

## Increasing Iranian Learners' Speaking Skill by Employing the Vaughan Method

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### Abstract

This study was conducted to provide a comparison between the Vaughan Method and the Communicative Language Teaching in terms of developing the speaking skill. A mixed-method design was selected. In the quantitative part which included a quasi-experimental design, 8 intact classes of 75 advanced Iranian EFL learners were given IELTS speaking pretests and posttests. An ANCOVA was run because the effects of the pretest scores were considered as the covariate and the type of method was the independent variable. The ANCOVA indicated that there were no significant differences among the performance of the two treatment groups, which showed that there was no significant difference between the Vaughan Method and the Communicative Language Teaching classes in terms of developing the learners' speaking skill. Meanwhile, the learners' attitudes towards the usefulness of the Vaughan method were obtained through a questionnaire and an interview. The learners' attitudes showed that the error correction and repetition were viewed positively. Meanwhile, they considered the teacher as the prime factor in increasing their motivation which led to the improvement of their speaking skill. This study implies that although the Communicative Language Teaching is an advanced and comprehensive approach, eclectically designed methods such as the Vaughan method could be as successful in EFL contexts.

**Keywords:** Communicative Language Teaching, Questionnaire, Speaking Skill, Vaughan Method.

## **1. Introduction**

The current formal English education in Iran is almost frustrating. After six years of going through English classes, students have problems speaking and communicating in English. The primary focus of the Ministry of Education in Iran is to develop the four language skills. But in the end, students are only able to read English texts. Speaking, listening, and writing out of context is neglected. In the middle school, the emphasis is on teaching alphabet, pronunciation, and vocabulary. In the high school, the emphasis is on reading comprehension, vocabulary, and grammar rules (Ekstam & Sarvandi, 2017). In Iran, the method which is employed in the formal English education is Grammar-translation method (Zarrabi & Brown, 2015). At the pre-university level, students are required to be prepared for English tests in the University Entrance examination. Therefore, enthusiastic students need to attend private English institutes which are not only expensive but take a great amount of students' time.

However, there is a similar situation in Spain. The Spanish Ministry of Education (SME) like other state agencies throughout Europe has dedicated its resources to provide the young citizens with bilingual education. With regard to the bilingual situation in primary and secondary schools in Spain which are under the supervision of the British Council, the results have not been satisfactory and most of young people are not able to understand or speak English or at least are very weak in these respects. Although SME has an obligation from the Boletín Oficial del Estado (the State Official Gazette) (BOE, 2019) to raise the education level of young people to the European standard level which is defined by Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and the European Language Portfolio (ELP), it has failed in this respect.

Therefore, SME has taken another initiative which has been undertaken by the International University Menedez Pelayo (UIMP) to provide language learning courses for those students who have some language background in grammatical knowledge, but they lack the speaking skill. This university has used the services of the Vaughan Systems for teaching the English courses. This company is using a method which is called the Vaughan Method. The Vaughan method is an oral-based method in which repetition, error correction, and motivation have been emphasized. The information about the procedures of this method has been published by Romero (2013). The teaching principles of the Vaughan Systems have been extracted from the Audiolingual method and the CLT.

In this paper, we try to investigate the long-term effect of the Vaughan method on students' speaking skill with regard to the communicative language teaching approach. Moreover, we want to explore the reasons behind the successfulness of the Vaughan method for improving the learners' speaking skill.

Q1. Does applying the Vaughan method in comparison with the communicative language teaching approach have a significant effect on Iranian advanced EFL learners' speaking skill?

Q2. Do the learners believe that the techniques in the methods they were exposed to were influential for their speaking skill development?

## **2. Literature Review**

Recently, the increase in unemployment rate has forced the Spanish government to find the roots underlying the inability of young people to fit for new occupations. The major factor in this respect has been identified as the lack of communication with other business agencies in other countries in Europe especially in the English language. This has been surprising for the

Spanish Ministry of Education, because the primary and secondary education in Spain is based on bilingualism which is under the supervision of the British Council.

Therefore, the Spanish authorities have provided economic aids for several foundations that present various projects to solve the language problem of Spanish education. An example is "Fundación La Caixa", that in 2013 has granted 25 scholarships to carry out postgraduate studies in Spain, 120 scholarships for Europe, the United States, Canada and Asia.

The path in favor of bilingualism appeared robust, since it was not only the institution Caixa that fought for this cause. Contracts have been made with large companies within Germany, through the German Exchange Service Academic (DAAD), and in France, with the French Embassy in Spain. The scholarships covered round-trip tickets, tuition costs at the university, and monthly endowments that varied according to the country and € 1,100 for settlement costs.

However, the funding of scholarships has been slowed down. An example of this funding deficiency is the suppression of the well-known MEC scholarships, which in the year 2013 have been replaced by Vaughan Systems immersion programs. The Vaughan Systems has various domains. The Vaughan town which has been designed for students and they can reside for a week to take part in crash courses. Meanwhile, there are intensive courses in the Vaughan company in which students attend and within a few months their communication requirements are satisfied.

In Europe, Spain is the third country with the least bilingual English adults. In fact, the highest percentage of people who are fluent in English in Spain is 20% and it is located in the

autonomous communities of Andalusia, Valencia, and Murcia. It is obvious that the bilingual education in Spain's primary and secondary schools has failed. In this respect, the Vaughan Method has assisted a greater percentage of young people to become bilinguals. Due to various beneficial aspects of the Vaughan systems, this method has been popularized in Spain's educational system. On the basis of learners' needs, this company has provided various programs, approaches, and teaching materials. Recently, this company has diversified its scope of educational programs. It has invested in areas including Vaughan Radio (2003), the first bilingual Learn English TV (2008), books, online videos, games, and national press. This company endeavors to utilize social media to be in contact with its former students (Pedraza, 2016).

According to Vaughan (2016), this method has followed four basic concepts. They include oral-based education, correction, repetition, and motivation. By stressing oral-based education, the Vaughan method is similar to the communicative language teaching. This method has aimed at the communication problems of the learners who after twelve years of schooling have not been able to speak in the English language. Oral-based classes are the actual requirements for those learners who want to obtain an occupation for which communication in English is important. According to Vaughan (2016), providing oral examples of grammatical structures can help learners to use the grammar for communication without any need to memorize the grammatical rules. Meanwhile, it is an impetus for learners to use language continuously in order to become proficient language users.

The second and third aspects of the Vaughan method are the emphasis on correction and repetition. A teacher using the Vaughan method corrects grammatical mistakes immediately

and asks learners to repeat the corrected parts to understand and remember it. The Vaughan method considers that correction and repetition are vital parts of learning and they must be continued until the learners become fluent in using correct English sentences (Romero, 2013).

In the Vaughan method correction is achieved for various reasons. When the problematic and corrected parts of learners' sentences are presented to them, they feel that the teacher is aware of their activities and they are under supervision. After noticing that they are not left unattended, the learners' confidence in their learning progress increases. Learners can learn from other learners' errors which can strengthen their learning progress. Meanwhile, it can boost a positive anxiety. If grammatical mistakes are not corrected, they might be fossilized in learners' minds which even may lead to more mistakes. For this reason, correction in the Vaughan method is very important. Another advantage of correction is that learners can trust their teachers. Learners consider their teacher as a person who judges their comments and provides them with necessary feedback. They expect the teacher help them improve their language skills.

In the Vaughan method, repetition of phrases and sentences is assumed to be of vital importance. Repetition is not only helpful for learners to practice the corrected forms, but also it assists them to fossilize the corrected forms in their minds and evade the mistaken forms (Vaughan, 2016). Meanwhile, repetition after correction could lead to more confidence because the learner can reduce his doubts about the learning progress. Repetition can provide the confirmation that what he is supposed to repeat is the sign that he is following the correct path. Correcting learners might lead to negative feelings and disappointment. Repetition helps learners to adjust themselves to the correct forms of language. When they repeat, at first they

make mistakes. Their mistaken sentences and vocabulary are disguised in the voices of other students and they can balance their phrases to the extent that they reach the correct production of target forms. In this way their identities are not threatened and they build up more progress. Chomsky has reduced the function of the faculty of language to just a recursion process (Hauser et al., 2002). A linguistic element is called recursive when it can be used repeatedly in a sentence.

New research shows that repeated stimuli will lead to reduced neural activity which is a very powerful cortical dynamics. Grill-Spector et al. (2020) mention that repetition of stimuli causes reduction in neural activity. This leads to facilitation of the learning process and faster processing of stimuli. According to Saffran (2003), statistical properties of linguistic input can be used by learners to discover words, grammar, and sound patterns; these properties are closely related to the number of occurrences and repetition of these elements in linguistic input. Meanwhile, the repetition times have good influence on memory retention. Zhan et al. (2018) investigated the effect of the number of repetitions on associative memory. They found out that learning six times compared to learning once resulted in more powerful activation in hippocampus which improved the associative memory.

The final aspect of the Vaughan method is motivation. This method requires teachers to make sure that learners use English inside and outside the classroom. The best way to increase learners' motivation is to keep track of their progress and provide feedback on their learning progress. When learners are provided with information about their previous mistakes and the way how they overcame them, they are motivated and receive the required energy to pass

through the other stages of learning process. This is performed through some progress reports which are provided for them on a daily basis (Vaughan, 2016).

The role of the teacher is emphasized in the Vaughan method. The teacher is the agent in class who can promote motivation and provide a friendly and absorbing atmosphere in class. The instructor pays attention to grammatical, pronunciation, and vocabulary mistakes. Then he or she devises strategies to make correction to students in a way that students do not get exhausted or demotivated. The instructor has an obligation to pump energy into the classroom and provide language exercises that boost students' progress without making them fatigued or disappointed. The Vaughan method includes teacher tip books which provide enthusiastic information about the innovative techniques for teachers. However, it is the energetic teacher who can exploit these techniques efficiently.

Romero (2013) conducted a research about the advantages and disadvantages of the Vaughan method which was based on his observation of the Vaughan classes. He criticized the Vaughan method and said that this method is based on the practices of the Audiolingual and Grammar Translation method. The practices of ALM resemble the repetitive militarist behaviors which have been designed for soldiers and there is no natural context for communication. Meanwhile, the GM method cannot provide a natural language input for students and it causes deficiency in natural and real language production. Romero (2013) maintains that the Vaughan method prohibits students from using synonyms in sentences and equalizes the use of them as mistakes. However, in the conclusion he expressed amazement that the private language schools using the Vaughan method are subsidized by the Spanish Ministry of Education and organized by the International University Menendez Pelayo.

Pedraza (2016) focused on the bilingual education in Spain and students' success in learning English. According to Spain's National Statistics Institute, only a third of Spanish people can speak in English; from this 35%, only half of them are at the medium level and only one-fifth of them possesses advanced speaking skill. Meanwhile, Moreno (2015) provides a description of the bilingual education in Spain and she maintains that the European Union has taken initiatives to promote bilingual education in the European countries. In this respect, an innovative approach has been introduced called Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) which deals with teaching various areas and subjects in a foreign language. In Spain 30% of the curriculum is taught in English in any area except mathematics and Spanish. Moreno (2015) believes that CLIL has not been successful and attributes its failure to various economic, social, and educational factors.

Communicative language teaching was developed in response to the deficiency of older methods for enabling learners to communicate. The major emphasis in CLT is on interaction, meaningful communication, and negotiation of meaning. The CLT entails that learners be active participants in the learning situation. In the classroom, the teacher cannot take the dominant role any longer and be the sole presenter of knowledge. Learners must also take the burden of the learning process and express themselves. In CLT, the learners' needs and purposes of learning are of prime importance. The teachers of CLT should try to focus on real communication and provide opportunities for learners to experience the language and put it into use. The teachers should be tolerant of learners' errors because errors are the natural outcome of the learning process. Both accuracy and fluency should be underscored and different language skills must be connected and taught as they take place in the real world.

In the CLT, the authenticity of classroom activities is underlined. Some of the popular activities which are employed in the CLT include: pair and group work, information-gap activities, task-completion activities, opinion-sharing activities, and information-transfer activities. In practicing various activities, first pre-task activities are presented and the topic and task are introduced to the learners and brainstorming is encouraged. The second step is the task cycle in which learners perform the actual task. And the last step is the language focus in which the teacher asks learners to pay attention to phrases and vocabulary which have been employed in the actual task. In CLT both inductive and deductive learning activities are employed and this facilitates language learning (Richards, 2006). However, Koosha and Yakhabi (2013) mention several problems regarding the use of CLT in EFL contexts. They state that CLT is not compatible with university entrance exams, EFL learners' needs and motivation, and the cultural values existing in EFL contexts. Even implementing and assessing CLT activities impose difficulties for EFL teachers. Although Koosha and Yakhabi (2013) accept that CLT is an advanced approach, they propose that CLT problems in EFL contexts must be solved in order to have a successful implementation of CLT.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Design of the Study**

A sequential explanatory mixed-method design was selected for this study. This design includes two stages in which firstly quantitative data and then qualitative data are collected. The findings of quantitative data are explained by further evidence from the qualitative phase. A quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design was employed for the quantitative phase. This design was selected due to the fact that experimental and control groups were intact classes which were held in different language institutes.

### **3.2 Participants**

Seventy-five Iranian EFL learners both male (N=30) and female (N=45) at two language institutes participated in this study. They aged from 20 to 28. Their first language was Persian and the English language was their foreign language. Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) was administered to make sure learners were at the advanced level. Eight intact classes were selected for this experiment. Vaughan method classes included, A (n=8), B (n=7), C (n=11), and D (n=10). CLT classes included E (n=9), F (n=11), G (n=9), and H (n=10). Vaughan method classes were held in the first institute and CLT classes in the second institute. For the Vaughan classes a Vaughan grammar book, a Vaughan vocabulary book, a Vaughan phrasal verbs book, and a Vaughan guideline book about the techniques of teaching were employed. For the CLT classes, the Interchange fifth edition was employed. This textbook has been specially developed by Jack C. Richards with a communicative approach.

### **3.3 Instruments**

Different instruments were used to ensure that various levels of EFL learner progress were assessed. These instruments included the Oxford Quick Placement Test, the IELTS speaking test, a belief questionnaire, and a semi-structured interview.

#### *3.3.1 Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT)*

This test was administered to make sure that learners were at the advanced level. This test includes 60 multiple-choice items and evaluates the proficiency levels of learners in a reliable and valid manner. In addition to testing grammar and vocabulary, language functions are tested to assess learners' understanding of meaning in communication.

### *3.3.2 Speaking Test*

In order to measure the quality of the participants' speaking performance in the pretests and posttests, learners were asked to take part in an IELTS 14 speaking test. The International English Language Test System is widely accepted and it is considered a very reliable means for evaluating the language competence of those students or non-students who intend to study or work in an English speaking country. The speaking test includes three parts. In the first part the learners talk about themselves, their home and family, their interests and a broad area of familiar topics. This part lasts about four to five minutes. In the second part, the learners are given a cue card and are asked to talk about a specific subject. They have one minute to get prepared and they are allowed to take some notes. Then the examiner asks one or two questions concerning the subject. In the third part, the examiner and the learner enter into a discussion about the subject of the second part. This discussion takes about four to five minutes. The examiner assesses the speaking ability of the learners on a nine-band scale. The examiner attributes a score from 1 to 9 according to IELTS speaking band descriptors (Appendix B). The band descriptors describe how a student can speak with regard to four areas of fluency and coherence, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy, and pronunciation. If a student speaks fluently and coherently, uses vocabulary with full flexibility, employs a full range of structures naturally and properly, and utilizes a full range of pronunciation features with precision and subtlety, the examiner will assign 9 to the student. If the student cannot communicate any relatable language, the examiner will assign 1.

### *3.3.3 Development of the Belief Questionnaire*

The development of this questionnaire proceeded in several stages. First, we reviewed the theories of teaching methods, learning beliefs, and learning strategies. Next, we consulted well-

known inventories of beliefs and language-related questionnaires (Horwitz, 1988; Liao, 2002; Oxford, 1990; Wen & Johnson, 1997) to devise the items. Then, we interviewed experienced teachers and recorded their viewpoints about the Vaughan method and how this method could be effective for learners' speaking skill. After the interview, a pool of items which could be included in the questionnaire was collected. After that, we asked a TEFL doctoral student and an experienced ESL teacher to make the sentences of the items clear and comprehensible and to eliminate redundant items. Moreover, three TEFL experts confirmed the validity of the questionnaire items. Finally, the questionnaire was compiled and subsequently piloted. The questionnaire items were about three major parts: (1) how the learners felt about the influence of repetitive drills on their speaking skill (6 items), (2) what their attitudes were about the usefulness of error correction on the development of their speaking skill (7 items), and (3) how they evaluate the effectiveness of the teacher's role for their speaking skill improvement (6 items).

#### *3.3.4 Interview Guide*

According to Patton (1990), an interview guide helps the interviewer to freely explore and ask questions about a subject area. He states that interview guides make data collection more systematic and more comprehensive. Following the approach by Patton (1990), we devised an interview guide (Appendix A) with 10 questions to interview students and to record their beliefs in the Vaughan class. The interview data were intended to serve as an additional source of information to supplement the questionnaire survey. The interview guide was used in the Vaughan method classroom to gather more in-depth information about learners' beliefs about the usefulness of the Vaughan method for the development of their speaking skills. The validity of the interview guide was checked by two TEFL specialists.

### **3.4 Data Collection Procedure**

Eight advanced intact classes in two English language teaching institutes were selected. To ensure that they were at the advanced level, an Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) was administered to them. For the purpose of the study, two experienced IELTS examiners were employed. At the beginning of the study, the learners' speaking skills were tested by the IELTS examiners using an IELTS speaking test. The study started and the classes were treated with the specified methods of teaching for 17 sessions. In the end, the learners' speaking skills were evaluated by the same IELTS examiners through a different IELTS speaking test. IELTS Speaking test was evaluated by certified IELTS examiners in a face-to-face interview in a quiet room to award band scores based on the four criteria including fluency and coherence, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy and pronunciation. For each of three parts, the examiner rewarded a score from 1 to 9 based on the four aforementioned criteria. Finally, these three scores were added up and averaged which constituted the learners' IELTS speaking scores.

At the end of the Vaughan class, the questionnaire was administered to the learners to obtain their attitudes towards the effectiveness of the Vaughan method techniques for the improvement of their speaking skill. In addition to the background information, this questionnaire had five choices on the Likert scale from 1 to 5 (*1=strongly disagree* to *5=strongly agree*). This questionnaire was piloted on a small number of learners and the Cronbach's alpha was 0.71 which is considered to have acceptable reliability (DeVellis, 2003). After explaining the questionnaire to the learners and giving information about the way to mark the items, the learners answered the questionnaire. Then, in order to get the mean scores, the scores on each item was added and divided by the number of learners in Vaughan classes.

When the questionnaire survey was completed, the interview data were collected. We checked the Vaughan class students' previous grades and consulted their English teachers. Then, four more successful and four less successful learners were selected for the interview. We met each of these students and they agreed to participate in the interview. All of the interviews were conducted in a quiet classroom and we told each interviewee about the purpose of the interview. The interviews were tape-recorded and conducted in Persian. Then we transcribed the Persian interviews for further analysis and later we translated some of analysis data into English texts.

### **3.5 Data Analysis Procedure**

Here the effects of the pretest scores on the posttest scores had to be controlled in order to witness the sole effect of the type of method (fixed factor) on the dependent variable (posttest scores). So the ANCOVA was used. In order to be able to make use of ANCOVA, we had to make sure that the condition of homogeneity of regression was observed. For this reason, the interaction of the speaking pretest scores and the type of method was taken into consideration by the SPSS software. With the realization of the condition of homogeneity of regression, we proceeded to the next ANCOVA and calculated the effects of method on the posttest speaking score, while the covariate of pretest speaking scores was controlled.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1 Results of OQPT**

The scores ranged from 48 to 58, with a mean of 52.58, and the standard deviation of 2.439. With regard to the guidelines of Oxford Quick Placement Test, the proficiency levels of the learners were at the C1 and C2. These levels are based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

**Table1**

*Descriptive Statistics of OQPT Scores*

| Scores | N  | Minimum | Maximum | Std. Deviation |
|--------|----|---------|---------|----------------|
|        | 75 | 48      | 58      | 2.439          |

#### 4.2 Results of Experiment

In this research we used the analysis of covariance in order to investigate the effect of speaking pretest scores as the covariate and the type of method as the independent factor on the learners' speaking posttest scores as the dependent variable. At first the Levene' test for the pretest scores and their interaction with the method was run. Table 2 shows that p-value is greater than 0.05 and we conclude that the equality of error variances is observed.

**Table 2**

*Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances<sup>a</sup>*

| F     | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
|-------|-----|-----|------|
| 1.867 | 1   | 73  | .176 |

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a. Design: Intercept + Method + pretestS + Method \* pretestS

The second condition for ANCOVA is the homogeneity of regression. In order to make sure that this condition is observed, a covariance analysis is performed and the interaction of the pretest scores and the method is considered. According to Table 3, we see that the interaction is not significant and the assumption of homogeneity of regression is observed,  $F = 1.894$ ,  $p = 0.173$ .

**Table 3**

*Tests of Interaction Effects for Speaking Posttest*

| Source            | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F      | Sig. |
|-------------------|-------------------------|----|-------------|--------|------|
| Corrected Model   | 3.571 <sup>a</sup>      | 3  | 1.190       | .911   | .440 |
| Intercept         | 76.414                  | 1  | 76.414      | 58.478 | .000 |
| Method            | 3.012                   | 1  | 3.012       | 2.305  | .133 |
| pretestS          | .419                    | 1  | .419        | .320   | .573 |
| Method * pretestS | 2.475                   | 1  | 2.475       | 1.894  | .173 |
| Error             | 92.776                  | 71 | 1.307       |        |      |
| Total             | 2713.000                | 75 |             |        |      |
| Corrected Total   | 96.347                  | 74 |             |        |      |

a. R Squared = .037 (Adjusted R Squared = -.004)

Therefore, we can move forward and perform the ANCOVA. Here the Levene's test of equality of error variance when pretest scores are considered only with the method is not significant.

Table 4 shows that the assumption of equality of error variance is observed,  $p = 0.140$ .

**Table 4**

*Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances<sup>a</sup>*

| F     | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
|-------|-----|-----|------|
| 2.221 | 1   | 73  | .140 |

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a. Design: Intercept + pretestS + Method

The ANCOVA is run and we see that there is no significant difference between the performance of the classes taught with the Vaughan method and the communicative language teaching,  $F = 0.796$ ,  $p = 0.357$ .

**Table 5**

*Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Speaking Posttest*

| Source          | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F      | Sig. |
|-----------------|-------------------------|----|-------------|--------|------|
| Corrected Model | 1.095 <sup>a</sup>      | 2  | .548        | .414   | .663 |
| Intercept       | 88.745                  | 1  | 88.745      | 67.082 | .000 |
| pretestS        | .080                    | 1  | .080        | .060   | .807 |
| Method          | 1.054                   | 1  | 1.054       | .796   | .375 |
| Error           | 95.251                  | 72 | 1.323       |        |      |
| Total           | 2713.000                | 75 |             |        |      |
| Corrected Total | 96.347                  | 74 |             |        |      |

#### 4.3 Results of Questionnaire

The questionnaire had 20 items. The items which were about repetition were items 3, 4, 8, 10, 15, and 16 which were related to repeating vocabulary, sentences, grammar points, and the exhaustion from it. The mean scores were above three and it means that most of the learners believed positively in repetition activities. Items 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 17 were related to correction of mistakes. The learner believed that correction of mistakes was useful for their confidence and speaking skill. Correction of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation drills was helpful for the improvement of speaking skill. The learners had positive views towards correction of mistakes. The role of the teacher was also emphasized by the learners' attitudes. The teacher was regarded as delightful, encouraging, kind, respectful, and energetic. The items 1, 2, 9, 14, 18, 19, and 20 had mean score above three.

**Table 6**

*Means of the Items of the Belief Questionnaire*

| Items  | Means |
|--|-------|
| 1. I enjoyed the way the teacher taught.   | 3.26  |
| 2. The teacher persuaded me to improve my speaking.                                      | 3.8   |
| 3. When I repeat sentences, I can learn the words and grammar rules better.              | 4.1   |
| 4. I think repetition of vocabulary drills improved my speaking.                         | 3.1   |
| 5. Correction of my mistakes helps me to gain more confidence.                           | 4.06  |
| 6. Correction of my translation mistakes was helpful for my speaking.                    | 3.43  |
| 7. The teacher corrected my mistakes and it was good for my speaking.                    | 4.2   |
| 8. I think repetition of grammar exercises was exhausting but I overcome the fatigue.    | 3.8   |
| 9. The teacher was kind and it helped me to overcome my problems.                        | 4.3   |
| 10. Repetition of sentences was helpful for my speaking.                                 | 3.7   |
| 11. When the teacher corrected my vocabulary mistakes, my speaking improved.             | 3.3   |
| 12. When the teacher gave me a list of my last grammar mistakes, my speaking got better. | 3.3   |
| 13. The teacher talked about my pronunciation mistakes which helped my speaking.         | 3.7   |
| 14. The teacher persuaded me in Persian which helped me.                                 | 4.66  |
| 15. Repetition helps me to understand my mistakes.                                       | 4.0   |
| 16. When the teacher repeated the grammatical points it was useful.                      | 3.03  |
| 17. I did not feel embarrassed after the teacher put right my mistakes.                  | 3.80  |
| 18. The teacher did not want to make me feel ashamed by talking about my mistakes.       | 3.56  |
| 19. The teacher had high respect toward me and I felt more secured.                      | 3.1   |
| 20. The teacher was very active and he removed my tiredness.                             | 3.4   |

For confirming the validity of the questionnaire, principal component analysis was run. This analysis was performed to determine the underlying factors which could account for most of the variation in the 20 items of the questionnaire. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy shows the proportions of variance in the data which have been caused by the underlying factors. Large values (near to 1.0) demonstrate that a factor analysis might be helpful with the data.

**Table 7**

*KMO and Bartlett's Test<sup>a</sup>*

|  |                    |         |
|--|--------------------|---------|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. |                    | .767    |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity                    | Approx. Chi-Square | 437.283 |
|  | df                 | 190     |
|  | Sig.               | .000    |

a. Based on correlations

In Table 8, the factor analysis with the criterion of eigenvalues above 1.0 is demonstrated. Three factors account for 62.7 % of the total variance. The first extracted factor has the largest eigenvalue of 3.59 and accounts for 29.08 of the total variance. The second extracted factor has the eigenvalue of 2.31 and the third factor has the eigenvalue of 1.84.

**Table 8.**

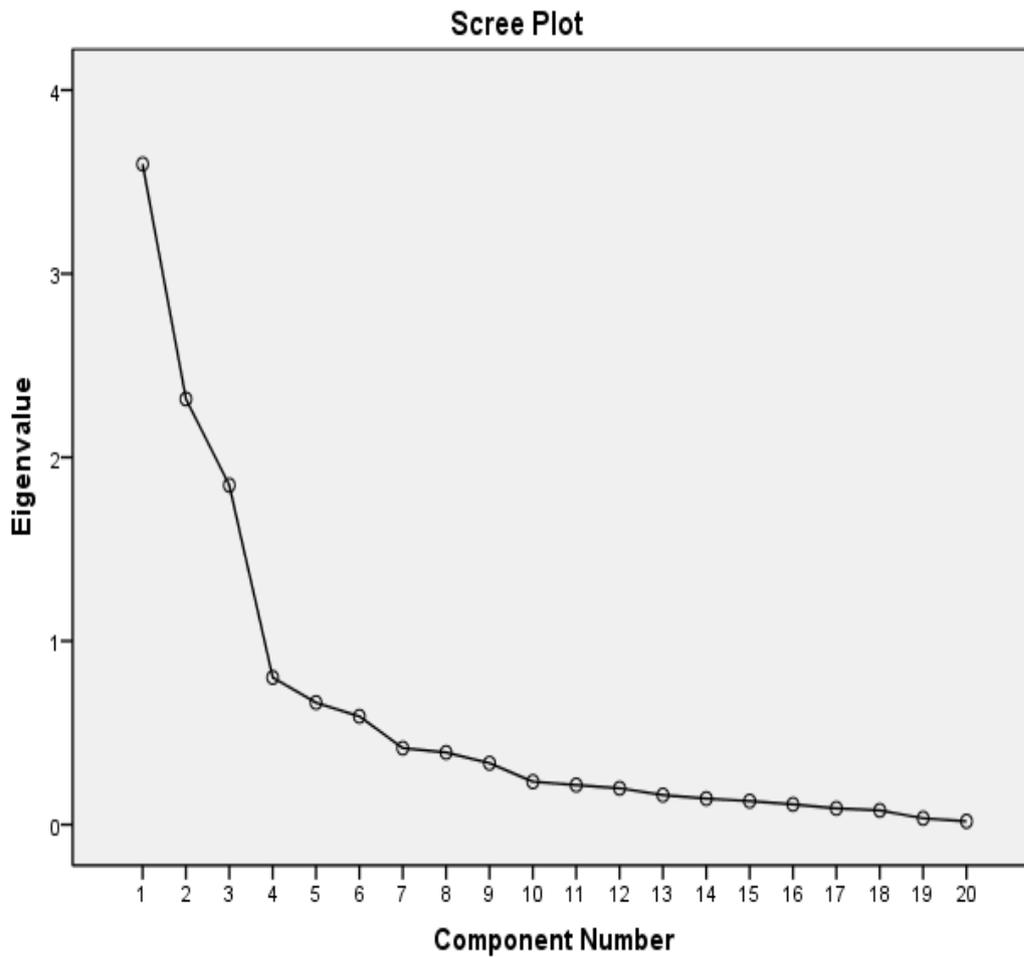
*Total Variance Explained*

| Component | Initial Eigenvalues |               |              | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings |               |              |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
|           | Total               | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total                               | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1         | 3.597               | 29.081        | 29.081       | 3.597                               | 29.081        | 29.081       |
| 2         | 2.318               | 18.737        | 47.818       | 2.318                               | 18.737        | 47.818       |
| 3         | 1.848               | 14.943        | 62.761       | 1.848                               | 14.943        | 62.761       |
| 4         | .801                | 6.477         | 69.238       |                                     |               |              |
| 5         | .664                | 5.372         | 74.610       |                                     |               |              |
| 6         | .589                | 4.764         | 79.374       |                                     |               |              |
| 7         | .417                | 3.369         | 82.743       |                                     |               |              |
| 8         | .393                | 3.176         | 85.919       |                                     |               |              |
| 9         | .335                | 2.706         | 88.625       |                                     |               |              |
| 10        | .234                | 1.891         | 90.516       |                                     |               |              |
| 11        | .215                | 1.740         | 92.256       |                                     |               |              |
| 12        | .198                | 1.602         | 93.857       |                                     |               |              |
| 13        | .161                | 1.298         | 95.156       |                                     |               |              |
| 14        | .142                | 1.146         | 96.302       |                                     |               |              |
| 15        | .128                | 1.039         | 97.341       |                                     |               |              |
| 16        | .110                | .891          | 98.232       |                                     |               |              |
| 17        | .088                | .715          | 98.947       |                                     |               |              |
| 18        | .078                | .629          | 99.575       |                                     |               |              |
| 19        | .034                | .278          | 99.853       |                                     |               |              |
| 20        | .018                | .147          | 100.000      |                                     |               |              |

Another criterion which is employed to determine the number of factors is Cattell scree test which is shown in Figure 1. The factors are on the X axis and their eigenvalues are on the Y axis. The scree plot shows that there are three factors before the eigenvalues change from a steep line to a flat slope.

Figure 1.

Scree Test of the Questionnaire Factors



In Table 9, we observe items 3, 4, 8, 10, 16, and 15 load on factor 3; items 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, and 17 load on factor 1; and items 1, 2, 9, 14, 18, 19, 20 load on factor 2.

**Table 9.***Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>*

| Items | Component |      |       |
|-------|-----------|------|-------|
|       | 1         | 2    | 3     |
| 3     | -.133     | .174 | .630  |
| 4     | -.139     | .087 | .405  |
| 8     | -.033     | .134 | .442  |
| 10    | .056      | .130 | .607  |
| 16    | -.209     | .065 | .463  |
| 15    | -.157     | .060 | .558  |
| 5     | .905      | .120 | .098  |
| 6     | .765      | .044 | .070  |
| 7     | .803      | .081 | -.057 |
| 11    | .663      | .073 | .214  |
| 12    | .515      | .220 | .036  |
| 13    | .539      | .295 | -.064 |
| 17    | .498      | .262 | -.036 |
| 1     | -.165     | .619 | -.187 |
| 2     | -.194     | .567 | -.024 |
| 9     | -.120     | .495 | .000  |
| 14    | -.133     | .552 | -.076 |
| 18    | -.076     | .440 | -.156 |
| 19    | -.199     | .519 | -.246 |
| 20    | -.226     | .537 | .028  |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 3 components extracted.

The items for repetition (3, 4, 8, 10, 16, 15), items for error correction (5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 16), and items for the teacher's role (1, 2, 9, 14, 18, 19) were validated as the three components.

#### 4.4 Results of Interview Analyses

Content analysis approach devised by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) was employed to report the interview results. For the interpretation of qualitative data, this approach has been commonly used. This approach includes six stages that the investigator is required to consider to discover significant and consistent patterns. These stages include, getting familiar with data, coming up with initial codes, looking for themes among codes, reviewing the themes, defining

and labeling the themes, and producing the final report. To search out any evident patterns in the interview responses, these stages were taken into account.

For the Vaughan, the learners admitted that this method was useful for the development of their speaking skills. The interviews with learners from Vaughan classes supported and validated the findings. These interviews reflected learners' opinions about the positive aspects of the Vaughan method in their learning process. The learners' beliefs about the Vaughan method included:

The learners believed that the Vaughan method could improve their speaking skill.

- 1. I'm glad that during the class my speaking got better.*
- 2. I think that during this class I was able to talk more correctly and more confidently.*
- 3. This method made me say longer sentences that I avoided before because they were hard to say.*
- 4. I was able to look native. I could say many sentences without a problem.*

The learners believed that the instructor's role for repetition and correction was important.

- 1. The teacher repeated all the time. But after each repetition I learned more.*
- 2. Sometimes I make the same mistake and I can't understand the problem. But repetition shows my weaknesses.*
- 3. When I repeat I remember my last mistakes and I try to use grammar rightly.*
- 4. Repeating sentences is good for my memory. With a better memory I can speak better.*
- 5. At first, repetition made me tired, but after practice I got used to it. Then I repeated more easily.*

*6. After the teacher corrected me, I got upset. But the teacher encouraged me in Persian and told me not to worry.*

*7. When we got tired during repetitions, the teacher tried to behave in a way to remove fatigue from us.*

*8. The teacher tried to challenge us in a way that was fun and interesting. We were not annoyed.*

*9. The teacher was very active. He did his best to get my attention towards repeating sentences. Also he was kind and when I did mistakes he was not angry. He tried to help me out.*

The interview results indicate that learners' had positive beliefs about the effectiveness of the Vaughan method regarding their speaking skill improvement. One of the learners was content to utter long sentences and this provided the learner with a sense of being a native speaker. Meanwhile, the learners viewed repetition as a positive factor for their learning because they could focus on their mistakes and learn effectively. Also, the role of the teacher as a facilitator was emphasized and the learners viewed their teacher as a counselor who can relieve tension and provide assistance.

## **5. Discussion**

In this research, we intended to investigate the influence of the Vaughan Method on advanced learners' speaking skill in comparison with the communicative language teaching through a quasi-experimental design. Meanwhile, at the end of the Vaughan course the learners' attitudes were obtained through a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. It was found out that there was no significant difference between the Vaughan Method and the communicative

language teaching regarding the improvement of the speaking skill. Meanwhile, Romero (2013) in his observation of the Vaughan method confirmed that there was an improvement in the learners' speaking skill and the learners were producing specific practiced statements with confidence and effortlessness.

In the questionnaire results, we observed that repetitions of sentence, vocabulary, and grammar drills have been viewed positively and most of the learners believed that repetition activities were helpful for their speaking skill. The role of repetition in learning is very important. One of the criticisms which have been leveled at the Audiolingual method was that repetition drills alone do not make students acquire language. However, Chomsky as the major critic of the ALM has emphasized the role of repetitive elements in the functionality of the faculty of language (Hauser et al., 2002). Moreover, the presentation of repeated stimuli can lead to the facilitation of the learning process in the brain (Grill-Spector et al., 2020). Saffran (2003) maintains that statistical properties of linguistic input which are closely related to the number of repetitions of that input can assist learners to identify words and other linguistic structures. Meanwhile, number of repetitions can improve the associative memory (Zhan et al., 2018).

The second aspect of the questionnaire was the teacher's error correction. Most of the learners believed that error correction was useful for the improvement of the speaking skill. There is a renewed line of research for the effectiveness of corrective feedback (Norris & Ortega, 2000; Mackey & Goo, 2007). Han (2004) has mentioned that implicit error correction is insufficient for language learning. Recently, it has been mentioned that corrective feedback could be any information which is provided for learners with regard to their errors (Sheen, 2007; Loewen, 2012). Rahimi and Dastjerdi (2012) maintained that delayed error correction could be more

effective than immediate correction. In the Vaughan method, the teacher also provided a list of each learner's errors at the end of each session.

The other aspect of the questionnaire was the emphasis on the role of an energetic teacher. The Vaughan Company has provided teacher training courses which enable teachers to fulfill their duty and transfer their knowledge to the learners. This has led to the improvement of learners' speaking skill. The Vaughan Company focuses on teachers' motivation for the task of teaching and it requires teacher trainees to be energetic and active during class time and challenge learners by asking them to repeat sentences and structures without making them exhausted. In diagnosing the various aspects of EFL teachers' duty in Iran, Noughabi (2017) mentions the problematic nature of teacher training courses and he says that these courses have not been successful and they are not based on teacher trainees' needs. According to Noughabi (2017), there should be a transfer of experience from skilled teachers to new teachers and supervisors should observe new teachers' classes to provide them with assistance and guidance. According to Zarrabi and Brown (2015), in spite of the money and time invested for the public and private English education sectors, they have not been successful and most of learners cannot speak the language fluently after completing the courses. Meanwhile, Avanaki and Sadeghi (2014) put the blame of the failure of centralized English education system in Iran on the lack of connection between theory and practice of teaching and they mention that teacher trainees are not provided with adequate practice in teaching activities. In Iran's English education system, English is dealt with as a theoretical subject such as mathematics or physics and the teacher's supposed duty is to present lessons and provide exercises and solve them and give assignment. However, English education is a practical subject which should be considered for the promotion of communication.

In the interview, the learners agreed that the Vaughan method was effective for their speaking skill development. Meanwhile, the role of the teacher for repetition and error correction was emphasized. The learners agreed that the teacher tried to be energetic and transfer his energy to the class to remove fatigue and tiredness. The teacher behaved in a way not to harm the learners' motivation by encouraging and reassuring them that they will overcome the problems.

## **6. Conclusion**

The main emphasis of this research was on the effectiveness of the Vaughan method to the development of the speaking skill. This skill has been neglected in Iran's education system. Meanwhile, this is the case for the Spain's bilingual educational system and the Spanish high school graduates are not able to communicate in English. However, the Spanish government has employed the Vaughan method for providing teaching services to these graduates. In this regard, the Vaughan method has been successful. In this research, we found out that the major focus of the Vaughan method was on repetition, correction, and the motivation of learners and teachers. Proper teacher training is one of the priorities of the Vaughan method.

The two basic aspects of the Vaughan method including error correction and repetition have recently been highlighted in new research. Neurological evidence shows that repetition activities can facilitate the neural network activity which leads to more efficient learning. New research shows that explicit corrective feedback is necessary to second language acquisition. Unfortunately, English teacher education in Iran is only restricted to teaching language as a scientific subject and the practical aspects have been neglected. Therefore, teachers only try to present what they have learned during training and we cannot blame only the teachers in this respect. Teacher supervision and transfer of skillful teachers' experiences to new teachers have

been disregarded. Supervision on teachers' performance not only should be during the teacher training courses, but also during the teaching occupation of the teachers.

Although the Vaughan method is to some extent similar to the Audiolingual method, but it is an oral-based method and it tries to motivate the learners to speak by using error correction and repetition drills. We can conclude that oral repetition drills should be employed within English classes. Therefore, learners can obtain an opportunity to express themselves without knowing the exact structure of the sentences. This will increase their motivation to learn the grammar rules and vocabulary used in the drilled utterances. On the other hand, the Vaughan method has also borrowed some of the CLT principles. The view that learning is a gradual process and errors must be tolerated has lead Vaughan teachers to provide motivating and encouraging remarks after error correction. This helps learners to overcome the bad feeling of making mistakes. However, the Vaughan method is an eclectic method which has employed various principles of the ALM and the CLT. According to Tayebinik et al. (2018), the implementation of the CLT in Iran has faced social and educational problems. Also, Koosha and Yakhabi (2013) mention the drawbacks of implementing CLT practices in EFL contexts. Therefore, the Vaughan method might be a good candidate for English teaching in Iran. In this regard, we should consider the current situation of Iranian students' speaking skill. According to Zarrabi and Brown (2015), the formal English education in Iran is Grammar-translation method which has not been successful. Meanwhile, CLT implementation has faced many drawbacks within the EFL contexts. This study implies that due to the similarity of English teaching situation in Iran and Spain, we should examine new procedures for teaching English. Every country possesses its own unique characteristics and there is no single panacea for all the language teaching problems. Although some experts maintain that the method area has become extinct,

the quest for innovative eclectic teaching methods should be continued. In this respect, there is a need for future research to illuminate whether the Vaughan method is effective for improving other language skills. Meanwhile, regarding repetition drills, there is a body of research which shows that repetition only fixes up to seven new items on the short-term memory in each memory practice session, but only some of these items will enter the long-term memory. Future research should emphasize the extent to which the Vaughan method can have long-term impact on memory.

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**Appendix A  
Interview Guide**

1. How do you consider this method of teaching useful for your speaking skill development? Please explain.
2. You were asked to memorize sentences during the course. Do you think it helped your speaking skill? How?
3. Your teacher presented the grammar rules to the class. Do you think talking about grammar rules could help your speaking skill? Please explain.
4. Your teacher corrected your mistakes. Do you think it was helpful for your speaking skill? Please explain.
5. Your teacher used grammar exercises. At some times they were tiresome. Do you think these exercises were helpful for your speaking skill? Explain.
6. Your teacher focused on specific topics of vocabulary. How do you evaluate their effects on your speaking skill development?
7. Some of the vocabulary exercises were repetitive and exhausting. How do you consider their usefulness for your speaking skill development?
8. At some times in your class, you were provided with Persian sentences and you were asked to translate them to English. Do you think this activity could help your speaking skill? How?
9. The teacher corrected every mistake that you made. Did you feel embarrassed or did it help you to focus more on your mistakes? Explain.
10. Your teacher provided you with a record of your last mistakes. How do you think it helped you?

**Appendix B  
IELTS Speaking Band Descriptors**

| Band | Fluency and coherence  | Lexical resource  | Grammatical range and accuracy  | Pronunciation  |
|------|--|---|---|--|
| 9    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• speaks fluently with only rare repetition or self-correction;</li> <li>• any hesitation is content-related rather than to find words or grammar</li> <li>• speaks coherently with fully appropriate cohesive features</li> <li>• develops topics fully and appropriately</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses vocabulary with full flexibility and precision in all topics</li> <li>• uses idiomatic language naturally and accurately</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses a full range of structures naturally and appropriately</li> <li>• produces consistently accurate structures apart from ‘slips’ characteristic of native speaker speech</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses a full range of pronunciation features with precision and subtlety</li> <li>• sustains flexible use of features throughout</li> <li>• is effortless to understand</li> </ul>   |
| 8    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• speaks fluently with only occasional repetition or self-correction; hesitation is usually content-related and only rarely to search for language</li> <li>• develops topics coherently and appropriately</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses a wide vocabulary resource readily and flexibly to convey precise meaning</li> <li>• uses less common and idiomatic vocabulary skillfully, with occasional inaccuracies</li> <li>• uses paraphrase effectively as required</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses a wide range of structures flexibly</li> <li>• produces a majority of error-free sentences with only very occasional inappropriacies or basic/non-systematic errors</li> </ul>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses a wide range of pronunciation features</li> <li>• sustains flexible use of features, with only occasional lapses</li> <li>• is easy to understand throughout; L1 accent has minimal effect on intelligibility</li> </ul> |
| 7    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• speaks at length without noticeable effort or loss of coherence</li> <li>• may demonstrate language-related hesitation at times, or</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses vocabulary resource flexibly to discuss a variety of topics</li> <li>• uses some less common and idiomatic vocabulary and shows some awareness of style and</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses a range of complex structures with some flexibility</li> <li>• frequently produces error-free sentences, though some grammatical mistakes persist</li> </ul>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shows all the positive features of Band 6 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 8</li> </ul>  |

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some repetition and/or self-correction</li> <li>uses a range of connectives and discourse markers with some flexibility</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>collocation, with some inappropriate choices</li> <li>uses paraphrase effectively</li> </ul>   |   |   |
| 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is willing to speak at length, though may lose coherence at times due to occasional repetition, self-correction or hesitation</li> <li>uses a range of connectives and discourse markers but not always appropriately</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has a wide enough vocabulary to discuss topics at length and make meaning clear in spite of inappropriacies</li> <li>generally paraphrases successfully</li> </ul>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a mix of simple and complex structures, but with limited flexibility</li> <li>may make frequent mistakes with complex structures though these rarely cause comprehension problems</li> </ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a range of pronunciation features with mixed control</li> <li>shows some effective use of features but this is not sustained</li> <li>can generally be understood throughout, though mispronunciation of individual words or sounds reduces clarity at times</li> </ul> |
| 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>usually maintains flow of speech but uses repetition, self correction and/or slow speech to keep going</li> <li>may over-use certain connectives and discourse markers</li> <li>produces simple speech fluently, but more complex communication causes fluency problems</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>manages to talk about familiar and unfamiliar topics but uses vocabulary with limited flexibility</li> <li>attempts to use paraphrase but with mixed success</li> </ul>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>produces basic sentence forms with reasonable accuracy</li> <li>uses a limited range of more complex structures, but these usually contain errors and may cause some comprehension problems</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>shows all the positive features of Band 4 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 6</li> </ul>   |
| 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cannot respond without noticeable pauses and may speak slowly, with frequent repetition and self-correction</li> <li>links basic sentences but with repetitious use of simple connectives and some breakdowns in coherence</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is able to talk about familiar topics but can only convey basic meaning on unfamiliar topics and makes frequent errors in word choice</li> <li>rarely attempts paraphrase</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>produces basic sentence forms and some correct simple sentences but subordinate structures are rare</li> <li>errors are frequent and may lead to misunderstanding</li> </ul>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a limited range of pronunciation features</li> <li>attempts to control features but lapses are frequent</li> <li>mispronunciations are frequent and cause some difficulty for the listener</li> </ul>   |
| 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>speaks with long pauses</li> <li>has limited ability to link simple sentences</li> <li>gives only simple responses and is frequently unable to convey basic message</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses simple vocabulary to convey personal information</li> <li>has insufficient vocabulary for less familiar topics</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>attempts basic sentence forms but with limited success, or relies on apparently memorized utterances</li> <li>makes numerous errors except in memorized expressions</li> </ul>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>shows some of the features of Band 2 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 4</li> </ul>  |
| 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pauses lengthily before most words</li> <li>little communication possible</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>only produces isolated words or memorized utterances</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cannot produce basic sentence forms</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speech is often unintelligible</li> </ul>  |
| 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no communication possible</li> <li>no rate able language</li> </ul>  |   |   |   |
| 0 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>does not attend</li> </ul>   |   |   |   |