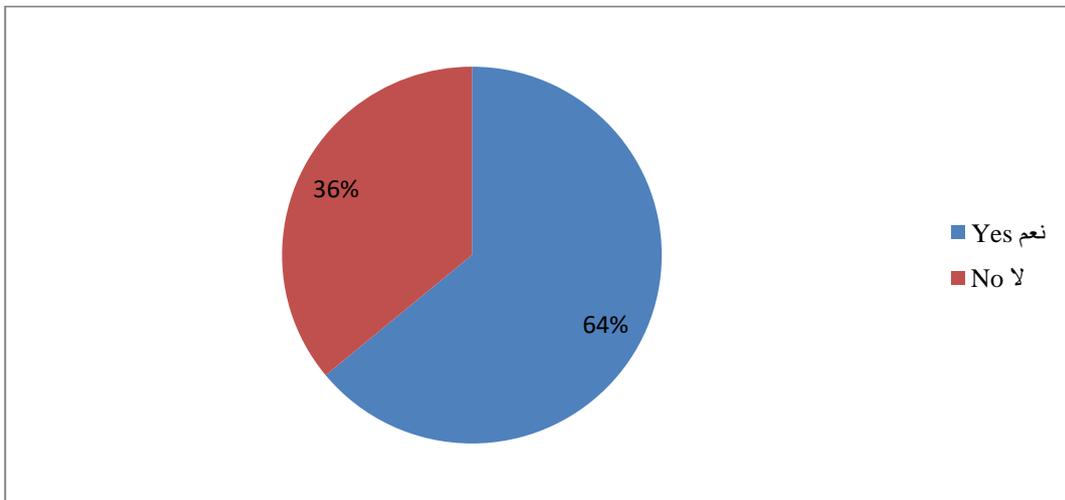
Figure 14: Teacher's wait-time (وقت الانتظار المعطى من قبل المعلم).
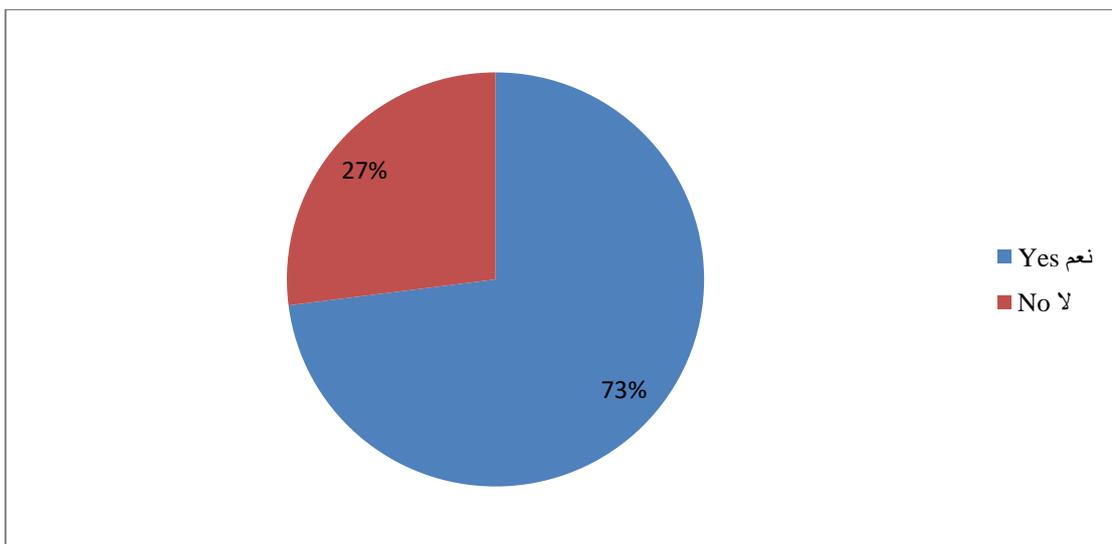
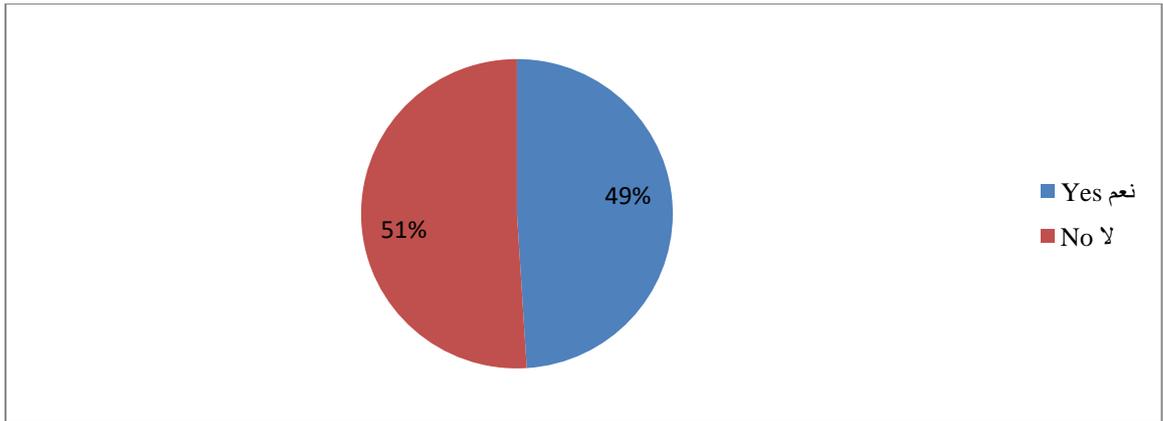**Figure 15:** Effect of question types (تأثير نوع الأسئلة).

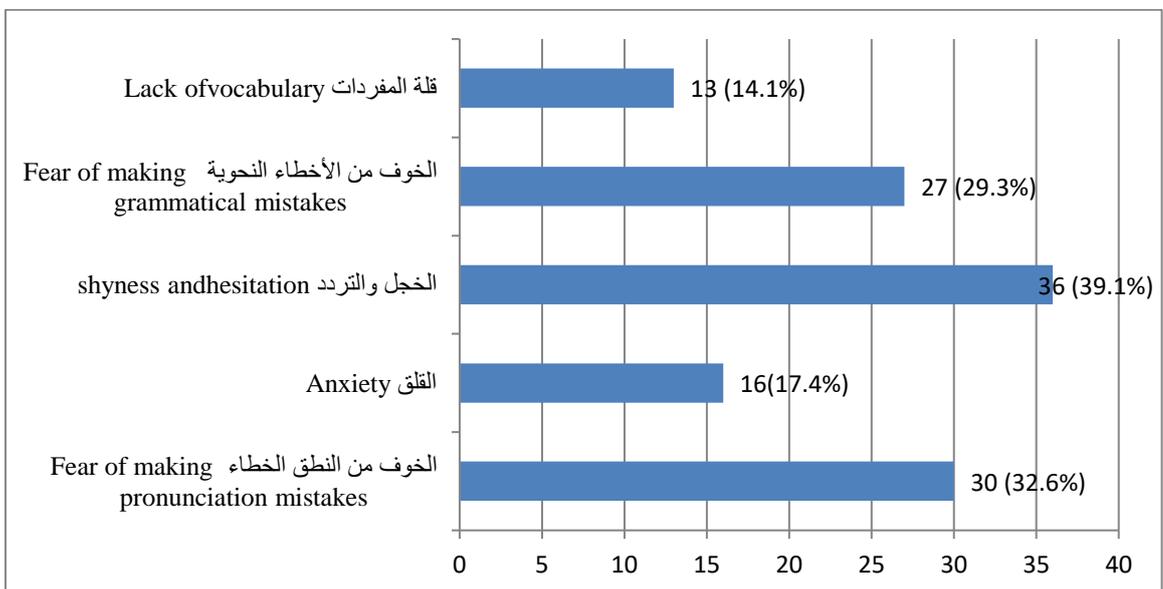**Figure 16:** Fear of speaking activities (الخوف من أنشطة التعبير الشفوي).

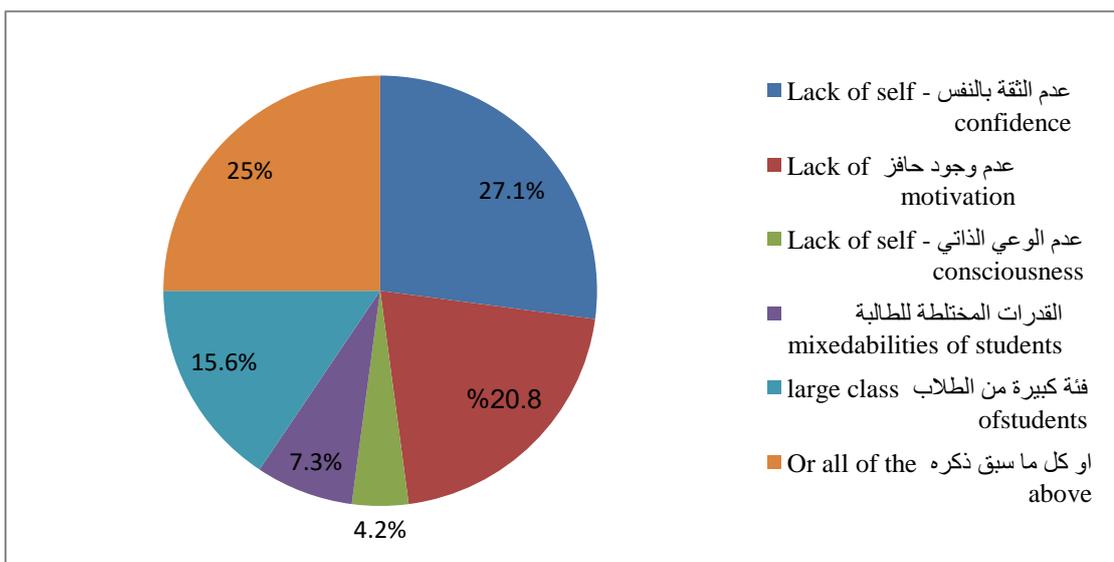**Figure 17:** Reasons for fearing participation (أسباب الخوف من المشاركة).

Figure 18: Other reasons preventing interaction (أسباب أخرى تمنع التفاعل).