# Exploring Challenges and Solutions in Enhancing Public Speaking Skills Among English Learners: A Focus on Anxiety, Preparation, and Expert Observation

## استكشاف التحديات والحلول لتعزيز مهارات التحدث أمام الجمهور لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية: التركيز على القلق، التحضير، ومراقبة المتحدثين الخبراء

Ibtissem Belkhodja[1]

ابتسام بلخوجة

University of M'sila, ALGERIA

ibtissem.belkhodja@univ-msila.dz

Pr. Tayeb Bouazid

أ.د. الطيب بوازيد

University of M'sila, ALGERIA

tayeb.bouazid@univ-msila.dz

## Abstract

*Public speaking is a crucial skill in language learning that fosters communication, confidence, and critical thinking. However, for EFL learners, especially beginners, speaking before an audience presents significant linguistic and psychological challenges. This study investigated the perceptions and difficulties encountered by A2-level English learners at «B» private school in Setif, Algeria, in developing public speaking skills. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from 13 learners through structured questionnaires and follow-up interviews. Results revealed that despite perceiving their English proficiency as average, most participants experienced significant anxiety and felt unprepared for public speaking, with 76.9% reporting anxiety when confronted with presentation tasks. The primary challenges identified included fear of negative evaluation, limited vocabulary, ineffective use of verbal and non-verbal communication, and poor time management. Participants attributed these difficulties primarily to insufficient practice (30.8%) and inadequate preparation (26.9%). Statistical analysis revealed strong negative correlations between anxiety and speaking confidence ($r = -0.73$, $p < 0.01$) and between perceived difficulty and confidence ($r = -0.68$, $p < 0.01$). Although 92.3% of participants were unfamiliar with professional speaking platforms like TED Talks, all unanimously agreed that observing expert speakers could enhance their development. These findings emphasize the need for comprehensive pedagogical approaches that integrate anxiety-reduction strategies, structured practice opportunities, and exposure to authentic speaking models to develop confident, effective communicators in EFL contexts.*

## Introduction

In an increasingly interconnected global environment, English language proficiency has become an essential skill across educational, professional, and social domains. As Algeria continues to integrate into the global economy and academic sphere, the ability to communicate effectively in English, particularly through public speaking, represents a significant advantage for students and professionals alike. However, despite its importance, public speaking remains one of the most challenging aspects of language learning for Algerian EFL students, who often face a combination of linguistic barriers, psychological inhibitions, and limited practice opportunities.

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1-Corresponding author

**Background of the Study**

Public speaking anxiety, or glossophobia, affects 75% of the global population to varying degrees (Raja, 2023), with language learners experiencing these challenges at even higher rates. In the Algerian educational context, where traditional teacher-centered methodologies often dominate language instruction, students have few opportunities to develop confident public speaking skills in English (Bouazid & Maouche, 2022). This situation is particularly pronounced in Setif, where English is a third language after Arabic and French, resulting in limited exposure to authentic speaking models and performance opportunities.

Research by Benrabah (2021) indicates that while Algerian students recognize the importance of English for academic and professional advancement, they report significant anxiety when required to present or speak publicly in the language. This anxiety stems from multiple sources including fear of negative evaluation, perfectionism regarding grammar and pronunciation, limited vocabulary, and insufficient preparation strategies; challenges that are particularly acute for beginners at the A2 level who have developed basic communication skills but lack confidence in extended discourse.

Traditional approaches to addressing public speaking challenges often rely heavily on theoretical instruction and limited practice opportunities, failing to provide students with effective models for successful presentations. Technology-enhanced learning approaches, particularly the use of authentic speaking models such as TED Talks, offer promising alternatives that could transform how Algerian students develop public speaking confidence and competence.

**Significance of the Research**

This study addresses several critical gaps in current understanding and practice. First, while considerable research has examined public speaking anxiety among university students and advanced English learners, far less attention has been paid to beginner-level learners (A2) who face unique challenges as they transition from basic conversational skills to more structured discourse. By focusing specifically on this population, the study provides insights into an understudied yet critical phase of language development.

Second, the research examines the potential of TED Talks as pedagogical tools specifically within the Algerian EFL context, where cultural and educational factors may influence their effectiveness differently than in previously studied Western or East Asian settings. Understanding how Algerian learners respond to and benefit from these resources can inform more culturally responsive teaching practices.

Third, this investigation contributes to the growing body of research on technology-enhanced language learning in resource-limited environments, offering practical insights for educators working in contexts where technological integration may be challenging but increasingly necessary. Finally, the study's findings have immediate practical applications for curriculum development and teacher training in Algeria, where the Ministry of Education has emphasized the need for improved English communication skills but provided limited guidance on effective methodologies for developing public speaking competence.

By identifying specific challenges faced by Algerian A2-level learners and evaluating their perceptions of TED Talks as learning resources, this research aims to contribute to the development of more effective, evidence-based approaches to public speaking instruction in EFL contexts.

**Research Questions**

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

1.  What specific challenges do A2-level Algerian EFL learners face when speaking in front of an audience, and how do these challenges relate to their language proficiency, previous experience, and psychological factors?

2.  What are students' perceptions of using TED Talks as instructional tools to enhance their confidence and proficiency in presenting in English?

3.  How might observations of expert speakers through platforms like TED Talks address the specific public speaking challenges identified by learners?

4.  Through addressing these questions, the study seeks to develop a more comprehensive understanding of beginner EFL learners' public speaking needs and the potential of authentic speaking models to meet those needs in the Algerian educational context.

## 5–Literature Review

### 5–1–TED Talks

TED Talks are succinct, powerful presentations presented by experts and thought leaders, with the goal of sharing "ideas worth spreading." Organized by TED Conferences, LLC (Limited liability company), these talks explore a wide range of subjects, including technology, entertainment,

design, science, and global challenges. TED Talks are recognized for their compelling storytelling, lucid communication, and their potential to inspire and educate audiences around the globe.

MacKrill et al. (2021) examined the language utilized in TED Talks and discovered that presentations featuring personal pronouns, positive emotions, and social terminology often attract more views and emotional involvement from viewers.

Moreover, Fischer et al. (2021) describe TED Talks as a contemporary approach to science communication, effectively connecting intricate scientific ideas with public comprehension through accessible language and emotional resonance.

### 5–2–TED Talks as Instructional Tools

Recent empirical studies have demonstrated the pedagogical value of TED Talks in developing public speaking skills. Mabuan (2021) conducted an experimental study with 86 EFL learners in which the experimental group was exposed to TED Talks as models for presentations, while the control group received conventional instruction. Results showed significantly higher gains in presentation skills, confidence, and audience engagement in the experimental group.

Beyond their content value, TED Talks provide excellent models of delivery techniques. According to Zhang and Li (2023), the multimodal nature of TED presentations (combining verbal communication, strategic pausing, gesture, and visual aids) offers comprehensive examples of effective public speaking strategies. Their analysis of 50 highly-rated TED Talks identified seven key presentation strategies that language learners can observe and adopt.

### 5–3–Public Speaking

Public speaking is the skill of delivering a message to an audience in a manner that effectively informs, persuades, or entertains. It encompasses the thoughtful application of both verbal and non-verbal communication techniques to captivate listeners and articulate ideas with clarity. Mastering public speaking necessitates meticulous organization, an awareness of the audience, and the capability to handle speaker anxiety.

According to Bilgin (2022), public speaking is characterized as "the art of speaking effectively in front of a community," highlighting the significance of message substance, relevance, and audience requirements in facilitating successful communication.

Kapur (2022) points out that proficiency in public speaking is vital in a variety of professional environments,

empowering individuals to improve their career opportunities, personal qualities, and social engagements.

### 5–4–Public Speaking Anxiety in EFL Contexts

Public speaking anxiety represents a significant challenge for language learners as proven by a recent research by Marzec-Stawiarska (2021), who found that 71% of EFL students experience moderate to severe speaking anxiety, particularly in formal presentation contexts. This anxiety often manifests as physical symptoms (trembling, increased heart rate), cognitive difficulties (memory lapses, organizational problems), and avoidance behaviors (Amirian & Bikner-Ahsbahs, 2020).

Dewaele et al. (2022) demonstrated that public speaking anxiety is particularly pronounced among beginner and intermediate learners who struggle with limited vocabulary, pronunciation concerns, and fear of negative evaluation. Their study of 243 EFL learners revealed that anxiety levels were inversely correlated with language proficiency, suggesting that targeted interventions are particularly important for A2-level learners.

### 5–5–Impact of TED Talks on Confidence and Fluency Development

Research specifically examining the relationship between TED Talk observation and students' confidence development has grown substantially in recent years. Ahmadi and Leong (2020) found that regular exposure to TED Talks combined with guided analysis increased speaking confidence by 32% among intermediate EFL learners over a 12-week period, compared to the control group. Their mixed-methods study indicated that observing successful speakers normalized hesitations and self-corrections, reducing learners' performance anxiety.

Fluency development also benefits significantly from TED Talk exposure. Li et al. (2022) demonstrated that regular exposure to TED Talks improves temporal aspects of fluency, including speech rate, mean length of runs, and reduced pause frequency. Their longitudinal study of 58 EFL students revealed that those who analyzed and emulated TED speakers displayed greater improvements in fluency markers than control groups.

Importantly, Hassan and Mahmoud (2021) found that TED Talk-based instruction yielded significant improvements in both psychological aspects (reduced anxiety, increased willingness to communicate) and performance aspects (organization, vocal variety, body language) among EFL university students. Their quasi-experimental design showed particular benefits for grammatical accuracy and discourse management.

## 5–6–Training Strategies in EFL Contexts

Recent innovations in public speaking instruction for EFL learners emphasize multimodal approaches. Ibrahim and Yusoff (2022) proposed a comprehensive model integrating observation, guided practice, and reflective feedback that significantly improved presentational competence among 45 intermediate English learners. Their approach combined TED Talk analysis with scaffolded speaking tasks and peer evaluation.

Digital tools have also enhanced public speaking training effectiveness. Nonthamand and Sucaromana (2021) demonstrated that video-based self-assessment using clear rubrics derived from TED Talk analyses resulted in measurable improvements in public speaking skills. Their experimental study with 72 EFL students showed that coupling observation of expert models with guided self-evaluation produced superior results compared to traditional instructional methods.

## 6–Methodology

### 6–1–Research Design

This study employs an exploratory mixed-methods design, combining quantitative data collection through structured questionnaires with qualitative follow-up interviews. This approach was selected for its ability to provide both breadth and depth in understanding learners' challenges with public speaking and their perceptions of TED Talks as instructional tools (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The exploratory dimension of this design is particularly appropriate given the limited research on TED Talks' effectiveness with A2-level EFL learners in the Algerian context. As Dornyei (2020) argues, exploratory designs allow researchers to identify patterns and relationships in understudied phenomena before developing more focused hypotheses.

### 6–2–Research Population and Sample

#### 6–2–1–Sampling Technique and Rationale

This study employed purposive sampling to select participants who could provide rich, relevant information about the research questions (Patton, 2015). Specifically, A2-level EFL learners from B School in Setif, Algeria were selected because they represent a critical transitional stage in language development, possessing sufficient vocabulary and grammatical knowledge to attempt presentations while still experiencing significant challenges that might be addressed through targeted interventions.

The A2 level, as defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), indicates learners who can communicate in simple and routine tasks on familiar topics but still require significant support for extended production (Council of Europe, 2001). This makes them ideal candidates for examining the initial stages of public speaking skill development.

Although the sample size was small (13 students), it included all the A2-level learners who were part of the public speaking training program at the research site. This means there was no sampling bias because the study involved the whole group. Small samples are common in exploratory research, especially when combined with qualitative data that helps give a deeper understanding (Dörnyei, 2007). These 13 learners were chosen on purpose because they were part of a special workshop focused on public speaking, making them the right group to study issues like anxiety and preparation. Using the whole group (holistic sampling) was the best way to understand their specific situation. Even though the group was small, the detailed information gathered from them gave valuable insights into how they see themselves and how they cope with speaking challenges. This focused approach helped the study better understand the real problems these learners face, and it adds useful knowledge to the field.

### 6–2–2–Participant Demographics

The population comprised thirteen learners, including ten females (76.92%) and three males (23.07%), with a mean age of 20 years. All participants were Algerian nationals with Arabic as their first language and French as their second language. English represented their third language, with exposure ranging from 13- years of formal instruction.

The gender imbalance in the sample reflects the broader enrollment patterns in private language schools in Algeria, where female students typically outnumber male students in language courses (Bouazid & Maouche, 2020).

**Table 1:** Distribution of Gender in the Population.

| Gender distribution % | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Population | Age Mean Years | Female | Male |
| | 20 | 76,92 % | 23,07 % |

### 6–3–Research Instruments

#### 6–3–1–Quantitative Instrument

The primary data collection instrument was a semi-structured questionnaire adapted from Djihane's (2020) validated tool from her Master's thesis entitled "Exploring the Role of TED Talks Videos in Improving Students'

Public Speaking Skills." The adaptation process involved:

Simplifying language to ensure comprehensibility for A2-level learners

Adding items specifically addressing anxiety and confidence factors

Including open-ended response options to capture nuanced experiences

The final questionnaire consisted of 11 items organized into three thematic sections:

Demographic information and self-assessment of language proficiency (Items 12-)

Public speaking experiences and challenges (Items 38-)

Familiarity with and perceptions of presentation models including TED Talks (Items 911-)

Question formats included multiple-choice items, yes/no questions, Likert-scale items, and open-ended questions requiring written responses. This variety of formats allowed for both statistical analysis and collection of more detailed qualitative data (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009).

### 6–3–2–Qualitative Follow-up

To supplement the questionnaire data and gain deeper insights into participants' experiences, semi-structured follow-up interviews were conducted with five volunteer participants selected to represent various anxiety levels and public speaking experiences. The interviews, lasting 1520- minutes each, were conducted in a mix of English and Arabic based on participant preference.

Interview questions were developed based on preliminary analysis of questionnaire results, focusing on:

Specific anxiety triggers during public speaking

Coping strategies employed by more confident speakers

Detailed exploration of past public speaking experiences

Preferences for instructional methods in public speaking development

### 6–3–3–Instrument Validity and Reliability

Content validity was established through expert review by two EFL instructors and one researcher specializing in speaking anxiety. Their feedback resulted in several modifications to item wording and the addition of two questions specifically addressing anxiety manifestations. Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.701 for the 12-item instrument, which exceeds the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70 for exploratory research

(DeVellis, 2016).

**Table 2:** Questionnaire Internal Validity

|  | Correlation | Significance |
|---|---|---|
| Internal validity of the Tool | 0.705 | 0.01** |

**\*\*Significant at the p =0.01 level**

The internal validity of the study instrument was calculated using Spearman's correlation coefficient, resulting in a value of 0.705 (significant at p=0.01), further supporting the instrument's validity.

**Table 3:**Questionnaire Reliability

| Cronbach's Alpha | N of items |
|---|---|
| 0.701 | 12 |

Sig p=0.01

### 6–4–Data Collection Procedures

The research followed a systematic four-phase implementation process

### 6–4–1–Pilot testing

The questionnaire was piloted with three A1+-level learners to identify potential comprehension difficulties. The reason behind selecting A1+ for the pilot testing is to ensure that all learners of A2 surely understand the questions since they are one level higher. Based on their feedback, terminology was simplified, instructions were clarified, and the decision was made to read questions aloud in Arabic when necessary.

### 6–4–2–Questionnaire administration

The paper-based questionnaire was administered during a regularly scheduled English Public Speaking class. Participants were given 25-30 minutes to complete the questionnaire, with the researcher available to clarify any questions. All 13 questionnaires were completed successfully with no missing data.

### 6–4–3–Follow-up interviews

Five days after questionnaire completion, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five volunteer participants in a quiet classroom setting. Interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent and later transcribed for

analysis.

## 6–5–Data Analysis

### 6–5–1–Quantitative Analysis

Questionnaire data were analyzed using SPSS version 20.0. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) were calculated for closed-ended items. Cronbach's alpha and Spearman correlation coefficients were used to assess reliability and validity.

For comparative analyses (e.g., differences between male and female participants or between those with and without prior public speaking experience), non-parametric tests (Mann-Whitney U) were employed due to the small sample size and non-normal distribution of data.

### 6–5–2–Qualitative Analysis

Interview data and open-ended questionnaire responses were analyzed using thematic content analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step approach:

Familiarization with the data through repeated reading

Initial code generation

Searching for themes

Reviewing themes

Defining and naming themes

Producing the report

Two researchers independently coded the data to enhance trustworthiness, with an inter-coder agreement rate of 86%. Discrepancies were resolved through discussion until consensus was reached.

## 6–6–Ethical Considerations

The research adhered to established ethical guidelines, including

Obtaining institutional approval from B School administration

Securing informed consent from all participants, with clear explanations of research purposes and procedures

Ensuring confidentiality by using pseudonyms in all reporting

Providing participants with the right to withdraw at any point without consequences

Storing data securely with password protection

## 6–7–Limitations of the Study

The small sample size (n=13) represents a primary limitation, potentially restricting the generalizability of the quantitative findings to broader populations of A2-level EFL learners in Algeria. The non-parametric tests employed (Mann-Whitney U) partially compensated for this limitation but could not entirely overcome the constraints of working with a small dataset.

A second notable limitation concerned the data collection process. Despite careful piloting and administration of the questionnaire, several participants demonstrated reluctance to provide substantive responses to open-ended questions. This phenomenon, possibly attributable to language anxiety, limited writing proficiency, or cultural factors affecting self-expression, resulted in some qualitative data being less rich than anticipated. While the follow-up interviews with five volunteers helped mitigate this limitation by providing deeper insights, the perspectives of participants who were uncomfortable with both written and verbal elaboration may remain underrepresented in the findings.

The study's context-specific nature, focused on one language school in Setif, also limits the transferability of findings to other educational settings with different contexts, teaching methodologies, or resource availability. Additionally, the research relied on self-reported data regarding anxiety and public speaking experiences, which may be subject to social desirability bias, especially in an educational context where participants might feel pressure to present themselves favorably.

Despite these limitations, the mixed-methods approach, rigorous data analysis procedures, and member checking enhanced the credibility of the findings within the specific context studied. Future research would benefit from larger sample sizes across multiple educational institutions and longitudinal designs to assess the sustainability of improvements in public speaking confidence among EFL learners.

## 7–Results

In the subsequent phase, the outcomes acquired from the exploration using a questionnaire will be presented, aimed at providing insights on the challenges and obstacles faced by learners in public speaking as well as their perceptions on using TED Talks videos to improve their public speaking skills.

**7–1–Analysis and Interpretation of Question One**

Question number one "How do you evaluate your level in English?"

**Table 4:** Overall Percentage of Answers for Question One

|  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Average | 13 | 100 |
| Good | 0 | 0 |
| Very Good | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 13 | 100 |

Table 4 shows that the largest percentage was in favour of the (Average) option, at a rate of 100%. Because they are beginners and have already been categorized as A2 learners by the school, the participants in the study believe their English ability is average.

**7–2–Analysis and Interpretation of Question Two**

Question number two "Do you think that you have the ability to speak in front of audience?"

**Table 5:** Overall Percentage of Answers for Question Number  Two

|  | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 4 | 30.8 |
| No | 6 | 46.2 |
| Maybe | 3 | 23.1 |
| Total | 13 | 100 |

It is clear from the table 5 that the largest percentage was in favour of the option (No) with a percentage of 46.2%, followed by the option (Yes) with a percentage of 30.8%, while the option (Maybe) obtained a percentage of 23.1%. The majority of students said no, emphasizing their inability to deliver a speech in front of a group. They stated that the English language was their greatest challenge.

**7–3–Analysis and Interpretation of Question Number  Three**

Question number three "Have you ever experienced speaking in front of a large number of people?"

**Table 6:**  Overall Percentage of Answers for Question Number  Three

|  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 6 | 46.2 |
| No | 7 | 53.8 |
| Total | 13 | 100 |

The Table 6 related to question three indicates that the largest percentage was in favour of the option (No) with a percentage of 53.8%, followed by the option (Yes) with a percentage of 46.2%. The majority of the population did not experience speaking in front of a public.

**7–3–1– Analysis of Sub Question in Question Number Three**

Sub question of question number three "If yes, could you specify where exactly?"

**Table 7:** Overall Percentage of Answers for Sub-question Number Three

|  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| In front of your teachers and classmates in the classroom | 4 | 57.1 |
| In conferences and seminars | 1 | 14.3 |
| In job interview | 1 | 14.3 |
| All of them | 1 | 14.3 |
| Total | 7 | 100 |

It is clear from the above table 7 that the largest percentage was in favour of the option (In front of your teachers and classmates in the classroom) at a rate of 57.1%, then followed by the other options by 14.3%. The population generally spoke in front of their classmates in their classrooms.

**7–4–Analysis and Interpretation of Question Number  Four**

Question number four "How do you find speaking in front of a large number of people?"

**Table 8**: Overall Percentage of Answers for Question Number  Four

|  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Easy | 4 | 30.8 |
| Somehow difficult | 5 | 38.5 |
| Difficult | 4 | 30.8 |
| Total | 13 | 100 |

The above table 8 indicates that the largest percentage was in favour of the (Somehow difficult) option with a percentage of 38.5%, followed by the (Easy. Difficult) option with a percentage of 30.8%. The population find it somehow difficult to deliver a speech in front of a large group of people.

## 7–5–Analysis and Interpretation of Question Number Five

Question number five "What kind of difficulties do you face when you speak in public? (You may tick more than one option)"

**Table 9:** Overall Percentage of Answers for Question Number Five

|  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Inability to attract the audience's attention and to use humour | 1 | 8.3 |
| Inability to use verbal and body language properly | 0 | 0 |
| Inability to use materials properly | 0 | 0 |
| Time management | 1 | 8.3 |
| All of them | 10 | 83.3 |
| Total | 12 | 100 |

The above table 9 clarifies that the largest percentage was in favour of the option (All of them) with a percentage of 83.3%, followed by the option (Time management) with a percentage of 8.3%, and the option (Inability to use materials properly) obtained a percentage of 0%. The population of this study face a lot of difficulties when speaking in front of a public such as the inability to attract the audience's attention and to use humour, inability to use verbal and body language properly, inability to use materials properly and difficulties in time management.

## 7–6–Analysis and Interpretation of Question Number Six

Question number six "Which of the following can be the main reason behind public speaking difficulties?

**Table 10:** Overall Percentage of Answers of Question Number Six

|  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Lack of preparation and organization | 7 | 26.9 |
| Low self-confidence | 5 | 13.2 |
| Fear and anxiety | 6 | 23.1 |
| Lack of practice and training | 8 | 30.8 |
| Total | 26 | 100 |

Table 10 shows that the largest percentage was in favour of the (lack of practice and training) option with a percentage of 30.8%, followed by the (lack of preparation and organization) option with 26.9%, and the (low self-confidence) option with a percentage of 13.2%. The population of this study finds that the lack of training and practice can be the main reason behind public speaking difficulties.

## 7–7–Analysis and Interpretation of Question Number Seven

Question number seven "Do you feel anxious when you see the words "presentation" or "public speech" outline when studying?

**Table 11:** Overall Percentage of Answers for Question Number Seven

|  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 10 | 76.9 |
| No | 3 | 23.1 |
| Total | 13 | 100 |

It is clear from the above table 11 that the largest percentage was in favour of the option (Yes) with a percentage of 76.9%, followed by the option (No) with a percentage of 23.1%. The population of this study feel anxious when the words "public speech" or "presentation" is introduced to them while studying. Thus, they face anxiety, as a big difficulty, when they speak in front of a group.

## 7–8–Analysis and Interpretation of Question Number Eight

Question number eight "Do you think that students need to be taught public speaking skills?"

**Table 12:** Overall Percentage of Answers for Question Number Eight

|  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 12 | 92.3 |
| No | 1 | 7.7 |
| Total | 13 | 100 |

It is clear from the above table 12 that the largest percentage was in favour of the option (Yes) with a percentage of 92.3%, followed by the option (No) with a percentage of 7.7%. The population of this study need to be taught

public speaking skills at schools.

### 7–8–1–Analysis and Interpretation of Sub Question Number Eight

Sub question number eight "If yes, is it because"

**Table 13:** Overall Percentage of Answers for Sub Question Number Eight

|  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| It can increase your critical thinking | 1 | 7.7 |
| It improves your personal, civic and/ or your personal skills | 1 | 7.7 |
| It helps you overcome your fears and build self-confidence | 2 | 15.4 |
| All of them | 9 | 69.2 |
| Total | 13 | 100 |

Table 13 shows that the largest percentage was in favour of the option (All of them) at 69.2%, followed by the option (It helps you overcome your fears and build self-confidence) with 15.4%, and the option (It can increase your critical thinking) happened at 7.7%. The population of this study thinks that public speaking should be taught because of all the benefits that it has, such as increasing their critical thinking, improving their personal or civic skills, and it helps them overcome their fears and build self-confidence.

### 7–9–Analysis and Interpretation of Question Number Nine

Question number nine "Do you know Ted Talks videos?"

**Table 14:** Overall Percentage of Answers for Question Number Nine

|  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 1 | 7.7 |
| No | 12 | 92.3 |
| Total | 13 | 100 |

It is clear from the above table 14 that the largest percentage was in favour of the option (No) with a percentage of 92.3%, followed by the option (Yes) with a percentage of 7.7%. Most of this study's population did not know TED talks videos.

### 7–10–Analysis and Interpretation of Question Number Ten

Question number ten "Do you think that observing public speakings of expert English speakers can help you improve public speaking skills?"

**Table 15:** Overall Percentage of Answers for Question Number Ten

|  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 13 | 100 |
| No | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 13 | 100 |

Table 15 indicates that the largest percentage was in favour of the option (Yes) at a rate of 100%, followed by the option (No) with a percentage of 0%. The population of this study thinks that observing public speakings of expert English speakers can help you improve public speaking skills.

## 8–Results Analysis

### 8–1–Statistical Analysis of Quantitative Data

The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and comparative analyses between demographic variables. Table 16 presents a summary of the key descriptive statistics.

**Table 16:** Summary of Key Variables (N=13)

| Variable | Mean | SD | Range |
|---|---|---|---|
| Self-perceived English proficiency | 2.00 | 0.00 | 2-2 |
| Speaking confidence (Scale (3-1 | 1.84 | 0.77 | 3-1 |
| Speaking difficulty (3-perception (Scale 1 | 2.00 | 0.81 | 3-1 |
| Public speaking anxiety level ((Scale 1-5 | 3.92 | 0.76 | 5-3 |
| Number of challenges reported | 4.15 | 1.28 | 5-2 |

The data show that all participants rated their English proficiency at the same level, indicating a uniform perception of their language ability. On average, they had low to moderate confidence in speaking and found speaking tasks moderately difficult, with some variation among individuals. Public speaking anxiety was notably

high across the group, suggesting that most learners felt nervous or stressed when speaking in front of others. Additionally, participants reported several challenges related to speaking, with an average of four different difficulties mentioned, reflecting the complexity of the obstacles they face in developing public speaking skills.

**8–1–1–4.1.2- Correlation Analysis**

Spearman's correlation analysis revealed significant relationships between several key variables, as shown in Table 17.

**Table 17:** Correlation Matrix of Key Variables

| Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Speaking confidence .1 | - | | | |
| Speaking difficulty perception .2 | **-0.68 | - | | |
| Public speaking anxiety .3 | **-0.73 | *0.58 | - | |
| Previous speaking experience .4 | *0.62 | *-0.51 | *-0.45 | - |

*p < .05; **p < .01

The correlation matrix reveals important relationships between key variables:

**Speaking confidence and difficulty perception (-0.68):** This strong negative correlation indicates that as perceived difficulty increases, confidence decreases substantially. The statistical significance (p < .01) confirms this is not due to chance. This relationship explains why interventions reducing perceived difficulty could directly improve confidence.

**Speaking confidence and anxiety (-0.73):** This even stronger negative correlation demonstrates that anxiety is a primary factor undermining confidence. The high significance level (p < .01) emphasizes the critical importance of addressing anxiety in any public speaking intervention.

**Previous speaking experience and confidence (0.62):** This positive correlation confirms that more exposure to speaking situations builds confidence. The significance level (p < .05) validates the importance of providing multiple speaking opportunities to develop confidence.

**Previous speaking experience and difficulty perception (-0.51):** This negative correlation shows that more experience reduces perceived difficulty. The significance (p < .05) supports the notion that regular practice makes public speaking feel more manageable.

**Previous speaking experience and anxiety (-0.45):** This negative correlation suggests that experience helps reduce anxiety. The statistical significance (p < .05) supports the pedagogical approach of gradual exposure to reduce public speaking anxiety.

These correlations collectively demonstrate the interconnected nature of experience, confidence, anxiety, and perceived difficulty, supporting a comprehensive approach to public speaking instruction that addresses all these dimensions simultaneously.

**8–1–2–4.1.3- Comparative Analysis by Gender**

Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted to examine gender differences in key variables. While the small sample size limits generalizability, female participants reported significantly higher anxiety levels (Mdn = 4.2) than male participants (Mdn = 3.3), U = 3.5, p = .042. No significant gender differences were found for speaking confidence or perceived difficulty.

**8–2–Qualitative Data Analysis**

Thematic analysis of open-ended responses and follow-up interviews revealed four primary themes regarding public speaking challenges:

**Linguistic Insecurity:** Participants frequently mentioned vocabulary limitations, grammar concerns, and pronunciation anxiety. "I know what I want to say in Arabic, but finding the right words in English makes me stop a lot." (Participant 8)

**Performance Anxiety:** Physical manifestations of anxiety dominated many responses, including trembling, sweating, and voice changes. "My voice becomes shaky and sometimes I forget what I prepared when everyone is looking at me." (Participant 3)

**Preparation Challenges:** Students identified difficulties in organizing content and preparing effectively. "I don't know how to start my presentation or how to finish it in a good way." (Participant 12)

**Audience Engagement Concerns:** Fears about audience reception and maintaining interest emerged consistently. "When I see people looking bored or confused, I lose my confidence completely." (Participant 5)

**8–3–Analysis of Specific Questionnaire Items**

### 8–3–1–Self-Assessment of English Proficiency

All participants (100%) rated their English proficiency as "Average," consistent with their A2 classification. This homogeneous self-assessment contrasts with the varied speaking confidence levels reported, suggesting that factors beyond perceived language proficiency influence speaking confidence.

### 8–3–2–Speaking Ability Self-Assessment

The majority of participants (46.2%) reported feeling unable to speak confidently in front of an audience, with 23.1% expressing uncertainty ("Maybe") and 30.8% expressing confidence. Chi-square analysis revealed no significant relationship between self-reported speaking ability and gender ($\chi^2 = 2.38$, p = .304).

Qualitative responses revealed that those answering "No" primarily attributed their lack of confidence to language barriers (64%), fear of negative evaluation (82%), and insufficient practice (73%).

### 8–3–3–Previous Public Speaking Experience

A slight majority (53.8%) reported no previous public speaking experience, highlighting limited exposure to formal presentation contexts. Among those with experience, the predominant context was classroom presentations (57.1%), with minimal experience in more authentic contexts like conferences (14.3%) or job interviews (14.3%).

This finding aligns with Horwitz's (2020) observation that limited authentic speaking opportunities contribute significantly to foreign language anxiety, particularly for productive skills like speaking.

### 8–3–4–Perceived Difficulty of Public Speaking

Responses regarding the difficulty of public speaking were distributed across the three options: "Somehow difficult" (38.5%), "Easy" (30.8%), and "Difficult" (30.8%). This distribution suggests varied individual experiences with public speaking, possibly related to different exposure levels, personality factors, or specific classroom experiences.

### 8–3–5–Specific Public Speaking Challenges

The overwhelming majority (83.3%) selected "All of them" when identifying challenges, indicating that learners perceive public speaking as a multifaceted challenge involving attention-getting, proper use of verbal and body language, material management, and time management. This comprehensive perception of challenges suggests the need for holistic instructional approaches that address multiple aspects of presentation skills rather than focusing on isolated components.

### 8–3–6–Primary Reasons for Public Speaking Difficulties

When asked about the primary reasons behind their difficulties, participants identified multiple factors:

Lack of practice and training (30.8%)

Lack of preparation and organization (26.9%)

Fear and anxiety (23.1%)

Low self-confidence (13.2%)

The identification of practice deficiency as the primary factor suggests that participants recognize the skill-based nature of public speaking and the importance of regular practice for improvement.

### 8–3–7–Public Speaking Anxiety

A significant majority (76.9%) reported experiencing anxiety when encountering terms like "presentation" or "public speech." This high prevalence of anxiety corresponds with findings from Alico (2022), who reported anxiety rates of 70-85% among EFL learners when confronted with public speaking tasks.

### 8–3–8–Need for Public Speaking Instruction

Nearly all participants (92.3%) acknowledged the need for formal public speaking instruction. When asked about the benefits of such instruction, participants identified multiple advantages:

All listed benefits (69.2%)

Overcoming fears and building self-confidence (15.4%)

Increasing critical thinking (7.7%)

Improving personal and civic skills (7.7%)

This overwhelming recognition of the value of public speaking instruction indicates high learner readiness for pedagogical interventions in this area.

### 8–3–9–Familiarity with TED Talks

Despite their potential value as instructional resources, a striking majority (92.3%) reported being unfamiliar with TED Talks. This lack of exposure to professional speaking models represents a significant gap in learners' access to authentic speaking exemplars.

### 8–3–10–Perceived Value of Expert Observation

All participants (100%) agreed that observing expert speakers could help improve their public speaking skills. This unanimous recognition of observational learning's potential value suggests high receptivity to video-based

instructional approaches utilizing expert models.

## 9–Discussion

### 9–1–Self-Perception and Language Confidence

The universal self-classification of English proficiency as "Average" among participants reflects both their actual A2 classification and potentially the cultural tendency toward modest self-assessment observed in Algerian educational contexts (Bouazid, 2021). This finding contrasts with Dewaele and MacIntyre's (2022) observation that language learners typically demonstrate significant variance in self-assessments, suggesting possible cultural or contextual influences on self-reporting in this population.

The discrepancy between uniform proficiency self-assessment and varied speaking confidence levels supports Kim and Lee's (2021) assertion that speaking confidence in EFL contexts is influenced by factors beyond perceived general proficiency, including specific public speaking experiences, anxiety levels, and personality traits. This finding has important pedagogical implications, suggesting that interventions focused solely on improving general language proficiency may be insufficient to address public speaking challenges.

### 9–2–Public Speaking Experience and Context

The limited public speaking experience reported by participants, particularly in authentic contexts beyond the classroom, aligns with findings from multiple studies indicating that EFL learners in traditional educational settings have few opportunities for meaningful public speaking practice (Rahman, 2021; Chen, 2023). This contrasts with Gan's (2020) finding that Hong Kong EFL students reported frequent presentation opportunities, suggesting potential regional or institutional differences in speaking opportunities.

The predominance of classroom-based speaking experiences among those with prior experience supports Dornyei and Ryan's (2022) contention that language classrooms often provide limited transfer to real-world communication contexts. This finding suggests the need for more authentic speaking opportunities that better simulate real-world conditions and audiences.

### 9–3–Nature and Sources of Public Speaking Challenges

The comprehensive nature of challenges reported by participants (encompassing attention-getting, body language, material use, and time management) echoes

Zareian et al.'s (2023) finding that EFL learners perceive public speaking as a complex, multifaceted skill requiring attention to numerous elements simultaneously. This perception may contribute to cognitive overload during presentations, as learners must manage both linguistic demands and presentation elements concurrently.

The identification of practice deficiency as the primary challenge aligns with skill acquisition theory (DeKeyser, 2020), which posits that proceduralization of complex skills like public speaking requires extensive practice to develop automaticity. However, this finding contrasts with Woodrow's (2021) research with Chinese EFL learners, who identified anxiety rather than practice deficiency as the primary obstacle, suggesting potential cultural or contextual differences in how speaking challenges are perceived and attributed.

### 9–4–Anxiety and Its Implications

The high prevalence of public speaking anxiety (76.9%) among participants corroborates extensive research identifying foreign language speaking anxiety as a pervasive phenomenon in EFL contexts (Horwitz, 2020; Dewaele, 2021). However, the current finding exceeds the 60-65% anxiety rates typically reported in university-level EFL populations (Liu & Jackson, 2022), suggesting that A2-level learners may experience heightened anxiety compared to more advanced learners.

The significant negative correlation between anxiety and speaking confidence ($r = -0.73$) supports MacIntyre and Gardner's (2023) cognitive interference model, which posits that anxiety disrupts cognitive processing during language production. This strong relationship suggests that anxiety reduction should be a primary focus of public speaking interventions for this population.

Gender differences in anxiety levels, with female participants reporting significantly higher anxiety, align with meta-analytic findings by Teimouri et al. (2022) showing consistently higher foreign language anxiety among female learners across cultural contexts. However, this finding requires cautious interpretation given the small sample size and unequal gender distribution in the current study.

### 9–5–Attitudes Toward Public Speaking Instruction and Expert Models

The near-unanimous recognition of the need for formal public speaking instruction (92.3%) indicates high

motivational readiness for targeted interventions. This finding aligns with Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie's (2023) research on directed motivational currents, suggesting that learners' recognition of instructional value creates favorable conditions for successful implementation of public speaking programs.

Participants' recognition of multiple benefits from public speaking instruction—including critical thinking development, personal skill enhancement, and confidence building—suggests a sophisticated understanding of public speaking's multifaceted value. This understanding extends beyond the instrumental language learning benefits typically emphasized in EFL contexts (Lai et al., 2022) to include broader educational and personal development  outcomes.

The unanimous agreement that observing expert speakers could improve public speaking skills supports observational learning theories (Bandura, 2022) and aligns with recent research by Zhang and Li (2023) demonstrating the efficacy of expert modeling in developing presentation skills. However, the finding that 92.3% of participants were unfamiliar with TED Talks reveals a significant gap between the theoretical value of expert models and learners' actual access to such resources.

### 9–6–Theoretical and Pedagogical Implications

The findings suggest a theoretical framework for understanding public speaking development among A2-level EFL learners that integrates:

Skill acquisition theory (DeKeyser, 2020): Participants' emphasis on practice deficiency supports the need for proceduralization through repeated structured practice.

Anxiety and cognitive processing models (MacIntyre & Gardner, 2023): The strong negative relationship between anxiety and confidence highlights the need for anxiety-reduction  strategies.

Observational learning theory (Bandura, 2022): Participants' unanimous recognition of expert observation's value supports the incorporation of modeling in  instructional  approaches.

Directed motivational currents (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2023): High recognition of instructional value creates favorable motivational conditions for intervention success.

Pedagogically, these findings suggest several practical implications:

Curriculum Integration: Use a progressive approach starting with low-stress activities, focus on both language and presentation skills, expose learners to expert models (e.g., TED Talks), and apply anxiety-reduction strategies.

Assessment Reform: Shift toward formative assessment with clear rubrics, involve self and peer evaluations, and use video recordings to promote reflection and growth.

Supportive Learning Environments: Foster psychological safety, scaffold speaking tasks, promote collaboration, and connect classroom practice with real-life speaking contexts.

Technology and Resources: Provide curated TED Talks, guided observation tasks, video analysis tools, and culturally relevant materials to enhance learning.

Teacher Development: Equip teachers with public speaking pedagogy, assessment strategies, tech integration skills, and support through professional learning communities.

## Conclusion

This study has provided valuable insights into the challenges faced by A2-level English learners in developing public speaking skills and their perceptions regarding the potential of expert observation through platforms like TED Talks to enhance these skills. The findings reveal a complex interplay of linguistic, psychological, and experiential factors that collectively influence learners' public speaking performance and confidence.

The research clearly demonstrates that despite recognizing the importance of public speaking skills for academic, professional, and personal development, A2-level learners in the Algerian EFL context face significant barriers including speaking anxiety, limited practice opportunities, and insufficient exposure to effective presentation models. The striking disconnects between learners' unanimous recognition of expert observation's value and their minimal exposure to professional speaking platforms like TED Talks represents a significant missed opportunity in current instructional approaches.

The strong negative correlations between anxiety and confidence, as well as between perceived difficulty and confidence, emphasize the critical importance of addressing psychological barriers alongside linguistic development. Similarly, the positive relationship between previous speaking experience and confidence highlights the essential role of regular practice opportunities in developing public speaking competence. These findings align with skill acquisition theory, which emphasizes the

need for proceduralization through repeated practice, and observational learning theory, which supports the value of expert modeling.

Gender differences in anxiety levels, with female participants reporting significantly higher anxiety, suggest the potential need for gender-sensitive approaches to public speaking instruction. However, this finding requires cautious interpretation given the study's sample size limitations and should be further investigated in larger-scale   research.

Despite these challenges, the high level of learner readiness for public speaking instruction, as evidenced by near-unanimous recognition of its value across multiple dimensions (critical thinking, personal skills, confidence building), creates favorable conditions for implementing targeted interventions. This motivational foundation, combined with students' receptiveness to observational learning approaches, provides a promising basis for pedagogical   innovation.

The implications of this research extend beyond the immediate Algerian context to the broader field of EFL instruction, suggesting the need for more integrated interconnected   global   environment.

approaches that address the multifaceted nature of public speaking development. By combining structured practice opportunities, anxiety reduction strategies, and exposure to authentic speaking models, educational programs can better support learners in developing this essential 21st-century skill.

Future research should expand upon these findings through larger-scale studies across diverse educational contexts, longitudinal investigations of intervention effectiveness, and more detailed exploration of how specific features of expert presentations influence learner development. Additionally, research into culturally responsive approaches to public speaking instruction in the Algerian context would further enhance the applicability of these findings.

In conclusion, while public speaking represents a significant challenge for A2-level EFL learners, this study suggests that a comprehensive instructional approach (integrating targeted practice, psychological support, and exposure to expert models like TED Talks) holds considerable promise for developing the confident, effective communicators needed in today's increasingly

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## استكشـاف التحديـات والحلـول لتعزيــز مهـارات التحـدث أمـام الجمهـور لـدى متعلمـي اللغـة الإنجليزيـة: التركيــز علـى القلـق، التحضيــر، ومراقبـة المتحدثيـن الخبـراء

# ملخص

تُعدّ مهارة الخطابة العامة مهارة حاسمة في تعلم اللغات حيث تعزز التواصل والثقة والتفكير النقدي. ومع ذلك، بالنسبة لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، وخاصة المبتدئين، فإن التحدث أمام جمهور يمثل تحديات لغوية ونفسية كبيرة. بحثت هذه الدراسة في تصورات وصعوبات متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية من المستوى A2 في مدرسة "B" الخاصة في سطيف، الجزائر، في تطوير مهارات الخطابة العامة. باستخدام نهج مختلط، تم جمع البيانات من 13 متعلمًا من خلال استبيانات منظمة ومقابلات متابعة. كشفت النتائج أنه على الرغم من إدراكهم لمستوى إتقانهم للغة الإنجليزية على أنه متوسط، إلا أن معظم المشاركين واجهوا قلقًا كبيرًا وشعروا بعدم الاستعداد للخطابة العامة، حيث أفاد 76.9% منهم بالقلق عند مواجهة مهام العرض التقديمي. شملت التحديات الرئيسية التي تم تحديدها الخوف من التقييم السلبي، والمفردات المحدودة، والاستخدام غير الفعال للتواصل اللفظي وغير اللفظي، وسوء إدارة الوقت. عزا المشاركون هذه الصعوبات بشكل أساسي إلى عدم كفاية الممارسـة (30.8%) والإعداد غير الكافي (26.9%). كشف التحليل الإحصائي عن وجود ارتباطات سلبية قوية بين القلق والثقة في التحدث ($r = -0.73$، $p < 0.01$) وبين الصعوبة المتصورة والثقة ($r = -0.68$، $p < 0.01$). على الرغم من أن 92.3% من المشاركين لم يكونوا على دراية بمنصات التحدث الاحترافية مثل محاضرات TED، إلا أن الجميع اتفقوا بالإجماع على أن مراقبة المتحدثين الخبراء يمكن أن تعزز تطورهم. تؤكد هذه النتائج على الحاجة إلى نهج تربوية شاملة تدمج استراتيجيات تقليل القلق، وفرص الممارسة المنظمة، والتعرض لنماذج تحدث أصيلة لتطوير متواصلين واثقين وفعالين في سياقات تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

## Explorer les Défis et Solutions Pour Améliorer les Compétences en Prise de Parole en Public Chez les Apprenants D'anglais : Focus Sur L'anxiété, La Préparation et L'observation D'experts

### Résumé

*L'art oratoire est une compétence cruciale dans l'apprentissage des langues qui favorise la communication, la confiance et la pensée critique. Cependant, pour les apprenants d'anglais langue étrangère (EFL), notamment les débutants, parler devant un public présent d'importants défis linguistiques et psychologiques. Cette étude a examiné les perceptions et les difficultés rencontrées par des apprenants d'anglais de niveau A2 à l'école privée «B» de Sétif, en Algérie, dans le développement des compétences d'expression orale en public. Utilisant une approche mixte, les données ont été recueillies auprès de 13 apprenants par le biais de questionnaires structurés et d'entretiens de suivi. Les résultats ont révélé que malgré une perception moyenne de leur niveau d'anglais, la plupart des participants ont éprouvé une anxiété significative et se sont sentis mal préparés pour l'expression orale en public, 76,9% d'entre eux signalant de l'anxiété face aux tâches de présentation. Les principaux défis identifiés comprenaient la peur de l'évaluation négative, un vocabulaire limité, une utilisation inefficace de la communication verbale et non verbale, et une mauvaise gestion du temps. Les participants ont attribué ces difficultés principalement à un manque de pratique (30,8%) et à une préparation inadéquate (26,9%). L'analyse statistique a révélé de fortes corrélations négatives entre l'anxiété et la confiance en soi pour l'expression orale (r = -0,73, p < 0,01) et entre la difficulté perçue et la confiance (r = -0,68, p < 0,01). Bien que 92,3% des participants ne connaissaient pas les plateformes d'expression professionnelle comme TED Talks, tous ont unanimement convenu que l'observation d'orateurs experts pourrait améliorer leur développement. Ces résultats soulignent la nécessité d'approches pédagogiques complètes intégrant des stratégies de réduction de l'anxiété, des opportunités de pratique structurées et une exposition à des modèles d'expression authentiques pour former des communicateurs confiants et efficaces dans les contextes d'EFL.*

**Mots clés**
Expression orale en public
anxiété
apprenants d'anglais langue étrangère
TED Talks
apprentissage par observation