

Öğretmenlerin Söylem Taktikleri ile Öğrencilerin Sosyal Becerileri Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi

Exploring the Relationship Between Teachers' Discourse Tactics and Learners' Soft Skills

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Özet

Yumuşak beceriler, eğitim ortamlarında etkili öğrenmeyi, iş birliğini, iletişimi ve kişisel gelişimi destekleyen kişilerarası, bilişsel ve duyuşsal yetkinliklerdir. Bu beceriler, dil öğreniminin doğası gereği sosyal bir süreç olması ve rol oynama, münazaralar, grup tartışmaları ve sunumlar gibi etkileşimli etkinliklere yoğun biçimde dayanması nedeniyle özellikle yabancı dil olarak İngilizce (EFL) bağlamlarında büyük önem taşımaktadır. Ancak Cezayir üniversitelerinde sunulan öğretim içeriği çoğunlukla okuma, yazma, dinleme ve konuşma olmak üzere dört temel dil becerisine odaklanmakta; öğrencilerin yumuşak becerilerinin sistematik olarak geliştirilmesi çoğu zaman ihmal edilmektedir. Bu çalışma, Khenchela Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümünde öğretim elemanlarının söylem taktikleri ile öğrencilerin yumuşak becerileri arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektedir. Öğretmen söylem taktikleri, öğretmenlerin sınıf içi iletişimi yönetmek, öğrenmeyi kolaylaştırmak, katılımı yönlendirmek ve öğrencilerin bilişsel, dilsel ve sosyo-duyuşsal gelişimini şekillendirmek amacıyla dili ve etkileşimsel hamleleri bilinçli ve stratejik biçimde kullanma yolları olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Çalışmanın temel amacı, öğretim elemanlarının sınıf içi söylem özelliklerini ve bunların öğrencilerin yumuşak becerileri üzerindeki etkilerini ortaya koymaktır. Bu amacı gerçekleştirmek üzere tamamen nitel bir araştırma deseni benimsenmiştir. Veri toplama aracı olarak sınıf gözlemi kullanılmış ve gözlemler, ikinci sınıf öğrencilerinden oluşan üç grup ile bu grupların Sözlü Anlatım derslerini yürüten öğretim elemanlarının derslerinde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Seçilen katılımcılar, toplam 128 öğrenciden oluşan ikinci sınıf İngilizce bölümü öğrenci evreninin tamamını temsil etmektedir. Gözlemler, öğretmen söylem uygulamalarının öğrencilerin yumuşak becerileri ve sınıf içi etkileşim üzerindeki etkisini derinlemesine anlamayı amaçlamıştır. Elde edilen bulgular, mizah kullanımı, destekleyici beden dili ve sadeleştirilmiş dil gibi öğretmen söylem stratejilerinin öğrencilerin yumuşak becerileri ve sınıf tartışmalarına katılım düzeyleri üzerinde açık ve olumlu bir etkiye sahip olduğunu göstermiştir. Bu stratejiler, öğrencilerin fikirlerini daha özgüvenli bir şekilde ifade etmelerini ve sözlü etkinliklere daha aktif katılmalarını teşvik eden daha Etkileşimli, destekleyici ve öğrenci merkezli bir öğrenme ortamının oluşmasına katkıda bulunmuştur. Genel olarak sonuçlar, öğretmenlerin söylemsel tercihlerinin dilsel yeterlilikle birlikte öğrencilerin yumuşak becerilerinin geliştirilmesinde kritik bir rol oynadığını ortaya koymakta ve eleştirel düşünme, özgüven, yaratıcılık ve motivasyon gibi becerilerin geliştirilmesi için uygun söylem stratejilerinin benimsenmesinin önemine dikkat çekmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: yumuşak beceriler, öğretim elemanlarının söylem taktikleri, sınıf içi etkileşim, eleştirel düşünme, motivasyon

Abstract

Soft skills are the interpersonal, cognitive, and emotional abilities that support effective learning, collaboration, communication, and personal development in educational settings. They are particularly crucial in EFL contexts, as language learning is inherently social and relies heavily on interactive activities such as role plays, debates, group discussions, and presentations. However, in Algerian universities, instructional content tends to focus primarily on the four language skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—often overlooking the systematic development of learners' soft skills. This study examines the relationship between faculty members' discourse

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tactics and learners' soft skills in the Department of English at Khenchela University. Teacher discourse tactics are defined as the deliberate and strategic ways teachers use language and interactional moves in the classroom to manage communication, facilitate learning, guide participation, and shape learners' cognitive, linguistic, and socio-emotional development. The main objective of this study was to investigate the features of faculty members' classroom discourse and their effects on learners' soft skills. To achieve this objective, a purely qualitative research design was adopted. Classroom observation was used as the main data collection instrument and was conducted during Oral Expression sessions with three groups of second-year students and their respective teachers. The selected participants represented the entire population of second-year English students, totalling 128 learners. The observations aimed to provide an in-depth understanding of how teachers' discourse practices influence students' soft skills and classroom interaction. The findings revealed that teachers' discourse strategies—such as the use of humour, supportive body language, and simplified language—had a clear and positive impact on students' soft skills and their level of participation in classroom discussions. These strategies contributed to creating a more interactive, supportive, and learner-centered learning environment, encouraging students to express their ideas more confidently and engage more actively in oral activities. Overall, the results highlight the crucial role of teachers' discursive choices in fostering students' soft skills alongside linguistic competence and raise teachers' awareness of the importance of adopting appropriate discourse strategies to enhance students' critical thinking, self-confidence, and motivation.

Keywords: soft skills, faculty members' discourse tactics, classroom interaction, critical thinking, motivation

Introduction

The inevitable changes that accompany the institutions' educational programs in the twenty-first century have created challenges to the modern educational system, especially those arising from developing students' skills to access high-quality education. This idea aligns perfectly with the context foreign language teaching wherein EFL teachers are not only supposed to encourage their students to use the English language effectively, but they are also required to equip them with other soft skills, including the interactive relationship with other students in the class, managing and organizing the course materials, and engaging in group work tasks. It is a problematic situation when EFL learners master the language and a set of hard skills, including writing, data analysis, and research making while being unable to participate in classroom interaction.

Previously, the interest in the study of soft skills was limited to the workplace and administrative arenas. It was all about preparing the workers to achieve effective results in their jobs. Doe and Smith (2025) conducted research about project management, and they have demonstrated that soft skills — including emotional intelligence and other interpersonal competencies — significantly affect project success and organizational performance by enhancing team collaboration and improving project. Nowadays, educational researchers shifted the focus from the workplace to the academic field. Recent studies have started to investigate ways to implement the study of soft skills in educational programs in order to enhance students' and teachers' productivity. In this respect, Medvedeva and Rubtsova (2021) have contended that in order to improve students' interactive, communicative, and even professional and hard skills, teachers should resort to the productive method that advocates teaching foreign languages communicatively through addressing students' soft skills.

Teachers, especially in EFL contexts, play a central role in developing students' soft skills. Through designing course materials and activities appropriate for the student's age, level, and requirements, teachers can help to improve learners' thinking, communication, and management skills. Teachers have to be transformative leaders who can explore students' knowledge, comprehension, beliefs, and attitudes (Elmahdi & Balla, 2024). Many studies have examined the teacher's role in enhancing students' soft skills. Aznam (2020) conducted a study about Teachers' perspectives toward soft skills in science learning. He argued that "Soft skills cannot be learned without practice and habituation in daily activities. However, in its implementation, there are still many obstacles that cause failure to foster students' soft skills and various factors cause this." (2018, p. 1). In this regard, Aznam highlighted that teachers have to select the appropriate strategies and tactics to integrate soft teaching skills within the educational curriculum.

Teachers' discourse is one of those key strategies that can directly address learners' soft skills, for teachers are supposed to produce clear, meaningful, motivating, and comprehensible discourse to motivate their students to participate in the learning process, improve their academic performance, and develop the way they view themselves and others, which is all what a soft skill is about. Mtafi (2025) concluded that some learning strategies like collaboration and critical thinking activities are directly linked to teachers' discursive techniques, especially

in language classes. Similarly, Tong et al. (2024) conducted a study wherein they compared the discursive patterns used by novice teachers to those that expert teachers employed to conclude that the flexible and interactive discourse used by expert teachers helped students to foster their participation and communicative engagement.

In the EFL context, Gümüşok and Balıkcı (2020) have claimed that discourse tactics like elaboration questions and minimal responses can help students to be more confident and spontaneous in their communication. In the same vein, Tamersit and Mouas (2025) have postulated that students' awareness about interpersonal relationships can be improved with the effective use of body language, modality, and pronouns as these elements can impact learners' understanding of formality and authority in different contexts.

Most educational programs focus on providing students with the appropriate content required to achieve their academic goals. Generally, teachers equip their students with the technical skills (hard skills) needed for their education while they ignore the importance of refining their soft skills to pave the way for students to be more productive and obtain higher academic achievement. Besides, previous studies have only highlighted teachers' role in enhancing students' soft skills without considering the way soft skills can relate to teachers' talk and discursive tactics. Accordingly, this study is more specific in the sense that it highlights the features of teachers' discourse and the way they can affect or inhibit the development of students' soft skills and interactions in EFL classes.

The present paper aims to investigate the extent to which teachers' discourse tactics affect the development of students' soft skills and their interaction in classroom activities.

The research questions that this study addresses are the following:

- To what extent do teacher discourse tactics relate to students' soft skills in EFL classes?
- What are the features of teachers' discourse that promote the development of students' soft skills?

Literature Review

Teachers' Discourse in Classroom Interaction

Numerous scholars viewed classroom interaction as the most fundamental activity in the EFL classroom. They highlight that teachers' discourse and the interactive relationships with students are necessary for achieving better educational tasks and objectives.

Teacher discourse is an essential aspect of successful classroom interactions. Many educational researchers have recently started to investigate the factors that can induce sufficient classroom interaction. Tsui (2001) argued that "descriptions of classroom interaction focused initially on the language used by the teacher, especially teacher questions and the learner responses elicited, teachers' feedback, and turn-allocation behavior" (p. 120). Accordingly, the teacher's talk facilitates student participation and engagement in classroom activities. It should always be clear and understandable to students, contributing to successful student responses. Questioning skills are also vital since they assist students in expanding their thinking to be more analytical and evaluative. Besides, positive teacher feedback is an important feature that can enhance the students' performance in the classroom as it contributes to raising their confidence and self-esteem.

The language used by the teacher should always be uncomplicated and self-explanatory to students. Teachers facilitate the interaction of students in the assigned classroom activities through the use of language, including simple grammatical structure, clear vocabulary, plain pronunciation of the words, and the use of intonation and stress when explaining or addressing students. Nunan (1994) stated that teachers' instructional language always provides students with language learning by fostering learning among each other and starting class activities leading to communication. Paraphrasing, modelling, and simplifying utterances are all part of the scaffolding strategies that can enhance comprehension and production (Mercer, 2000). Teachers' speech acts, turn-taking, and politeness should also be considered in teachers' discourse. Turn-taking, asking and answering questions, and exchanging thoughts and opinions between students and teachers are all viewed as tools to construe knowledge and develop effective communication (Mercer, 2000).

When analysing teacher discourse, it is always insufficient to focus only on issues like grammar, vocabulary, and language structure; other discursive features are equally important. Code-switching, for instance, can be considered as one discourse strategy that can aid the comprehension process and make the teaching-learning atmosphere more comfortable (Sert, 2005). Even pausing (usually referred to as wait time), which follows teachers' questions, can help students to provide high-quality responses and manage turn-taking and participation

in the classroom, especially if the class is characterized by the existence of dominant VS passive learners (Walsh, 2006).

Using gestures and body language when interacting with students in EFL classrooms is considered as one type of teacher discourse tactics because discourse can be also viewed as a multimodal interaction that includes movement, gesture, and eye contact along with speech. Gestures and facial expressions are mostly used in EFL contexts to reinforce vocabulary learning while eye contact can encourage participation and help to maintain discipline. Body language strategies can also have affective functions; nods and smiles, for instance, can motivate students to talk openly, reduce anxiety, and create a better learning atmosphere (Lazaraton, 2004)

Successful classroom interaction is the focal point of the language teaching process, and it is intricately related to teachers' discourse about the lesson itself or about students' performance in classroom activities. Teachers' discursive practices are said to be successful when they exert influence on students' hard and soft skills.

Soft Skills in EFL Classrooms

Soft skills serve as the foundation for students' relationship development, communication skills, and awareness of personal qualities and attributes that every student should possess. To put it another way, a soft skill is a multidimensional term that encompasses a variety of other skills, each of which has a specific application in the educational settings.

The ability to communicate successfully with other students is often seen as the most crucial attribute. It facilitates information transfer and understanding of what others are saying. Communication involves exchanging ideas, facts, opinions, views, and information between two or more participants, and it can be fulfilled through the use of written messages, spoken words, gestures and responses to others' suggestions. Usually, students need to use polite language while delivering their ideas, especially when interacting with their teachers or with each other, and they should have a sense of respect toward others. Students with highly-developed communication skills can effectively send and receive information, which helps the development of cooperative and productive interaction in the classroom sphere (Kechagias, 2011).

Students of English as a foreign language often encounter communication problems in their social and professional environment. It is desirable to include training programs in the EFL curriculum to improve students' communication competence (Mousawa & Elyas, 2015). Teachers should shift their attention away from content toward enhancing students' skills and competencies. Alternatively, they are supposed to improve students' listening abilities, cultural understanding, and interpretation of nonverbal communication like gestures and facial expressions to avoid misunderstandings. This can be achieved when students and teachers alike engage in discussions and debates to keep the discourse flowing and allow themselves to be part of the learning process. Additionally, assigning students to teamwork activities may also improve their communication skills (Tarricone & Luca, 2002).

At the heart of the successful teaching process, teamwork is a significant skill that contributes to improving the learner's interaction. Team working is the ability to establish a relationship with other students based on participation and collaboration in classroom activities. It entails sharing resources and information that actively contribute to meeting the lesson's objectives. Researchers argued that encouraging student collaboration promotes learners' qualities and skills, such as academic achievement, interpersonal skills, and self-esteem (Mohd-Yusof et al., 2013).

It is vital to integrate team working in several activities to develop EFL students' skills. Many studies emphasized the advantages of working in teams to achieve a higher level of interaction through exchanging ideas and experiences with other students. Through teamwork, students will also share responsibilities in solving complex classroom tasks and presenting innovative ideas in their works. Additionally, team working contributes to reducing errors and improving the quality of student performance. The constructivist theory of Vygotsky (1978) supports this view as it highlights that learning activates a range of developmental processes that can only occur when the individual interacts with others in their surrounding and collaborates with peers. Once absorbed, these processes form part of the one's developmental success. Successful learning is established from the support of others, for students will be capable of performing tasks that they would not have been able to create by themselves.

Recent studies emphasized the importance of a competent leader in maintaining effective teamwork performance. Students are supposed to be good leaders when directing other students and assisting them to achieve the task objectives. The primary responsibility of leader students is to guide and lead the teamwork for the sake of

performing the assigned tasks successfully and overcoming the obstacles that may arise during the course. Higher education is required to graduate students with particular skills like leadership skills that prompt higher academic success. Astin and Astin stated that “one of the most important duties of higher education is to train individuals with different leadership skills, and universities must provide qualified leadership education to students” (as cited in Cansoy, 2017, p. 67). Teachers as academic leaders also need to maintain a strong relationship with their students to improve their leadership prospects. For example, teachers should listen carefully to students when they talk about their interests, for doing so will make them feel that their ideas matter and that they can be good leaders to whom everybody would listen attentively.

Leadership is one of the imperative skills that lead to individuals' overall growth and progress in education and social life. In the light of necessity and numerous recommendations, Cansoy (2017) argued that the targeted components for leadership development are communication skills, group skills, decision making, and responsibility skills. In this regard, great leaders are students who have outstanding communication abilities, which allow them to convey their ideas and share their experiences with others to attain common educational goals. Additionally, successful leaders are good listeners who are willing to respond to other people's comments and suggestions. They always seek to identify the problem and then find the best way to solve it by making good decisions.

While leadership encourages students to attain educational goals, management is about regulating and directing students to achieve these goals. Management studies directly address the effective use of organizational resources to attain educational objectives (Buch, 2008). It is concerned with the adequate organization of resources to carry out various tasks and activities in the classroom setting. EFL students should be effective managers when arranging and controlling material resources to achieve instructional goals. For example, students are urged to outline their objectives and use their time management techniques to complete projects and assignments on time and accomplish the established goals of the course.

Students who effectively control and manage their time are more organized, productive, and are likely to meet the deadline of their assignments. Nasrullah and Saqib Khan (2015) acknowledge that time management is critical to students' academic success and achievement. This process expands to include other sub-skills such as organization, prioritization, goal setting, and communication. Students' time management skills have a significant impact on their academic achievement. Hence, it is critical to teach students these skills to enhance their classroom performance on one hand and raise awareness about the significance of time and organization in one's life on the other.

Problem-solving is becoming the most pervasive skill in classroom interaction nowadays. Problem-solving skills help students to quickly and effectively solve educational issues; it requires identifying the problem, analysing it, and then, finding the best way to solve it. Mayer and Wittrock (2006) define the term as a cognitive process used by a person unaware of any solution methods. This definition elaborates that this skill is related to the student's cognitive system. When the student faces an educational problem like the inability to recall figures and definitions or the struggle to manage time, the student would likely resort to his previous knowledge or to invent strategies to handle the issue and find the appropriate solution.

For effective and successful problem solving, the student should adhere to specific techniques. Personal qualities are strongly associated with problem-solving skills; people with strong problem-solving abilities have a better life than others because they are more persistent to determine the best available answers and how to act in difficult situations (Coşkun et al., 2014). The problem-solving process goes through multiple stages like research, which is the fundamental skill in problem-solving wherein students need to highlight the leading causes of the problem and understand them to gather the information needed to solve the issue. Then, students will use their critical thinking skills to find the possible solutions to this problem. Once the students list the possible solutions, it is time to choose the appropriate solution and put it into action.

Methodology

Research Design

To answer the study's questions and attain the underlined objectives, this work employs a case study qualitative approach by means of an observation method that is a qualitative data-gathering tool used to gain insights into individuals' behaviours and analyse how events evolve in a given situation. Marshall and Rossman (1989) have

defined observation as "the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study" (p.79).

The current study used the observation method to examine the effects of faculty members discourse on students' soft skills. Also, it examines the faculty members' discourse strategies used in classroom discussion in Oral Expression sessions. The observation method helps researchers to gain knowledge about how students interact and communicate with each other, how the teacher uses discourse strategies, and how students react to the teacher's discursive tactics.

Participants

The researchers decided to implement the observation method with three second-year teachers of Oral Expression and their students. The observation sessions lasted for six hours; each hour was devoted to one Oral Expression session. Second-year students were particularly selected because the syllabus of the Oral Expression subject contains lessons related to interaction strategies, debates, conversation, and discussions, which allows researchers to obtain a comprehensive view about the way faculty members' discursive practices influence their students' character and soft skills. It is important to note that the three observed groups represent the entire population of second-year students, totalling 128 individuals, of whom 98 are female. The study also included observations of the three Oral Expression teachers, who varied in terms of experience, gender, and educational background. Specifically, the sample comprised one male teacher and two female teachers. Regarding their academic specializations, one teacher is an expert in sociolinguistics, another in applied linguistics, and the third in cultural studies. Their teaching experience ranged from three to twelve years.

Description of the observation Grids

The observation grid serves as a guideline to obtain accurate insights into faculty members' discourse strategies that are used to stimulate students' interaction in Oral Expression sessions at the University of Khenchela.

Two observation grids were employed in this study. The first grid was used to observe teachers, and the second grid was used to observe students' behaviour in class. The two suggested observation grids comprise two columns (session one and two). Therefore, every teacher and every group was observed twice. For instance, teacher A is in charge of group number three. The researchers have visited group three twice, accompanied by the two observation grids. After conducting the observation, the researchers compare faculty members' discursive tactics with the way students reacted to them, and the soft skills they manifested. Each of the two grids consists of 11 criteria that revolve around tactics of faculty members' discourse used in the classroom discussion as well as students' behaviour and soft skills in the classroom discussion. The researcher's task is to tick in the two columns whenever a particular criterion is manifested by students or teachers.

Concerning teachers' observation grid, the selected criteria are made in the form of statements. The first criterion is about whether the teacher frequently asks questions or not. The next one revolves around evaluating the teacher's ability to explain the lesson clearly and concisely while debating the lesson with students. The third and fourth criteria relate to evaluating the sense of humour displayed in the teachers' talk and whether the teacher provides positive feedback to students. The fifth criterion is linked to the teacher's body language (gestures, facial expressions, smiling). The sixth criterion investigates whether teachers use informal language in classroom discussions or not. The following criterion (seven) determines the grammatical structure of the teacher's language, and whether it is simple or complicated. The eighth criterion focuses on the teacher's willingness to repeat the explanation when the students request that. The ninth and the tenth criteria aim to study the teacher's language, particularly the use of stress and intonation. The last criterion (11) attempts to examine the teacher's willingness to respond to students' questions and comments.

Students' observation grid is also constructed upon 11 criteria. The first criterion is made to check whether the students are interested in the topic of discussion or not. The second criterion displays students' ability to demonstrate active collaboration with each other. The third and fourth criteria aim to investigate the interactive qualities of students with the teacher, whether they actively interact in the class discussion, and whether they are willing to show politeness while interacting either with their teacher or with the other students. The following criterion (five) is an attempt to examine students' ability to solve educational problems. The sixth and the seventh criteria are made to check students' motivation to share their opinions with others and if they respect and listen to

each other while participating. The following criterion (eight) tends to look at students' behaviour, and whether they are smiling while the teacher is explaining the lesson. The ninth criterion is to investigate students' ability to understand the teacher's talk. The tenth is to examine students' leadership spirit demonstrated in the classroom activities. The last criterion (number eleven) examines students' creativity in classroom performance.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were observed throughout the conduct of this study. Before collecting data, official permission was obtained from the head of the Department of English at Khenchela University. All participating teachers were informed that they would be part of a research work, and their voluntary participation was secured through informed consent. Students were also informed that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw at any stage. To ensure confidentiality, no real names of students or teachers were mentioned, and all the observed behaviours were used only for research purposes.

Analysis and Interpretation of the Observation Grid

Three groups of second-year students were observed twice during Oral Expression sessions. Classroom observations were conducted using a semi-structured, non-participant approach. Data were recorded through an observation checklist and complementary field notes focusing on teachers' discourse practices and behaviours fostering learners' soft skills. By the end of every observation session, the researchers made a comparison between the sessions, the teachers, and the groups being observed. Students and faculty members were not informed about the topic being investigated. This being the case, students would not feel offended or distracted by the researcher's remarks. The subject was selected specifically because the lessons in the syllabus are dedicated to debates and discussions, so faculty members' discourse along with the way learners' behaviour are shaped can be easily observed and evaluated. Additionally, discussions require demonstrating a wide range of verbal and non-verbal communication skills.

Research Findings

Teacher A

The first two sessions took place with group two (2). The lesson tackled was expressing opinion. Teacher A opted for the selection of some debatable topics to discuss with students and ascertain their opinions towards them.

The teacher tried to push all the members of the group to participate in the discussion and express their opinions regarding the selected topic. The language in the explanation process was straightforward, understood, soft, and smooth with a simple grammatical structure. Besides, the teacher demonstrated a tendency to ask the students other related questions (e.g. give a real-life example, could you please expand your answer and give me more details). Here, the teacher motivated the student to increase their communication skills and present ideas differently.

Simultaneously, the teacher was always repeating the unclear explanation to the students while also responding to the students' comments and questions and providing them with positive feedback even when the answer is wrong. The teacher's use of body language, gestures, and facial expressions was apparent throughout the lesson explanation. Additionally, the humour sense of the teacher was displayed clearly during the sessions, which made the students actively involved in the lesson. The second lesson was about fluency and how to keep the flow of the discourse without stopping; the teacher challenged the students to take something out of the box and then talk about it in two minutes to check their fluency. The same strategies of teacher's discourse were employed in the second lesson.

Table 1

The Observation Grid of Teacher A

Number of criteria	Criteria	Teacher A	
		Session1	Session2
01	Teacher tends to ask questions frequently	✓	✓
02	Teacher is clear when debating topics	✓	✓
03	The teacher uses some humour	✓	✓

04	Teacher provides students with positive feedback	✓	✓
05	Teacher uses gestures and body language	✓	✓
06	The teacher makes use of some informal language		
07	The teacher's grammatical structures are simple	✓	✓
08	Teacher is willing to repeat things	✓	✓
09	Teacher uses intonation and stress		
10	Teacher uses soft and smooth language	✓	✓
11	Teacher responds to student questions and comments	✓	✓

Note. Checks represent the observed criteria

Teacher A Students

The outcomes of the teacher's performance and their discourse strategies are clearly displayed in the students' behaviour and performance in the class interaction. One can notice that the students were very interested in the topic of the discussion. Hence, they actively interacted with the teacher and demonstrate active collaboration. The students were motivated enough to express their opinions freely without disrupting the others while speaking. Also, the students were smiling when the teacher explained the lesson, which can have multiple interpretations like comfort, content and language understanding, involvement... It was noticed that the majority of the students were very creative when presenting their ideas; some ideas were not even expected by the teacher.

Very few students, however, presented their thoughts in a very simple way, and sometimes they kept repeating the other students' ideas. In the second session, all the students manifested a challenging spirit when they tried to talk about the item they selected from the box, and they were all competing to pass to the board and participate in the class activity. This elucidates the active engagement of the students and their competitiveness spirit. Additionally, the students' leadership spirit was very transparent in the second session when a good number of students volunteered to take the leadership of the group.

Table 2

The Observation Grid of Teacher A Students

Number of criteria	Criteria	Group 2	
		Session1	Session2
01	Students are interested in the topic.	✓	✓
02	Students demonstrate active collaboration among themselves.	✓	✓
03	Students interact with the teacher.	✓	✓
04	Students show politeness when interacting with the teacher or with each other.	✓	✓
05	Students demonstrate ability to solve educational problem.		
06	Students are motivated to share their opinions.	✓	✓
07	Students listen to each other while participating.	✓	✓
08	Students are smiling while the teacher is explaining the lesson.	✓	✓
09	Students are able to understand the teacher's talk	✓	✓
10	Students show a leadership spirit.		✓
11	Students are being creative.	✓	✓

Teacher B

Other two observation sessions took place with group 3. The teacher had previously informed the students to prepare a summary of a book, article, or anything they had read before and affected their behaviour or way of thinking. This teacher also pushed them to talk about an experience that they witnessed and is considered a turning point in their lives.

When the students presented their works, the teacher frequently asked them questions (to give more details, to give examples, or to clarify their talk). The teacher was very straightforward while giving instructions and

comments. Concurrently, the teacher was showing willingness to listen to students' comments and answer their questions. Besides, she used simple grammatical structure and smooth and soft language. Occasionally, the teacher opted for some figurative language, especially when displaying her sense of humour in addition to using body language and facial expressions like smiling. The results prove the active engagement of the teacher in the teaching process as an attempt to motivate and encourage students to be involved in the classroom discussion and improve their soft skills, particularly communication and leadership skills.

Table 3

The Observation Grid of Teacher B

Number of criteria	Criteria	Teacher B	
		Session1	Session2
01	Teacher tends to ask questions frequently.	✓	✓
02	Teacher is clear when debating topics.	✓	✓
03	The teacher uses some humour.	✓	✓
04	Teacher provides students with positive feedback.		
05	Teacher uses gestures and body language.	✓	✓
06	The teacher makes use of some informal language.		✓
07	The teacher's grammatical structures are simple.	✓	✓
08	Teacher is willing to repeat things.		
09	Teacher uses intonation and stress.		
10	Teacher uses soft and smooth language.	✓	✓
11	Teacher responds to student questions and comments.	✓	✓

Teacher B Students

It was noticed that the students were very interested in the topic since the majority prepared their work and wanted to be selected to present it, especially as the time allotted for the session was not enough to discuss such a topic. Each time one of the students present given literary work, colleagues interact by giving comments, asking questions and responding to faculty members' questions. Interestingly enough, all the students were sharing their opinions concerning the presented works while listening to the one who talked, which clearly shows active collaboration in the classroom. The leadership spirit appeared in the students' performance when they were trying to give positive and inspirational stories about themselves to push the other students toward positive change; they were also very creative and productive while presenting their ideas.

Table 4

The Observation Grid of Teacher B Students

Number of criteria	Criteria	Group 3	
		Session1	Session2
01	Students are Interested in the topic.	✓	✓
02	Students demonstrate active collaboration among themselves.	✓	✓
03	Students interact with the teacher.	✓	✓
04	Students show politeness when interacting with the teacher or with each other.	✓	✓
05	Students demonstrate ability to solve educational problem.		
06	Students are motivated to share their opinions.	✓	✓
07	Students listen to each other while participating.	✓	✓
08	Students are smiling while the teacher is explaining the lesson.	✓	✓
09	Students are able to understand the teacher's talk.	✓	✓
10	Students show a leadership spirit.	✓	✓
11	Students are being creative.	✓	✓

Teacher C

The third session with group one (1) was entirely unlike the two other groups. The teacher introduced a topic related to illegal immigration. Remarkably, the researcher noticed the inactive state of the teacher despite the use of explicit instruction and positive feedback. Interestingly enough, the teacher did not display any humour sense while discussing the topic with the students. Besides, there was a total absence of body language, gestures, and facial expressions, which rendered the class atmosphere very monotonous. The overuse of informal language while explaining has affected the whole interaction process negatively, for the teacher was unable to maintain discipline in class. The results of the study show the teacher's unfamiliarity with the criteria of conducting classroom talks in Oral Expression sessions, which hints at the teacher's brief experience in teaching Oral Expression.

Table 5

The Observation Grid of Teacher C

Number of criteria	Criteria	Teacher C	
		Session1	Session2
01	Teacher tends to ask questions frequently.	✓	
02	Teacher is clear when debating topics.	✓	✓
03	The teacher uses some humour.		
04	Teacher provides students with positive feedback.	✓	✓
05	Teacher uses gestures and body language.		
06	The teacher makes use of some informal language.	✓	✓
07	The teacher's grammatical structures are simple.		
08	Teacher is willing to repeat things		
09	Teacher uses intonation and stress.		
10	Teacher uses soft and smooth language.		
11	Teacher responds to student questions and comments.	✓	✓

Teacher C Students

Students in this session were required to express their opinions regarding illegal immigration. The teacher only interacted with two or three elements (good students), and they freely expressed their opinions while the others only did so when the teacher addressed the question to them. One can tell that the students' interactions were not as good as those of the previous two groups. Some students were interested in the topic while the others gave the impression that they felt completely frustrated. This indicates that students of this group lack language proficiency, communication competencies, and active collaboration with the other students. It was also noticeable that the students did not contribute to the creation of new ideas and did not expand the ideas that were suggested by their teachers or by the three students who were participating. It was very apparent that they were not listening to their teacher or to their colleagues. The sole issue they cared about is the time they are supposed to leave the classroom, which clearly demonstrates boredom. Smiles were scarce because insufficient amusement stimulus was provided by their teacher.

Table 6

The Observation Grid of Teacher C Students

Number of criteria	Criteria	Group 1	
		Session1	Session2
01	Students are Interested in the topic.		
02	Students demonstrate active collaboration among themselves.		
03	Students interact with the teacher.		
04	Students show politeness when interacting with the teacher or with each other.	✓	✓
05	Students demonstrate ability to solve educational problem.		
06	Students are motivated to share their opinions.		
07	Students listen to each other while participating.	✓	✓

08	students are smiling while the teacher is explaining the lesson.		✓
09	Students are able to understand the teacher's talk.	✓	✓
10	Students show a leadership spirit.		
11	Students are being creative.		

Discussion of the Findings

The observation method is designed to observe and investigate the relationship between faculty members' discourse and students' soft skills in class. The findings can help to gain an in-depth understanding of the relationship between the two variables. The results are summed up as follows:

1. Relationship between faculty members' discourse tactics and students' soft skills

Developing students' soft skills depends highly on the type of the discourse tactics that EFL teachers employ, and these tactics are mostly related to teachers' character, teaching philosophy, and ways of thinking. Since the English language is usually considered as a fun language, interactive discourse tactics can raise students' motivation and increase participation in class. This idea was highly emphasized by Gümüşok and Balıkcı (2020), who referred to questioning as the most effective discourse tactic. Teachers who are less interactive in nature or those who maintain a monotonous feel in the classroom will rather encourage passiveness among students, which will, in turn, inhibit students' soft skills and drive them into complete marginalization of the role that these skills play in developing the hard skills like reading, writing...etc. Unlike teacher A and teacher B, the tactics employed by teacher C (the use of informal language in particular like idioms, phrasal verbs, and shortened words and expressions) have negatively influenced students' soft skills. This is a new angle of research that this study highlighted, for previous research papers (Mtafi, 2025; Tong et al., 2024) have only pinpointed how these tactics can develop EFL students' soft skills. Therefore, there is always a type of relationship existing between faculty members' tactics and students' soft skills; being positive or negative depends on students' character and interest. This idea aligns perfectly with the research made by Aznam (2020), which highlighted that teachers should be selective in regard to the discourse tactics that fit their students best.

2. Features of faculty members' discourse that promote the development of students' soft skills

The four main discourse tactics that influenced students' soft skills are: using humour, using specific body movements, questioning, and employing simple and soft linguistic structures. Displaying a sense of humour, for instance, helped students to talk more without feeling the pressure of making mistakes, which, in turn, encouraged them to be more creative in class, for the teacher's spirit drove them into discussing any idea they wished to share. Some aspects of body language like maintaining eye contact or nodding head when listening to students' answers are very effective to boost students' self-confidence and show them that their answers matter. Questions-based discussions that Teacher A and Teacher B have employed made students contemplate some thought-provoking issues, which can help to develop their critical thinking skills. Similarly, Gümüşok and Balıkcı (2020) consider frequent questioning as the best tool to extend students' talk. Tamersit and Mouas (2025), however, consider it as restrictive strategy since faculty members' questions are usually viewed by students as authoritative checks. The use of simple linguistic structures (short and syntactically uncomplicated sentences, high-frequency vocabulary, paraphrasing, and explicit instructions) can make the classroom atmosphere very supportive, engaging and inclusive, which can create collaboration opportunities among students. The use of accessible language was encouraged by Gümüşok and Balıkcı (2020), who maintained that simple teacher talk promotes participation. Tamersit and Mouas (2025), however, warned that excessive simplification may lead students to lose interest in the course and in their teachers' talk.

Conclusion

The focus of the article was to show the way Faculty members' discursive tactics and students' soft skills are related. As indicated by the results gained from the observation method, faculty members' discourse tactics have great influence on learners' interaction and soft skills in the classroom. Teachers who make use of humour, simple language structures, questioning, and body language in their classes are more likely to advocate learners' leadership, motivation, and problem-solving skills. Still, teachers are supposed to have working knowledge about the needs and interests of their students to adjust their discourse tactics accordingly. After all, not only hard skills that matter in EFL classes; soft skills are also very vital, and faculty members' discourse can make them more effective.

Suggestions

Based on the findings obtained from this study, the following suggestions can be offered:

- Future studies could incorporate various universities across Algeria or even Arab EFL contexts to increase generalizability or explore potential regional differences.
- Investigating the effect of teachers' discursive tactics in other courses like writing or reading, not just Oral Expression, to show a more holistic view of soft skill development.
- Combining qualitative observation with quantitative measures like questionnaires or performance assessments, to triangulate data and strengthen conclusions about the impact of discourse on soft skills.
- Exploring other critical competencies like emotional intelligence, teamwork, or even intercultural communication, to demonstrate how teacher discourse tactics can improve a broader range of soft skills.

Limitations

Despite the insights gained from this study, several limitations should be acknowledged:

- The study observed only three Oral Expression groups and their teachers at Khenchela University, which may affect the generalizability of the results to other EFL contexts, universities, or cultural.
- Data were collected exclusively in Oral Expression classes, leaving out other subjects or language skills wherein teacher discursive features could affect students' soft skills differently.
- While qualitative observation provides in-depth insights, it does not allow for statistical generalization or causal inference. The results describe relationships rather than establish definitive cause-and-effect.
- The presence of an observer in the classroom could have influenced teacher and student behaviour, possibly enhancing or suppressing certain discourse tactics and student responses.

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