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تخصص اللغة الانجليزية

## TITLE

# Investigating Speaking Difficulties that encounte Students at Secondary Schools

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### **Abstract**

This study aimed at investigating the Speaking Skill's Problems and Difficulties that Encounter Secondary Schools' Students in Saudi Arabia in Riyadh City. The scope of the study was in the area of the applied linguistics. The objectives of this study were: to investigate the difficulties and the problems that face secondary school students in speaking English, to draw teachers' attention to the importance of speaking skills, to encourage speaking skill among the students, and to offer recommendations that might help teachers and students to overcome and reduce these speaking problems and difficulties.

The study has adopted the descriptive analytical method. The sample of the study consisted of (30) male teachers in Riyadh city in the second semester of the academic year 1444 / 1443 H. A questionnaire was designed as a tool to collect the data, The study used a recent statistical package to analyze the data. The results indicated secondary schools students face problems and difficulties in speaking skill. To conclude, the researcher gives the following recommendations: English text books should be well prepared to motivate and encourage students to speak the language and they should be given enough time to practice speaking skills, schools should be provided with language labs or at least with some educational techniques, so as to introduce classroom communication

activities in good and interesting manners, and teachers should offer extra speaking skill activities in order to enable students to speak fluently.



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## Background

English is an important language in the world, It has become the international language of communication (Seidlhofer, 2005, cited in Abduh Ali Al-ma'shy, 2011). "Of the 4,000 to 5,000 living languages, English is by far the most widely used" (Broughton et al., 1978, p.1). It is considered the first language in many countries such as the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Australia. In other countries, English is considered a second or foreign language. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, English is regarded as a foreign language and is generally treated as an academic subject in schools. In most cases, English is not the medium of teaching and learning, and is not widely used outside the classroom.

Most English teachers concentrate on improving reading and writing skills and do not take into account the importance of speaking and listening skills. In other words, teaching the oral skills in Saudi schools is mostly ignored.

## Problem Statement

Teaching English in Saudi Arabia started in the late 1950s. Currently, Saudi students begin to study English when they reach fourth grade of the elementary level. According to (Mofarreh 2005, cited in Abduh Ali Al-ma'shy, 2011), the goal of teaching speaking is to improve the students' ability to communicate. This is necessary for the students to be able to express themselves, communicate with



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English speakers, and to improve their understanding and respect for the culture of other nations. Moreover, Dosari (1992) says that EFL is taught in order to enable students to communicate with other English speakers and to offer them a window on the world. However, by the time they are at secondary schools, students still face a lot of problems when speaking English ,one of these problems is that the Saudi English syllabus does not encourage speaking since it mostly emphasizes reading. Not only that, but the students also lack interest in the language which leads to minimum concentration during class time. Without forgetting the fact that they also lack the opportunity to practice their speaking skills outside class since the society speaks mostly Arabic language. In addition to that, the students also lack motivation through competitions such as debates, quizzes, essay writing, radio and television talk shows, news reading competitions, etcetera so as to create interest and opportunity to practice speaking skills. And lastly, most teachers are not well versed with English pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary so as to enable smooth running of the lessons and increase both input and output.

### **Research Questions**

This study aims to answer the following question:

1. What are the main reasons behind the speaking problems and difficulties that encounter Saudi Secondary schools' students in speaking?
2. How can English language teachers overcome these problems and difficulties?



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## Methodology

This section describes the study design, participants, and data collection procedures. The main objectives of this study are to investigate the difficulties and the problems that face secondary school students in speaking English in Riyadh city. The study also seeks to draw teachers' attention to the importance of speaking skills, to encourage speaking skill among the students and to offer recommendations that might help teachers and students to overcome and reduce these speaking difficulties.

### 8.1. Design:

Robson (1997) stated that the design of self-completed questionnaires for researches is likely to have advantages such as low cost of collecting data and self-completion questionnaire can be cheaper regarding data processing and offer a simple descriptive information.

### 8.2. Study population and Sampling:



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The population of this study is all English Language male teachers in Riyadh city. The sample used in this study consists of twenty English language male teachers, chosen randomly from the Saudi English.

language teachers who have long experience and teach English as a second or foreign language in The Saudi secondary Schools especially in Riyadh city.

### **8.3. Data collection**

#### **8.3.1. The instruments:**

The instrument which was used in this research as a tool to collect data was a questionnaire for the English language male teachers the subjective questionnaire is used. The questionnaire is consisted of ten items so as to achieve the objectives of the study (SEE APENDIX 1). In addition to the personal information of the participants which consists of age, gender, academic qualification and teaching experience. The researcher thinks that the questionnaire is the most valuable and suitable data collecting method, so it is distributed to teachers in different schools in Riyadh. The study will help to obtain reliable data that will lead to reasonable results and findings by the end of the study.

#### **8.3.2. Validity of the questionnaire:**

The questionnaire was shown to a panel of three university professors and two English Language supervisors to ensure the validity and their comments and recommendations were taken into consideration before editing the final version.



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### 8.3.3. Reliability of the questionnaire:

Reliability is the degree to which an assessment tool produces stable and consistent results. Colin Phelan et al, (2005-06). Reliability study was carried out to assess the internal consistency of the tool. The study participants consisted of 20 male teachers. The internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The internal consistency of items within tool construct was good with alpha ranging from 0.79 to alpha = 0.82. The reliability of the tool was high (0.82). (SEE APPENDIX 2).

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.816	10

### 8.3.4. The Procedure:

The questionnaire was distributed to twenty male teachers who teach English language as a foreign or second language. They answered the questionnaire's questions according to their point of view by choosing from; strongly agree, agree, uncertain, strongly disagree, and disagree. The researcher used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and analyzed the data of the questionnaire.

## Significance



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This study is considered and extremely important for many factors:

1. The results of this study will help EFL teachers in terms of diagnosing speaking difficulties and remedying them.
2. The results of this study will also help curricula designers to design syllabuses that are particularly applicable for teaching speaking skills.
3. This study will draw the teachers' attention to the importance of speaking skill and the great role that it plays in communication between people.

### **Overview of chapters**

1. Chapter One: Introduction.
2. Chapter Two: Literature review .
3. Chapter Three: Research methodology .
4. Chapter Four: Findings and Discussion .
5. Chapter Five: Conclusion.

### **Plan of work**





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This study dealt with the speaking skill problems and difficulties that encounter Saudi secondary school students and suggests how these problems and difficulties can be solved.

**Findings** The results of this study approximately accept all the hypotheses of the study. Testing hypotheses of the current study revealed that the Saudi students encounter problems and difficulties in speaking skills because students don't involve in real communication activities so as to improve their speaking skill. Moreover, the English textbook does not include enough speaking activities so as to encourage students to speak. Add to that lack of language laboratories, and finally the students lack the opportunity to practice their speaking skills outside class.

- a. English text books should be well prepared to motivate and encourage students to speak the language and they should be given enough time to practice speaking skills.
- b. Schools should be provided with language labs or at least with some educational techniques, so as to introduce classroom communication activities in good and interesting manners.
- c. Teachers should offer extra speaking skill activities in order to enable students to speak fluently.



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