

# **Students' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Using Non-Traditional Techniques to Improve Oral Communication Skills**

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## **Introduction**

Speaking is considered a major skill of any language. Some linguists, in this regard, define language as nothing but a system of vocal symbols used to communicate ideas and thoughts among the members of a certain social society. This shows that language is mainly an oral activity and writing is considered a secondary system derived from the spoken language. As a result, students who learn English either as a foreign or a second language should be encouraged to speak the language to a certain extent that enables them to communicate with other speakers of the language. To produce students who are proficient in a foreign language, educators should ensure that their students are participating in a variety of performance-based tasks based upon authentic use of language for communication (Fuller, 2011). Foreign language teachers, then, should design assessment practices using a variety of communicative contexts, thus providing a way to document students' progress in language ability as they continue in a foreign language program of study. Moreover, students who study English either as a foreign language or a second language are assumed to be provided with more and more opportunities to practice oral communication skills inside and outside the classroom in natural and meaningful situations. This can be done by using different types of activities and practices that motivate the students to use the language naturally and purposefully in meaningful situations. Contextualization of language, in this regard, has been shown to increase students' motivation, engagement in learning, the amount of information learned, and their self-perception of competence in the target language (Cordova & Lepper, 1996). Based on this assumption, students' perspectives should be investigated and taken into account when they are involved in the teaching –learning process especially at higher education levels as they represent the first beneficiaries of the teaching-learning process. Moreover, university students are to be given more chances to actively participate in selecting some teaching materials which are hoped to suit their needs and interests especially when talking about learning languages and English in particular. Undoubtedly, students nowadays seem to be mature enough and more self –confident to give their own opinions as they are open to various types of technological advancements including computers, the Internet, social networks, YouTubes, up-to-date mobiles, high-technology ....etc.

Students who are registered in the so-called **Oral Communication Course** were involved in various types of activities, such as presentations, games, YouTube materials, acting, puzzles, poetry recitation, summaries, jokes, dramatization, improvisation, PowerPoint presentations and so on. Oral Communication course plan includes different forms of evaluation procedures such as writing

exams based on language use activities and situations, in-class participation and oral presentations, oral exam, on-going assessment, fluency-based observation and so on.

### **What is oral communication?**

Oral communication is simply seen as information spoken by mouth or it is when one party can hear what the other is saying since the word "oral" means "with your mouth", so we may say that "Oral Communication" means to communicate by talking or by the use of speech. To be more specific, we can define oral communication as the ability of a person to interact with others by means of spoken words. Oral communication covers a wide area, ranging from effective oral presentations, personal discussions, telephone discourse, interviews, and informal conversation. Hughes and Large (1993) found that a number of students have a level of oral communication considerably discrepant from their written communication and argue that, if both written and oral forms of communication are required of graduates by employers, both should be developed through degree programmes and should contribute to the final degree class awarded.

Rahman (2010) maintains that communication is a dynamic interactive process that involves the effective transmission of facts, ideas, thoughts, feelings and values. It is not passive and does not just happen; we actively and consciously engage in communication in order to develop information and understanding required for effective group functioning.

According to <http://www.hawaii.edu/gened/oc/oc.htm>, oral communication involves expressing and sharing ideas and information as well as influencing others through verbal and nonverbal symbols. Therefore, instructors who want to improve students' oral communication skills can design assignments that ask students to inform, persuade, reinforce already-existing attitudes or behaviors, entertain or move and influence others' emotions. Willis(1996) identifies eight purposes of task-based language teaching

1. to give learners confidence in trying out whatever language they know;
2. to give learners experience of spontaneous interaction;
3. to give learners the chance to benefit from noticing how others express similar meanings;
4. to give learners chances for negotiating turns to speak;
5. to engage learners in using language purposefully and cooperatively;
6. to make learners participate in a complete interaction, not just one-off sentences;
7. to give learners chances to try out communication strategies; and
8. to develop learners' confidence that they can achieve communicative goals.

Oral assessment might, on the other hand is simply defined as the process of assessing a person's ability to communicate coherently and appropriately and to support their arguments/opinions effectively through the use of spoken communication. Oral assessment is often used as a tool for testing people's knowledge in a way that allows assessors to probe and

scrutinize them, for example through a viva, which they are otherwise unable to do through the use of exams and coursework.

### **The Objectives of the Oral Communication Course**

The course under discussion is a three- credit hour course aiming at developing the students' fluency and communicative competence in English through recycling and applying their previous knowledge in real life situations. It also aims at providing study and practice in conversational English with emphasis on the process by which ideas are interchanged orally from one person to another or to a group. This course, moreover, is dedicated to provide students with opportunities to communicate freely on every matter. It thus covers various language functions, mainly spoken, such as introducing oneself and others, asking and providing information, agreeing and disagreeing, asking for and giving directions, advising, apologizing, taking and leaving a message, describing people and places, making appointments, etc. Furthermore, the course aims to help students develop their critical thinking skills and public-speaking ability so as to be able to express themselves in a rationale and critical way. Therefore, functions are explicated in a variety of topics, themes and situations which are going to be conducted through various types of activities in class and outside. Such activities are hoped to provide students with the opportunity to practice speaking and listening as well. The course consists of regular classroom presentations, formal speaking, practice on individual problems with usage and articulation, authentic classroom interactions and lectures, effective speaking tasks and essential academic vocabulary. In such activities students learn to listen to lectures and presentations, and then use their notes for other academic tasks such as tests or small group discussions. They also learn how to participate in class, engage in formal and informal small group discussions on lecture content, and present oral summaries. Furthermore, students are encouraged to develop their own techniques for learning and using new vocabulary in order to recognize the words when they hear them and to use them in their spoken English.

### **Grade Distribution**

As ***Oral Communication*** is a speaking course, so the grading is heavily weighted toward reflecting student's improvement in ability to SPEAK in public, in small groups, and intrapersonally as demonstrated in formal classroom assignments. As a result, 40% of the students' grade is determined by the skills they demonstrate in following instructions, organizing, carefully preparing and delivering speeches.

1-First Hour Exam (Written)	(15 %)
2-Second Hour Exam(Written)	(15 %)
3-In-class participation and oral presentations	(20 %)
5-Written Final Exam	(30 % )
6-Oral Final Exam	(20 %)

### **Activities During the Course**

As usual, the first lecture began with a course syllabus discussion activity in which students were given a copy of the syllabus. After the initial syllabus discussion, the students were asked to prepare different types of presentations and activities so as to interact with their classmates and the teacher as well. From the beginning, students were motivated to go through the assigned material at home in order to come to class with an idea about what is being raised in class so as to benefit from the course and to be very active contributors to class discussion, pair and group work, commenting, and expressing opinions. Then they were asked to submit a short report on each activity (one to two paragraphs maximum). The first few classes were devoted to activities like individual oral presentations and practice in class participation and discussion skills. Students were instructed to make a five-minute presentation on a topic of their choice. They were given minimum instructions. Then, after finishing the initial activities, the teacher devoted one class to explain the rubrics of the oral test which was held at the last three classes. The teacher prepared 35 questions and situations on sheets of paper and students were individually asked to randomly choose only one sheet. Then he/she was asked to read the question/s aloud. After that he/she was supposed to answer the question/s in 5-7 minutes.

### **Literature Review**

Wallace (2011) conducted a study in which 17 students participated in one section of Spanish I. The study was multi-part including three data collection sets that examined the use of elicitation and recasts as error correction strategies as well as explicit use of praise and feedback. Data Set One included a pre and a post-instructional that examined seven categories related to speaking Spanish: commitment and confidence, self-correction and the desire to be corrected, recognition of recasts, recall of recasts, elicitation recognition, elicitation recall, and praise. Data Set Two included three video and audio recorded activities: an introduction of the participant in the present tense, a description of a room, and an oral presentation of that description. In these activities the researcher used error correction and praise strategies, and the participants demonstrated their ability to apply the feedback in an oral capacity by producing oral monologues while self-correcting the errors they had previously committed during instructional time. However, participants showed that they recognized recasts more than they did elicitation, even if they felt they recalled more from elicitation. And finally, with respect to praise, the participants indicated that they desired praise, though it did not seem to impact their level of confidence. As students spent time learning the material and making an effort to apply it in recordings, they showed an increase in their confidence level as shown by the researcher's observations of their excited participation in class and desire to answer questions during the instructional time. Comparing the scores from each participant's

assessment using its rubric, one could see that all students except for one increased in the quality of their oral language production. Participants exhibited less inhibition in language production and did not commit as many errors in vocabulary usage and language control. These results show a marked increase in the quality and the amount of oral language production. Having students participate in their own correction and then validating them for that effort may cause them to remember the material more and therefore develop intrinsic motivation to produce the language.

Plyler (2011) maintains that the use of authentic materials in foreign language instruction can be accomplished easily due to the wide variety that are easily accessible to teachers, such as stories and proverbs, media and news, art, and television and movies. Culturally authentic materials provide a realistic context for foreign language instruction in which students can learn and practice the target language and that the use of authentic materials in a foreign language classroom provides students the opportunity to be completely “immersed in cultural meanings. In addition, by using culture and its products as a means of learning a foreign language, students are frequently exposed to new language and linguistic features as well as use of contextualized language for a variety of communication purposes, which aid in the development of one’s proficiency. Using technology-based instruction and particularly the Internet can be an especially engaging and meaningful way to present authentic materials in a foreign language classroom. The Internet is ultimately the best way to find and utilize these resources because of its accessibility, as well as the many different ways it offers teachers to connect with the materials, especially through the use of authentic websites.

Plyler (2011) carried out a study that analyzed the use of instructional strategies in the high school Spanish classroom involving authentic materials obtained from the Internet. The researcher looked for major themes that emerged from the data collected during the study to answer the research question: how does the use of authentic materials from the Internet in the high school Spanish classroom influence students’ oral and written language development? This research study included 41 students in two classes of Spanish in Level Three in a central North Carolina public high school. Data collection for this study occurred during normal instructional delivery as part of in-class assignments completed by all students. There were three data sets involved in this study. The first data set involved work completed by students while the researcher employed instructional strategies using authentic materials from the Internet. Within this data set there were three assignments, which required students to research authentic websites to answer written questions and make oral presentations about the information they found. The researcher used the completed assignments to evaluate the effectiveness of the instructional strategies using culturally authentic materials obtained from the Internet in helping students develop their written and oral language ability. The second data set included the field notes taken by the researcher about the instructional process, which included classroom instruction and review of video-recorded instruction throughout

the study. Following the video-recorded instruction, the researcher took field notes in a journal about the instructional strategies, student engagement, and students' oral language development. Students had the opportunity to refuse to be videotaped and still participate in the study. The third data set included student responses to a written survey, which included questions about student engagement and the development of cultural awareness and language ability. The survey was used to learn students' feelings regarding the use of authentic materials from the Internet in developing oral and written language ability. The results from this study showed that the subjects were able to develop their oral and written language ability. Additionally, the majority of students responded affirmatively to the questions on the survey concerning the acquisition of new words from the authentic websites. However, although students may have been able to acquire new language, a smaller percentage of students felt that their comfort level while speaking in the target language was developed. In addition, results showed that more students were able to develop their written language ability further than their oral language ability. This is evident as there were more serious errors in the oral presentations than in the written activities, perhaps showing that students felt more confident writing than speaking in the target language. Affirmative responses to survey questions and student comments during instruction, which demonstrated the high engagement level of the students while completing these activities, supported their findings. Additionally, multiple students commented on the survey about the appropriate level of challenge of the language tasks and, consequently, their high interest level in completing them. These students' high degree of engagement during the assignments was helping them develop their language ability through motivating them to continue to read and research the authentic website.

Fuller(2011)conducted an action research study at a high school located in the Piedmont area of North Carolina where the researcher was assigned for the student teaching internship in Spanish. A total of 19 students from three Level 2 Spanish classes participated in the study. The researcher sent consent forms home via students and administered forms of assent to them, explaining the purpose of the study and obtaining written permission to record and film them as well. Participating students were assigned an identification number (1-19) which was used to identify them during the data collection. This study was comprised of three data sets. The first data set was instructional practices focused on oral language development in four activities that subjects completed as part of normal instruction. The activities used for this study were: an interview, a description of a photo followed by probing questions used by the researcher, a problem solving activity, and an oral presentation. The second data set was field notes taken by the researcher that focused on her instruction while subjects completed the four oral language activities as well as notes taken from video footage of the activities. The final data set was a post-instructional survey that participants completed at the conclusion of the research study to help the researcher gain information regarding

the use of the oral language strategies. The data collected were analyzed to investigate the impact of the use of the strategies on students' oral language development. Results from this study showed that activities which included visuals were shown to enhance students' oral language ability in the domains of comprehensibility, vocabulary usage, and language control. Furthermore, students made gains in recycling previously learned language by describing background information such as what people in the audience were doing, what people were wearing, and descriptions of physical appearance. This demonstrated that the incorporation of visuals provided a specific context for oral language production, and therefore, students demonstrated more oral language ability. Three of the four oral language activities allowed students to work with a partner to complete the task, and results showed that during these activities students demonstrated development of oral language skills such as circumlocution and negotiation of meaning. Results also suggested that students were more engaged and enjoyed activities to a greater degree when they involved a partner. This directly supports the research regarding increased motivation that can result from group work and that it provides a platform for students to communicate with others as in real-world situations (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). Additionally, data from this study reinforced Cordova and Lepper's (1996) research which stated that richer contexts can increase students' intrinsic motivation which can lead to their use of more complex language. This action research study found that activities with richer contexts heightened student motivation and pushed students to use more complex structures as well as speak more comprehensibly. Importantly, through these activities, students were shown to improve greatly in the domain of language control by distinguishing between past tense grammar structures and how to use them accurately. An interesting note of importance was that although the interview was the first activity students completed and the oral presentation was the last activity, participants scored on average 0.61 points less (using a 4 point scale) in the domain of comprehensibility on the oral presentation. There was reason to believe that because the interview had a more specific and structured L2 context, students were more motivated to complete the task, and therefore spoke more comprehensibly.

Finally, results showed that students performed better on oral language tasks when they were given many opportunities to use and hear the language. Gain was seen over time in the domains of language control in activities which allowed students to hear another person speaking the language in addition to using the language. Importantly, in the only activity in which there was no opportunity for students to hear the language, the oral presentation, students showed a decrease in all domains of oral language ability. Thus, results from this study agree with the research of Hall (1999) and Shrum and Glisan (2010) which states that teachers can increase the chances for students to gain oral language ability by providing opportunities for students to use and hear the language.

Marr, et al (2011) investigated the effectiveness of a peer-mediated fluency-building intervention for struggling readers in second grade. The intervention was provided to small groups of students referred to as difficult-to-remediate, treatment resisters, nonresponders, or lower responders in similar research. Oral reading fluency performance for students who received supplemental intervention ( $n = 17$ ) was statistically significantly better than that for their peers who received only typical classroom instruction ( $n = 17$ ). The effects of enhanced fluency instruction were evident across multiple benchmarks, and significant relationships were evident between oral reading fluency and comprehension. The authors discuss the findings in the context of similar peer-mediated interventions and the emerging development of targeted interventions to support response-to-intervention practices.

Lucas (2011) maintains that teachers spend considerable time instructing students how to organize and deliver professional oral presentations, design effective PowerPoint slides, answer interview questions, and communicate effectively in problem-solving teams. Yet considerably less time is spent systematically teaching them the communication skill they will use most: day-to-day verbal communication. Improving verbal communication competence will contribute to students' success across a variety of communication contexts. This activity raises students' consciousness of their own verbal communication patterns and gives a starting point for improving their verbal skills.

Rahman (2010) aimed to apply task-based approach in teaching oral communication skills through investigating the teaching of oral communication to the students of Engineering and Technology at Indian School of Mines. His paper first described the dimensions of 'oral communication skills' and taskbased approach'. The paper concluded that the tasks used were well received by the majority of the learners who found this experience to be rewarding, intrinsically interesting, and educationally beneficial. Moreover, it was revealed that students got involved in the task, because the tasks were giving the feeling of real life situation. Their final performances were impressively polished and much improved, that is, the final product was of high level. 70 percent students scored grade 'A'. On the other hand, it was found that the initial stage involved some problems in carrying out these tasks. Sometimes it went out of control from the hand of students and even from the hand of the teacher.

Negishi (2010) conducted a study that attempted to investigate the characteristics of interaction dynamics in a group oral interaction carried out by Japanese learners of English. The relationship between the participants' language development and interactional management functions (IMFs) was also explored. Oral performance tests in a paired or a small group have recently been introduced because the assessment of L2 learners' authentic conversational competence is considered important in the current era of globalization. Qualitative analysis showed that some characteristics, namely, modifying or developing the topic and negotiation of meaning, displayed an



association with the development of the participants' language ability. More proficient speakers' dialogues of this study showed a more complex, co-constructed, and collaborative nature, with more interactions and negotiation of meaning. The results revealed that the group oral was an effective format for L2 learners as it provided more opportunities to interact with peers, irrespective of its threat to construct validity.

Seong (2005) aimed to provide a tourism English teaching model for the improvement of oral communication skills. To achieve this purpose, the researcher introduced a model of Triple –I (Identification- Interaction-Induction), focusing on provoking interaction. The stage of Identification is preparation for the Interaction stage focusing on the identification of the task and the expressions used with it. The Interaction stage is the language construction stage, focusing on interaction through a technique of scaffolding and practice when necessary. The Induction stage is the wrapping up stage, focusing on inducing learners' language knowledge that learners have learned during the class. In order to test the practicability and effectiveness of the Triple –I model, an experiment was conducted during a 16 week period. Subjects of the study were 62 sophomore junior students in tourism English. Each group consisted of 31 students. The two groups were examined as equal groups in a final written achievement test as well as with an interview. Experimental group was assigned the PPP (Presentation- Practice-Production) model. The results of the study revealed that significant differences were found between the two groups in the speaking ability and that students in the experimental group achieved higher scores than those in the control group. It was found that the amount of utterances and the frequency of teacher's scaffolding were significant during the interaction activities. Students in the experimental group achieved higher scores than those in the control group in the amount and the frequency of teacher's scaffolding and that general English use ability differences between the groups were insignificant in all four areas: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The study concluded that the Triple –I model of teaching spoken English for tourism students was valid, reliable and practical.

Joughin (2004) carried out a phenomenographic study of students' experience of oral assessment which identified six aspects of oral assessment that figured strongly in students' descriptions of their assessment. These aspects were the students' underlying intention in preparing for assessment, their conceptions of the subject matter they were studying, their experience of interaction, their feelings, their sense of audience, and the comparisons they made between written and oral assessment formats. Each aspect could be experienced in a variety of ways. For example, students may have a limited sense of interaction and see the assessment as a one-way presentation or they may see the assessment as highly interactive, involving probing questions that will test their understanding. Students' conceptions of oral assessment can be described in terms of the variation in ways of experiencing each of these aspects. The ways in which students can experience critical aspects of oral assessment may stand in contrast to the ways in which lecturers see these aspects. Students' ways of experiencing them are considered in the context of dimensions of oral assessment

previously identified from lecturers' perspectives . While dimensions of oral assessment were identified through the literature, aspects of oral assessment from the student's perspective were identified through interviews with students engaged in a specific program of study. The program was offered in an 'open learning' mode. Participants attended an orientation workshop, then studied through print materials and self-managed cluster groups that met regularly to discuss the topics they were studying. Participants had access to a group mentor and to the program coordinators. The program required students to complete six items of assessment. These alternated between written papers which were submitted to one of the program coordinators or a tutor, and oral presentations to the cluster group. The oral presentations were short — five minutes of presentation, five minutes of questioning and discussion, and one minute of personal reflection. At the conclusion of each oral presentation, students would receive oral feedback from group members, complete a 'feedback sheet', and send the sheet and their notes to the coordinator or tutor for marking. Fifteen students in the program were interviewed using a semi-structured format designed to encourage the description of the experience of oral assessment from the student's perspective. Within an open structure, the interviews explored what the oral assessment was like for the student, including the student's perception of the context of the assessment, how the student prepared for the assessment, and how the student compared the oral assessment to the written assignment.

The results revealed that not only student perceptions were different to the lecturer's own perceptions but also that students differed from each other in how they perceived the dimensions. In a given instance of oral assessment, identifying its relevant dimensions and anticipating, in so far as this is possible, the varieties of ways in which students might experience those dimensions, may be a useful starting point in introducing that assessment to students. Students need to learn about assessment in the same way that they learn about the content of a subject. Helping students learn about oral assessment may involve helping them become aware of the dimensions of oral assessment through drawing their attention to the variety of ways in which these dimensions can be experienced.

Iwamura (2002) carried out a study in which six sections of Practical English at Korea University participated in chat sessions via CCDL (Cross-Cultural Distance Learning) with students from Waseda University. The overall participants were 533 students .The purpose of this program was to provide students the opportunity to communicate in English with partners at other university. Through CCDL students were able to communicate with peers with whom do not share any language except English. Therefore, this study aimed to examine some preliminary observations of the benefits of the program and the expectations language teachers can entertain as technology offers us contexts in which to build learning programs where technical facilities can be maximized . Students were encouraged to cull from their personal data topics they enjoyed the most. A variety of assignments through the semester provided practice for this final requirement. As a result, many , if not most, of the students surprised even themselves with the excellent reports they delivered.

Many achieved a fluency that allowed them to hear and immediately correct their own errors, to make their classmates laugh at the comic aspects of their experience, and to appreciate how each student created a unique experience with his or her Waseda partner. The visual materials they created added to the effect of their lively presentations. It was observed that many students were having so much fun and learning from each other on various things-not only English but cultural exchanges as well. The final outcome of such a study revealed strong enthusiasm and appreciation that students have expressed in their written reports and oral presentations. Students moreover had more opportunities to develop online friendships.

Kent (2001) suggested a method to be used by Korean EFL teachers when conducting oral tests with their students. The main objectives of this method were to assess the oral skill level of students in a pre-planned communicative context, as well as testing listening comprehension through question/answer based tasks. Moreover, the method aimed to allow students to expand their use of language, centered on a theme of their own interest, and engage in oral communication on a familiar topic covered by the class syllabus. The exam structure was "semi-free". They were informed that chapter headings of the course syllabus provide the topics for the exam, and that they can discuss any one area of relevance to each topic. In addition to that, students were informed that they can bring notes, or memory cards, along with them to the test. Typical topics covered by course syllabuses included the following: around the community, eating, education and school life, friends and family, the global village, health, homes, love and dating, nature, as well as work and lifestyles. Students then tested for approximately 10 minutes per pair. Students then engaged in a prepared conversation for around 5 minutes. At this point an examination criteria were used by the instructor at relevant points of the students' conversation to check their oral skills.. As students had pre-planned their conversations, they were expected to exhibit a high degree of familiarity with the topic material. The exam evaluation criteria were conducted when students engaged in their prepared conversations. For each point of evaluation, students were graded on a Likert-type scale (1 being poor, through to 5 being excellent). The criteria consisted of 5 major domains: Fluency of Speech, Grammar Use, Listening Comprehension, Pronunciation and Vocabulary Appropriateness and Complexity. As a result students felt more comfortable, and relaxed, during the testing process.

Ahmed (1996) discussed the applications of a task-based approach to designing a syllabus for an oral communication skills course in an academic setting. The researcher presented a case study based on the actual development of such a course in the intensive English program at IUJ (International University of Japan). The paper attempted to highlight some of the important aspects of implementing a task-based approach to syllabus design and provided some practical guidelines for designing such a course. The output of this case study revealed that the course has been quite successful in achieving its goals and that part of this success can be attributed to the task-based

approach which emphasized functional uses of language, i.e., what people do with language. Furthermore, it was concluded that if the tasks selected relate to well-defined needs in specific institutional contexts, the course becomes more relevant and useful in the minds of the students. To conclude, the task-based approach to syllabus design was found to have much potentials.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Language is mainly considered an oral activity in which people communicate with each other to get their social and physical needs and, furthermore, communicate ideas and thoughts among the members of a certain social society. Oral communication, then, is basically seen as the ability of a person to interact with others by means of spoken words which in turn covers a wide area, ranging from effective oral presentations, personal discussions, telephone discourse, interviews, and informal conversation. Thus, oral communication involves expressing and sharing ideas and information as well as influencing others through verbal and nonverbal symbols. On the other hand, students who study English either as a foreign language or a second language are assumed to be provided with more and more opportunities to practice oral communication inside and outside the classroom in a natural and meaningful way.

Based on these assumptions, students' perspectives should be investigated and taken into account when they are involved in the teaching –learning process especially at higher education levels as they represent the first beneficiaries of the teaching-learning process. However, not much has been written about using non-traditional techniques for the purpose of improving oral communication skills in higher education in Palestine, and less has been written about investigating students' perceptions with regard to this topic. Consequently, this study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of using non-traditional techniques used by one of the researchers while teaching the course Oral Communication at An-Najah National University during the fall semester in the academic year 2011/2012.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Instructors and foreign language teachers who want to improve students' oral communication skills should devote their utmost efforts to design assignments and activities that stimulate students to inform, persuade, reinforce already-existing attitudes or behaviors, entertain or move and influence others' emotions by using different types of activities and practices that motivate the students to use the language in meaningful situations. Moreover, university students should be given more chances to actively participate in selecting some teaching materials which are hoped to suit their needs and interests especially when talking about learning languages and English in particular. Thus, the present study aimed at investigating students' perceptions of the effectiveness of using non-traditional techniques to improve oral communication skills. Moreover, the study

aimed at exploring the effect of students' level and their Cumulative Grade-Point Average (C.G.P.A) on these perceptions.

### **Questions of the study**

This study aimed to answer the following questions:

- 1-What are the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of using non-traditional techniques for improving their oral communication?
- 2-Are there any significant differences between the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of using non-traditional techniques due to their level( freshman, sophomore, junior and senior).
- 3- Are there any significant differences between the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of using non-traditional techniques due to their **Cumulative Grade-Point Average (C.G.P.A)**?

### **Significance of the Study**

This study was guided by four reasons: First it seems significant to investigate the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of using non-traditional techniques as they represent the first beneficiaries of the teaching-learning process. Second, there has not been a study that investigated the perceptions of the students who study this course at An-Najah University which means that there is still a necessity to explore the advantages of using non-traditional techniques for the sake of improving oral communication skills. Third, the results of this study are hoped to be useful for the decision-makers and lecturers at An-Najah University who can benefit from the results to improve the quality of teaching which are currently used to teach this course. Fourth, the results of this study can help bridging the gap that might exist between theory and practice in terms of teaching oral communication skills and it can add some useful information to the growing body of literature in this area.

### **Study Design**

The descriptive analytical design was used as it suited the study objectives.

### **Instruments and Materials**

#### **The Questionnaire**

The main goal of this study was to investigate students' perceptions of the effectiveness of using non-traditional techniques to improve oral communication skills. To achieve this goal, the researchers designed a 41-item questionnaire. The scores of responses of the examinees to each item were calculated according to the five-point-scale, "Likert scale", in which strongly agree = 5 points, agree = 4 points, undecided = 3, disagree = 2 points and strongly disagree = 1 point.

Section one of the questionnaire gathered information regarding students' levels and students' Cumulative Grade-Average and sources of their previous linguistic background.

Section two, on the other hand, was built to measure students' perceptions of the effectiveness of using non-traditional techniques to improve oral communication skills and therefore it covered six domains : the instructor, the course, students' fluency, students' confidence and participation, advantages of non-traditional techniques and fostering interaction.

### **Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire**

To ensure the face validity and content validity of the questionnaire, it was firstly rated by a jury of five experts in the field of Education, English and Evaluation an assessment from QOU and An-Najah University to rate each item for clarity and appropriateness in measuring the students' perceptions. The jury's suggestions were taken into account and used to modify the questionnaire by omitting, adding, rephrasing items bring the number of items from 62 to 41 in addition to modifying certain items which needed to be rewritten so as to avoid duality of some items and eliminate duplications as well. The second phase involved administering the questionnaire to a randomly chosen sample of 10 students who took this course so as to rate the questionnaire items for clarity of expression. Their responses and comments were taken into account when the final version of the questionnaire was prepared.

The Cronbach Alpha formula was used to find out the reliability of the questionnaire. The reliability values of study domains were (0.73), (0.77), (0.75), (0.73), (0.79) and (0.71) respectively which are high, and suitable for scientific purposes.

### **The Non-Traditional Techniques**

As the main objective of this study was to investigate students' perceptions of the effectiveness of using non-traditional techniques to improve oral communication skills, one of the two researchers who taught the course Oral Communication Skills in the first semester used and encouraged the students to use a variety of non-traditional techniques for the sake of improving their oral skills. These non-traditional technique involved using techniques, methods, materials and resources that do not conform to or in accord with traditional or familiar techniques. Therefore, these non-traditional techniques included:

- 1-group oral to practice oral skills and test performance in the oral test at the end of the course.
- 2-guest speaker's participation. Two guest speakers were invited to the two sections of the course. These speakers were native speakers of English, so the students had the opportunity to interact with native speakers and improve their self-confidence. This, moreover, strengthen the so-called cross-cultural communication.
- 3-individual oral presentations and practice in class participation and discussion skills: the students were asked to prepare a topic assigned to them and present in the class. Students made formal oral presentations. Each presentation was followed by a question/answer period, and concluded by the teacher's comment.

- 4- learning and teaching activities that involve oral communication, including small group discussions, mock interviews, role plays, pair and group oral presentations.
- 5- Chapter or section presentations to the class (e.g., presenting course content).
- 6- Debates and Panel discussions (e.g., several students speaking with one another on a topic in front of an audience of peers): This activity runs nearly every week. The students were engaged in a formal/informal discussion/debate activity on an assigned topic. This activity is completely student-led, i.e., students play all the roles (observer, group presenter, and participating members).
- 7- Interviews (e.g., mock job interviews, research interviews, interrogations)
- 8- Press conferences and TV Simulation programs.
- 9- Creative or aesthetic performances (e.g., storytelling, performance of literature, oral interpretations or readings, reading poems)
- 10-Oral critiques of others' performances or presentations
- 11-Role-play: Students were asked to make group of three to five . In the beginning, they were given the situation and asked to come to the class after preparation. They prepare their role and perform in the class. After this initial activity, they are assigned situations on the spot and they have to perform at the very same time. The teacher listened to the performances of the students and commented on the individual performances.
- 12- Pair work : Working in pairs provided students with an opportunity to "think aloud" about what they know, and a process for acquiring and reflecting on information. For many students, pair work was a comfortable starting point to practise the skills they will need to participate in larger groups. Such activity helped students build positive relationships, work cooperatively, and participate actively in the classroom.
- 13- Whole-class discussions:. By involving the whole class in shared activities, and by teaching students how to be good listeners, to respect each other and to participate without fear, the teacher was able to maximize students' self-confidence and their active participation and minimize anxiety for all students.
- 14-Presentations : Presenting in front of a class might be for some students a terrifying experience. Many students, therefore, were hesitant to give presentations in class; they were uncomfortable or nervous and did not clearly understand what an effective presentation looks like. By demonstrating an ineffective presentation, modelling an effective presentation, and facilitating student collaboration, the teacher eased students' stress and clearly defined an effective presentation. Therefore, students were introduced to different techniques of presentation by using the Language Lab. YouTube was used to enable the students to watch authentic presentations presented by native and non-native speakers, for example " Easy oral communication skills". The quality of presentations improved with effective instruction, practice and support.

15-Students presentations included presenting funny sayings and proverbs, Jokes, puzzles, sketches, games, music. For example one of the students sang two songs in English and then explained them and made the students listen to them using the mobile and then this activity was followed by comments and a whole class discussion. This student played a couple of songs on her guitar as ice breaker. It was awesome and so amazing.

16-Students were given more opportunities to use technology in their presentations: some of them used their own mobiles, others their laptops and PowerPoint, video clips, songs, poetry accompanied by musical background, YouTube.

17-The technique of improvised dialogues were used during this course which enabled the students to use the language for communicating naturally with other partners. Even the topics chosen for discussion were interesting and went in accordance with students' needs and interests, for example, friendship, early marriage, how to win friends, colors as indicators of personality, yes for Palestine, how to live happily, SPEAK YOUR FEELINGS, the difference between somebody you love and somebody you just like, what do you do when you get angry?,

18-Two students invited two native speakers from Hope Project and interviewed them in front of their classmates who were asked to ask the guests some questions. Students had the chance to listen to the American accent and to practice questioning techniques.

### **Lecturer's Role**

As the major objective of this course was to improve students' oral communication skills, the lecturer offered the best efforts and opportunities to help the students practicing the oral skills through creating a comfortable, safe environment in which students may be successful in presentations. The lecturer, therefore, provided the needed encouragement and explicit instruction to build up students' strengths and address their needs. He provided the students with various opportunities to construct a safe and encouraging environment in which students can practise oral skills, when English was not their first language. The lecturer used to be ready anywhere and anytime to give the students extra practice, a peer to work with, and any kind of support before presenting. Students, then were given the chance to chose partners or team members who can model knowledge, skills and strategies at a level that is accessible and not intimidating. The lecturer, furthermore, used to follow the technique of modeling effective skills for small-group discussion by providing many opportunities to practice oral skills in a safe environment and by using techniques such as paraphrasing what the other has said, asking for clarification, and orally clarifying their own ideas. The teacher did his best to encourage students to make connections between written and oral skills so as to share ideas and of course, to develop listening skills and apply oral skills in different ways – in pairs, small groups, and with the whole class as well. The teacher was so friendly with students and he kept on using a sense of humour that helped students



feel comfortable in a variety of roles and tasks assigned to them and to participate actively in their learning. Finally, the teacher of this course tried the best efforts to give all students an equal opportunity to share ideas and learn from each other in a friendly environment.

### **Participants and Sample**

The participants in the study were 83 students (77 female and 6 males) selected as a stratified random sample from the whole population according to three categories: level, Cumulative Grade-Average and previous linguistic background. The students were taught the course by one of the researchers at An-Najah University in the first semester of the academic year 2011/2012. The majority of students major in English language and literature and only 5 major in Methodology of Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

Table(1) below indicates the sample distribution in accordance with the independent variables.

**Table 1**  
**Distribution of Sample According to Study Independent Variables**

Variable	Class	Frequency	Percentage %
Level	2- 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	35	47.9
	3- 4 <sup>th</sup> year	38	52.1
Cumulative Grade-Average	less than 70%	9	12.3
	70 -79%	50	68.5
	80% and more	14	19.2
Previous linguistic background	training sessions and courses	29	39.7
	listening to recorded materials	18	24.7
	Interaction	5	6.8
	using Internet technologies	21	28.8
Total		73	100%

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The data were collected through a questionnaire which was constructed by the two researchers. The questionnaire was given to the students in class in the last lecture of the course. Students were told that the questionnaire is being given in an effort to understand how they think and feel about the effectiveness of using non-traditional techniques to improve oral communication skills so as to gain some insights on the more effective teaching procedures for the future students. The total number of the completed questionnaire was 80. Seven questionnaires were excluded because their responses were not consistent. Only 73 questionnaires were analyzed statistically using SPSS.

To estimate the students' responses toward the effectiveness of using non-traditional techniques to improve oral communication skills, the researchers used scales, depends on percentage as follows:

\*80-100 % is a very high degree.

- \*70-79.9 % is a high degree.
- \*60-69.9 % is a moderate degree.
- \*50-59.9 % is a low degree.
- \* Less than 60% is a very low degree.

## Data Analysis and Results

The researcher used SPSS V.17 to analyze the data. The following statistics were used:

1. Means, frequencies, percentages, and standard deviations.
2. T-test for Independent samples.
3. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).
- 4- Scheffe Post Hoc test

## Results

To accomplish the purpose of the study, the researchers analyzed the data in accordance with the study questions and the results were as follows:

**1-Results Related to the First Question:** *What are the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of using non-traditional techniques for improving their oral communication?*

In order to answer this question, the researchers calculated the means, standard deviations, percentages and levels, for items of students' perceptions of the effectiveness of using non-traditional techniques to improve oral communication skills. Tables (2-8) show the results.

**Table (2)**  
**Means, Standard deviation, percentages and levels of the items of the instructor domain**

Items	M	SD	Percentage	Level
The instructor gave me a good chance to promote language use.	4.49	0.58	89.8	Very high
The instructor was able to deal with individual differences effectively.	4.34	0.53	86.8	Very high
By using non-traditional techniques, the instructor was able to make the classroom activity more relevant and real.	4.53	0.65	90.6	Very high
Using non-traditional techniques enabled the instructor to add spice and stimulus to the teaching process.	4.30	0.88	86.0	Very high
The instructor showed genuine interest in his students and their progress.	4.47	0.55	89.4	Very high
The instructor provided situations for students to express themselves.	4.52	0.63	90.4	Very high
The instructor promoted meaningful communication via the language.	4.40	0.72	88.0	Very high
<b>Total score</b>	<b>4.44</b>	<b>0.34</b>	<b>88.8</b>	<b>Very high</b>

Table (2) shows that the totals score of instructor domain achieved a mean of (4.44) and a percentage of (88.8) which indicates a very high level of effectiveness.

**Table (3)**  
**Means, standard deviation, percentages and levels of the items of the course domain**

Items	M	SD	Percentage	Level
The course provided me with different ways to improve my oral skills.	4.51	0.67	90.2	Very high
The course helped me create an interesting learning environment.	4.23	0.70	84.6	Very high
The course helped both the lecturer and students to account for expectations.	4.07	0.63	81.4	Very high
The course emphasized the importance of using fun and laughter to stimulate students to talk.	4.47	0.75	89.4	Very high
The course focused on using dramatization to improve oral skills.	4.27	0.82	85.4	Very high
The course developed my ability to exploit different teaching aids (audio, YouTube blackboard, , video, ....etc.)	4.44	0.76	88.8	Very high
The course improved my ability to use non-verbal gestures and facial expressions to communicate with others.	4.40	0.79	88.0	Very high
<b>Total score</b>	<b>4.34</b>	<b>0.39</b>	<b>86.8</b>	<b>Very high</b>

Table (3) shows that the total score of course domain achieved a mean of (4.34) and a percentage of (86.8) which indicates a very high level of effectiveness.

**Table (4)**  
**Means, standard deviation, percentages and levels of the items of the students' fluency domain**

Items	M	SD	Percentage	Level
Using non-traditional techniques helped me speak English to a reasonable degree of fluency.	4.25	0.57	85.0	Very high
Using non-traditional techniques improved my actual correctness of structure and vocabulary.	4.16	0.71	83.2	Very high
Using non-traditional techniques improved adequacy of pronunciation.	4.29	0.61	85.8	Very high
Using non-traditional techniques helped me use my voice to the full.	4.29	0.75	85.8	Very high
Using non-traditional techniques developed my ability to use English for fruitful discussions.	4.26	0.58	85.2	Very high
Now, I can speak more fluently than I was three months ago.	4.33	0.69	86.6	Very high
Now I can manage a successful conversation.	4.25	0.68	85.0	Very high
Using non-traditional techniques stimulated me to ask and comment fluently.	4.27	0.69	85.4	Very high
<b>Total score</b>	<b>4.26</b>	<b>0.40</b>	<b>85.2</b>	<b>Very high</b>

Table (4) shows that the total score of students' fluency achieved a mean of (4.26) and a percentage of (85.2) which indicates a very high level of effectiveness.

**Table (5)**  
**Means, standard deviation, percentages and levels of the items of the students' confidence & participation domain**

Items	M	SD	Percentage	Level
Using non-traditional techniques reinforce my self-confidence.	4.34	0.61	86.8	Very high
Using non-traditional techniques reduced the degree of shyness, fear and anxiety among students	4.45	0.69	89.0	Very high
I felt confident when I was involved in the various activities of the course.	4.47	0.60	89.4	Very high
Using non-traditional techniques enabled students to be more independent and creative in their use of English.	4.41	0.68	88.2	Very high
Using non-traditional techniques allowed the whole class to participate.	4.21	0.90	84.2	Very high
Using non-traditional techniques gave a room for improving discussions.	4.37	0.54	87.4	Very high
<b>Total score</b>	<b>4.37</b>	<b>0.45</b>	<b>87.4</b>	<b>Very high</b>

Table (5) shows that the total score of students' confidence & participation achieved a mean of (4.37) and a percentage of (87.4) which indicates a very high level of effectiveness.

**Table (6)**  
**Means, standard deviation, percentages and levels of the items of the advantages of non-traditional techniques domain**

Items	M	SD	Percentage	Level
Using non-traditional techniques involved acting as well as speaking.	4.32	0.62	86.4	Very high
Using non-traditional techniques made learning more enjoyable.	4.52	0.65	90.4	Very high
Non-traditional techniques helped students overcome classroom boredom.	4.40	0.57	88.0	Very high
Non-traditional techniques transferred learning from skill-getting to skill-using.	4.52	0.58	90.4	Very high
Using non-traditional techniques made learning more student-centered and less teacher-centered.	4.30	0.74	86.0	Very high
Using non-traditional techniques reduced the strain of formality in class.	4.34	0.71	86.8	Very high
Using non-traditional techniques met the needs and interests of the students.	4.21	0.82	84.2	Very high
Using non-traditional techniques provided a sense of challenge and fun.	4.51	0.60	90.2	Very high

<b>Total score</b>	<b>4.39</b>	<b>0.38</b>	<b>87.8</b>	<b>Very high</b>
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Table (6) shows that the total score of advantages of non-traditional techniques domain achieved a mean of (4.39) and a percentage of (87.8) which indicates a very high level of effectiveness.

**Table (7)**  
**Means, standard deviation, percentages and levels of the items of the fostering interaction domain**

Items	M	SD	Percentage	Level
Non-traditional techniques developed my ability to stimulate interaction.	4.41	0.68	88.2	Very high
Using non-traditional techniques offered the possibility of successful communication between the instructor and the students.	4.48	0.56	89.6	Very high
Using non-traditional techniques foster cooperation with peers.	4.38	0.64	87.6	Very high
Using non-traditional techniques helped me interact with my classmates' feelings and thoughts.	4.51	0.58	90.2	Very high
I liked using role-playing, mock-interviews and classroom debates to interact with my teacher and my classmates.	4.41	0.72	88.2	Very high
<b>Total score</b>	<b>4.44</b>	<b>0.43</b>	<b>88.8</b>	<b>Very high</b>

Table (7) shows that the total score of fostering interaction domain achieved a mean of (4.44) and a percentage of (88.8) which indicates a very high level of effectiveness.

Table (8) summarizes the results of the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of using non-traditional techniques to improve oral communication skills.

**Table (8)**  
**Means, standard deviation, percentages and levels of the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of using non-traditional techniques domains**

Domain	M	SD	Percentage	Level
The instructor	4.44	0.34	88.8	Very high
The course	4.34	0.39	86.8	Very high
Students' Fluency	4.26	0.40	85.2	Very high
<i>Students' confidence &amp; Participation</i>	4.37	0.45	87.4	Very high
Advantages of non-traditional techniques	4.39	0.38	87.8	Very high
Fostering Interaction	4.44	0.43	88.8	Very high
<b>Total score</b>	<b>4.37</b>	<b>0.30</b>	<b>87.4</b>	<b>Very high</b>

Table (8) shows that the total score of the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of using non-traditional techniques achieved a mean of (4.37) and a percentage of (87.4) which indicates a very high level of effectiveness.

#### **Second: Results related to the study hypothesis:**

### 1- Results related to the first hypothesis:

“There are no significant differences at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) between the means of students' perceptions of the effectiveness of using non-traditional techniques due to students' level.” The researchers used T-test for independent samples to test the hypothesis. Table (9) shows the results.

**Table (9)**  
**T-test for independent samples of students' perceptions due to Level**

Domain	Level	Frequency	Mean	S.D	T-value	Sig.*
The instructor	2- 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	35	4.37	0.37	1.700	0.094
	3- 4 <sup>th</sup> year	38	4.50	0.30		
The course	2- 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	35	4.25	0.42	1.869	0.066
	3- 4 <sup>th</sup> year	38	4.42	0.35		
Students' Fluency	2- 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	35	4.24	0.40	0.461	0.646
	3- 4 <sup>th</sup> year	38	4.28	0.40		
Students' confidence & Participation	2- 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	35	4.33	0.45	0.755	0.453
	3- 4 <sup>th</sup> year	38	4.41	0.44		
Advantages of non-traditional techniques	2- 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	35	4.31	0.35	1.722	0.090
	3- 4 <sup>th</sup> year	38	4.46	0.39		
Fostering Interaction	2- 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	35	4.37	0.48	1.381	0.172
	3- 4 <sup>th</sup> year	38	4.51	0.38		
Total score	2- 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	35	4.31	0.30	1.685	0.096
	3- 4 <sup>th</sup> year	38	4.42	0.29		

\* Significant at ( $\alpha= 0.05$ ), D.F = 71

Table (9) shows that there are no significant differences at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) between the means of students' perceptions of the effectiveness of using non-traditional techniques to improve oral communication skills due to students' Level.

### 2-Results related to the second hypothesis:

“There are no significant differences at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) between the means of students' perceptions of the effectiveness of using non-traditional techniques to improve oral communication skills due to Cumulative Grade-Average.”

The researchers used One Way ANOVA to test the hypothesis. Tables (10, 11) show the frequencies, means and standard deviations of the degree of students' perceptions of the effectiveness of using non-traditional techniques to improve oral communication skills due to Cumulative Grade-Average and the results of One Way ANOVA test respectively.

**Table (10)**  
**Frequencies, means, and standard deviations of the students' perceptions due to Cumulative Grade-Average**

Domain	Cumulative Grade-Average	Frequency	Mean	S.D
The instructor	less than 70%	9	4.46	0.37
	70 -79%	50	4.38	0.34
	80% and more	14	4.61	0.24
The course	less than 70%	9	4.37	0.40
	70 -79%	50	4.28	0.40
	80% and more	14	4.55	0.26
Students' Fluency	less than 70%	9	4.33	0.46
	70 -79%	50	4.20	0.41
	80% and more	14	4.45	0.29
Students' confidence & Participation	less than 70%	9	4.44	0.49
	70 -79%	50	4.30	0.43
	80% and more	14	4.60	0.43
Advantages of non-traditional techniques	less than 70%	9	4.36	0.38
	70 -79%	50	4.34	0.40
	80% and more	14	4.57	0.25
Fostering Interaction	less than 70%	9	4.38	0.45
	70 -79%	50	4.41	0.44
	80% and more	14	4.57	0.40
Total score	less than 70%	9	4.39	0.32
	70 -79%	50	4.31	0.30
	80% and more	14	4.55	0.22

**Table (11)**  
**One Way ANOVA to test the differences of the students' perceptions**  
**due to Cumulative Grade-Average**

Domain	Source of variation	Sum of Squares	D.F	Mean Squares	F	Sig.*
The instructor	Between groups	0.581	2	0.291	2.671	0.076
	Within groups	7.618	70	0.109		
	Total	8.200	72			
The course	Between groups	0.827	2	0.413	2.854	0.064
	Within groups	10.138	70	0.145		
	Total	10.964	72			
Students' Fluency	Between groups	0.730	2	0.365	2.344	0.103
	Within groups	10.900	70	0.156		
	Total	11.630	72			
Students'	Between groups	1.004	2	0.502	2.649	0.078

confidence & Participation	Within groups	13.262	70	0.189		
	Total	14.266	72			
Advantages of non-traditional techniques	Between groups	0.581	2	0.291	2.113	0.129
	Within groups	9.624	70	0.137		
	Total	10.205	72			
Fostering Interaction	Between groups	0.316	2	0.158	0.833	0.439
	Within groups	13.257	70	0.189		
	Total	13.573	72			
Total score	Between groups	0.644	2	0.322	3.807	*0.027
	Within groups	5.917	70	0.085		
	Total	6.560	72			

\*Significant at ( $\alpha=0.05$ )

Table (11) shows that there are no significant differences at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) between the means of students' perceptions of the effectiveness of using non-traditional techniques to improve oral communication skills due to Cumulative Grade-Average in all domains except the total score. In order to identify the source of differences in the total score, the researchers used Scheffe Post Hoc test. Table (12) shows the results.

**Table (12)**  
**Scheffe Post Hoc test results to compare between the means of the total score due to Cumulative Grade-Average**

Cumulative Grade-Average	less than 70%	70 -79%	80% and more
less than 70%		0.075	-0.166
70 -79%			-0.242*
80% and more			

\*Significant at ( $\alpha=0.05$ )

Table (12) shows that there are significant differences at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) between the means of the total score due to Cumulative Grade-Average, between (70-79%) and (80% and more) in favor of (80% and more).

### 3-Results related to the third hypothesis:

“There are no significant differences at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) between the means of students' perceptions of the effectiveness of using non-traditional techniques to improve oral communication skills due to Previous linguistic background.”

The researchers used One Way ANOVA to test the hypothesis. Tables (13, 14) show the frequencies, means and standard deviations of the degree of students' perceptions of the effectiveness of using non-traditional techniques to improve oral communication skills due to Previous linguistic background and the results of One Way ANOVA test respectively.

**Table (13)**



**Frequencies, means, and standard deviations of the students' perceptions  
due to Previous linguistic background**

Domain	Previous linguistic background	Frequency	Mean	S.D
The instructor	training sessions and courses	29	4.42	0.37
	listening to recorded materials	18	4.45	0.31
	Interaction	5	4.43	0.36
	using Internet technologies	21	4.44	0.33
The course	training sessions and courses	29	4.29	0.44
	listening to recorded materials	18	4.30	0.36
	Interaction	5	4.46	0.19
	using Internet technologies	21	4.41	0.39
Students' Fluency	training sessions and courses	29	4.25	0.44
	listening to recorded materials	18	4.18	0.28
	Interaction	5	4.40	0.41
	using Internet technologies	21	4.32	0.45
Students' confidence & Participation	training sessions and courses	29	4.32	0.46
	listening to recorded materials	18	4.34	0.41
	Interaction	5	4.60	0.43
	using Internet technologies	21	4.42	0.46
Advantages of non-traditional techniques	training sessions and courses	29	4.34	0.41
	listening to recorded materials	18	4.40	0.34
	Interaction	5	4.40	0.42
	using Internet technologies	21	4.45	0.36
Fostering Interaction	training sessions and courses	29	4.43	0.46
	listening to recorded materials	18	4.37	0.40
	Interaction	5	4.60	0.24
	using Internet technologies	21	4.47	0.47

Total score	training sessions and courses	29	4.34	0.34
	listening to recorded materials	18	4.34	0.25
	Interaction	5	4.47	0.22
	using Internet technologies	21	4.41	0.32

**Table (14)**  
**One Way ANOVA to test the differences of the students' perceptions**  
**due to Previous linguistic background**

Domain	Source of variation	Sum of Squares	D.F	Mean Squares	F	Sig.*
The instructor	Between groups	0.010	3	0.003	0.029	0.993
	Within groups	8.189	69	0.119		
	Total	8.200	72			
The course	Between groups	0.284	3	0.095	0.611	0.610
	Within groups	10.681	69	0.155		
	Total	10.964	72			
Students' Fluency	Between groups	0.296	3	0.099	0.602	0.616
	Within groups	11.334	69	0.164		
	Total	11.630	72			
Students' confidence & Participation	Between groups	0.398	3	0.133	0.660	0.580
	Within groups	13.868	69	0.201		
	Total	14.266	72			
Advantages of non-traditional techniques	Between groups	0.154	3	0.051	0.353	0.787
	Within groups	10.051	69	0.146		
	Total	10.205	72			
Fostering Interaction	Between groups	0.240	3	0.080	0.415	0.743
	Within groups	13.332	69	0.193		
	Total	13.573	72			
Total score	Between groups	0.143	3	0.048	0.514	0.674
	Within groups	6.417	69	0.093		
	Total	6.560	72			

\*Significant at ( $\alpha= 0.05$ )

Table (14) shows that there are no significant differences at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) between the means of students' perceptions of the effectiveness of using non-traditional techniques to improve oral communication skills due to Previous linguistic background.

## Discussion and Conclusions

The present study aimed at investigating students' perceptions of the effectiveness of using non-traditional techniques to improve oral communication skills and exploring the effect of students' level and their Cumulative Grade-Point Average on these perceptions. The results revealed that the total score of the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of using non-traditional techniques achieved a mean of (4.37) and a percentage of (87.4) which indicates a very high level

of effectiveness. Moreover, the results showed no significant differences at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) between the means of students' perceptions due to students' level, previous linguistic background and Cumulative Grade-Average in all domains except the total score.

These results indicate that the majority of students benefited from using non-traditional techniques regardless their level, previous linguistic background and their cumulative grade-Average. This might be explained by the idea that the students were given equal opportunities to speak the language and to choose topics and materials that suit their abilities and interests.

### **Recommendations**

- 1- It may be helpful to videotape both the students' first presentations and the improved presentations so that students may re-examine the changes and avoid what should be avoided.
- 2- It is preferable if the teachers of this course emphasize the use of the so-called Edutainment approach that blends education with entertainment to make learning the language more enjoyable and a favorable experience as such approach can increase students' interests and feelings.
- 3-The so-called Suggestopedia approach is better recommended as it suits such course as it emphasizes the use of music, games, physical movements.
- 4-It is advisable if the students cooperate outside the classroom to arrange for pair and group presentations and activities so as to save time.
- 5-Students should be provided with more and more opportunities to practice oral communication skills inside and outside the classroom and in natural and meaningful situations.

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