**Action research**

**Problem**

My students speak mostly Arabic when they want to express their opinion in the class discussion. Their mental dictionary is poor, which hinders their ability to speak and express themselves well in English. This problem appeared while teaching English II course, in which students have to develop their speaking abilities through answering some discussion questions, and give their opinion on subjects they haven’t directly experienced, or universal issues. Students also feel shy and uncomfortable when they are asked to say what they think of a topic. Also, they don’t have the full confidence in the amount of vocabs they have, they are always afraid of making mistakes and lose their face.

Not all learners struggle with speaking; however, there are some students who have this problem. More insight into this might help to develop the students’ level of speaking, I want to encourage students to have real, free-flowing discussion in English in the classroom activities using only English language. Students should speak meaningful English when they discuss various topics. I also aim that students use most of the new vocabulary items they have been exposed to during the course. English language is an international language and students need to focus on it as a second language. After graduation, they need English for work. It is the language most in demand at the moment and it should be. Throughout talking to my colleagues who teach the same course, I noticed that this is a common problem.

**Strategies**

So as to motivate students to create a world of active discussion using English language, I decided to use two methods, the first one is English conversation games which enrich their vocabulary and the use of language, the other strategy is the working groups.

In the conversation games, the teacher tries to use most of the vocabularies that students are going to learn in the unit, listed on the board. The teacher starts by telling a story about the topic of the unit, then the first student should choose a word from the list to use it to add one event to the story. Students continue like this until the words are finished. Students keep in mind that they have to use only English and they should use this English no matter how simple it is. The teacher develops students’ sentences by using the most appropriate words.

In the working groups, students discuss various topics which are not too demanding taken from the course book, and the teacher performs as facilitator in the group. As a part of the group, the teacher starts the discussion and helps them to elaborate their ideas, and he can let the discussion peak gradually by asking questions. If a student is stuck at a word, he has to look it up in his smart phone’s dictionary and if he fails to find it, the teacher provides him with it. Also, the teacher has to speak only English, students are not allowed to use Arabic. If the student speak mostly English, which means that he uses two words in Arabic and the rest in English while talking for two minutes, this is considered acceptable. If the teacher see that the student use more than two Arabic words, he shouldn’t stop the learner, but he should support him with suitable English words.

**Participants**

The participants of this research are 30 students from English II course. These students have already passed English I, and they are of non- English Speaking backgrounds, there level in English is considered low-intermediate.

**Data collection**

To ensure that these two strategies are helpful, data was collected before and after applying the two strategies. Data is collected through observations and notes, in addition to pre and post video. Notes and observations took place through the all process, whereas the video was done through two stages (at the beginning and at the end of the course).

The teacher records the video for the groups’ discussion at the beginning of the course, and after she spplies the two strategies. This video examines if there is a difference in the students’ language performance.

**Reflection**

The majority of students could get more motivated and enthusiastic about speaking English; English is no more a burden or boring subject. I could notice that the peer collaboration lead also to creativity as students support each other, monitor and facilitate. Furthermore, peer cooperation helps students to overcome shyness and complexes and made them feel that they are in the comfort zone. Students also stated that they prefer to learn by using conversation games as they helped them to unconsciously speak up and digest information by increasing their interest in the topics covered.

Through the games, students did their best to contribute to the discussion and use their simple English unconsciously. At the beginning of the course, students had difficulties in speaking fluent English, and they spoke mostly Arabic to express their views and respond to their colleagues’ opinions. They didn’t have enough vocabulary to represent their points. However, throughout playing conversation games, and activate in working groups, students could make a difference, they could learn new vocabulary unconsciously and effectively without feeling bored. The video showed that there was an advance in the students’ language performance.