

**LINGUISTIC PROFICIENCY OF JORDANIAN  
FRESHMEN MAJORING IN ENGLISH: THE  
EFFECT OF MOVIES ON ORAL  
COMMUNICATION  
PROFICIENCY**

**AMRO MOHAMMAD SULEIMAN MOHAMMAD**

**SULTAN IDRIS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY**

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## ABSTRACT

English as a foreign language (EFL) students' low level of linguistic proficiency has raised many concerns about English teaching and learning in most EFL countries. Although many studies have been conducted to promote students' level of linguistic proficiency, the majority of these studies were conducted in an ESL/EFL context in-class. Consequently, few attempts have been taken to promote students' level of linguistic proficiency out of class. To contribute to that, this study tried through a mixed methods/case study design to answer the overarching research question; 'How do Jordanian EFL students perceive their level of linguistic proficiency, and is there a way of helping these students improve their oral communication proficiency out of class?' To answer that, 60 EFL students were selected to participate in the quantitative phase and six to participate in the qualitative phase. The quantitative data was collected by means of self-assessment test, and a survey questionnaire. While, the qualitative data was collected by means of interview and study notes. To examine the effect of movies on oral proficiency, the six subjects were divided equally into two groups (treatment and control) and asked to take the self-assessment test twice (pre and post) to be interviewed also twice, and to fill in the study notes during the case study's scheme. Only the treatment group was given eight movies with its guides and asked to self-study it over eight weeks. The findings showed that more than the half of the students (38 students; 63.3 %), rated their linguistic proficiency below average with the majority of them (49 students; 81.6 %) showing their lack of confidence in using English. The findings also indicated that movie could help improve the students' oral communication proficiency with higher post-test scores than pre-test scores. Methodological triangulation from both the interviews and the study notes also supports that assertion. In conclusion, self-directed learning using movies has improved the students' oral communication proficiency. This study has implications for practical applications in language teaching and learning which suggests that using movies in self-directed learning can be effective to improve linguistic proficiency out of class. The results strongly suggest that further larger scale investigations into students' language improvement out of class should be carried out to get more comprehensive data.

## **PROFISIENSI LINGUISTIK SISWAZAH JORDAN YANG MAJOR DALAM BAHASA INGGERIS: KESAN FILEM DALAM PROFISIENSI KOMUNIKASI ORAL**

### **ABSTRAK**

Tahap kemahiran linguistik mahasiswa bahasa Inggeris yang rendah telah menimbulkan kekhawatiran mengenai pengajaran dan pembelajaran bahasa Inggeris di kebanyakan negara-negara yang menggunakan bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa asing (EFL, English as a foreign language). Walaupun banyak kajian telah dijalankan untuk meningkatkan kemahiran linguistik mahasiswa, kajian-kajian tersebut dijalankan dalam konteks EFL di dalam kelas. Akibatnya, hanya ada sedikit percubaan yang telah diambil untuk meningkatkan tahap penguasaan linguistik mahasiswa dari luar kelas. Melalui penyelidikan kuantitatif dan kualitatif, kajian ini cuba menjawab soalan; 'Bagaimana mahasiswa-mahasiswa EFL di Jordan melihat tahap kemahiran linguistik mereka, dan adakah cara-cara membantu mahasiswa-mahasiswa ini meningkatkan kemahiran komunikasi lisan mereka dari luar kelas?' Untuk berbuat demikian, 60 mahasiswa EFL telah dipilih dari Universiti Nasional Ajloun di Jordan untuk mengambil bahagian dalam fasa kuantitatif kajian ini, dan 6 orang mahasiswa dipilih untuk mengambil bahagian dalam fasa kualitatif. Data kuantitatif dikumpul melalui ujian penilaian diri, dan soal selidik. Data kualitatif dikumpulkan menggunakan temubual dan nota kajian. Untuk menyiasati kesan filem terhadap kecekapan lisan, enam subjek dibahagikan kepada dua kumpulan, iaitu eksperimental dan control, dan diminta untuk mengambil ujian bahasa penilaian diri sebanyak dua kali iaitu sekali sebelum permulaan kajian kes dan satu lagi selepas kajian kes, ditemubual dua kali, dan mengisi nota kajian semasa kajian kes. Hanya kumpulan eksperimental yang diberikan lapan filem dengan panduannya dan diminta belajar dengannya selama lapan minggu. Penemuan menunjukkan bahawa lebih daripada separuh daripada mahasiswa, 38 orang (63.3%), menilai kemahiran linguistik mereka di bawah purata dengan majoriti, 49 orang (81.6%), menunjukkan kekurangan keyakinan mereka menggunakan Bahasa Inggeris. Kajian kes menunjukkan bahawa filem dapat membantu meningkatkan kemahiran komunikasi lisan mahasiswa kerana skor selepas ujian lebih tinggi daripada skor sebelum ujian. Persepsi mereka dalam temubual dan nota kajian mereka juga menyokong hal tersebut. Disimpulkan bahawa pembelajaran sendiri dengan menggunakan video telah menambahbaik kemahiran komunikasi lisan mahasiswa. Kajian ini mempunyai implikasi untuk aplikasi praktikal dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran bahasa yang menunjukkan bahawa penggunaan bahan video dari luar kelas dapat berkesan baik. Hasil kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa penyiasatan dengan skala yang lebih besar dalam pembaikan kemahiran bahasa dari luar kelas mesti dibuat agar mendapatkan data lebih lengkap.

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## LIST OF APPENDICES

- A Self-assessment Test
- B Survey Questionnaire
- C Study Notes
- D Transcript of Interviews
- E Self-directed Learning Using Movies Scheme
- F Official Document (Consent letter, validation and translation)





## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACTFL	American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
CAL	Computer Assisted Learning
CCT	Communicative Competence Theory
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
F2F	Face-to-Face
JLPT	Japan Language Proficiency Test
OCLL	Out-of-class Language Learning
QDA	Qualitative Data Analysis
SA	Self-Assessment
SDL	Self-Directed Learning
SDT	Self Determination Theory
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences





## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION



The current study tried to answer the overarching research question; ‘How do Jordanian EFL students perceive their level of linguistic proficiency, and is there a way of helping these students improve their oral communication proficiency out-of-class?’

This chapter includes introduction, background of the study, contextual background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, research hypotheses, significance of the study, theoretical framework, conceptual framework, definition of terms, operational definitions, the study limitations, and summary.





## 1.2 Background of the Study

Generally speaking, EFL students' low level of linguistic proficiency has raised many concerns about English teaching and learning in most, if not all, EFL countries where English is not spoken commonly. Various attempts to promote students' level of linguistic proficiency have been considered. These attempts have led to changes in the methods of teaching; shifting from a focus on receptive skills and knowledge to an emphasis on productive skills. As a result, English language teaching methodologies have shifted from the traditional approaches to communicative language teaching approach (CLT) in which the main focus is on developing learners' communicative competence in the targeted language (Al-Ahdal et al., 2014).



part of one's language competence within the Communicative Language Teaching paradigm, the teaching of speaking and listening skills (oral communication) in second/foreign language learning has become a hot topic for researchers and stakeholders over the past few decades.

However, oral communication skills (listening and speaking) are vital but difficult to be acquired in a language class as it presents a large number of challenges to second language learners for many reasons (Feng, 2007). In the first place, it encompasses a complex cognitive processing task that is challenging for second language learners to accomplish (Bygate, 2009). As such, it requires learners to understand and employ linguistic, non-linguistic, and contextual parameters such as mimics, gestures, and body language in an effective way to construct and receive





meaning by producing and receiving utterances (Göktürk, 2016). In the second place, there are many psychological factors that come into action during second language learners' engagement with oral communication such as self-confidence and anxiety (Wilson, 2006).

In addition to other psychological factors and the cognitive demand, extra challenge with oral communication is that in the EFL context where English is taught as a foreign language, learners have a limited number of opportunities to use the targeted language outside of the classroom. Thus, language stakeholders need to find ways to extend the oral communication practices out-of-class to expose their learners to the target language more effectively, rather than purely rely on in-class limited activities (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996, as cited in Göktürk, 2016). Especially in EFL contexts where learners still have very little or no exposure to English beyond the classroom (Fathali & Okada, 2016).

In order to enhance learners' oral communication skills, to increase exposure, to foster self-reflection, and to increase the amount of extensive practice of oral communication skills, a number of multimedia technologies have been recently employed. Out of these, video has received considerable attention from researchers and educators (e.g., Metruk, 2018; Rismawati, 2017; Göktürk, 2016; Kim, 2015; Yaseen & Shakir, 2015; Tahir, 2015; Woottipong, 2014; Bal-Gezegina, 2014; Rokni & Atae, 2014; Ismaili, 2013).

Although several studies have investigated the utilization of video in foreign/second language speaking/listening classes as a way of increasing learners'





exposure to the target language, the majority of these studies either focused only on learners' perceptions of the incorporation of video into listening classes, or were conducted in an ESL/EFL context in-class, where learners might have very limited time to practice the target language (Göktürk, 2016). As a result, literature lacks enough investigations on the utilization of video out-of-class as a way of increasing learners' exposure to the targeted language.

### 1.3 Contextual Background of the Study

Since the foundation of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in 1921, Emirate of Trans-Jordan, as a political entity under the British mandate. English language was generally the first foreign language to be taught in Jordan. In the early 1920s there were no specialized teachers, no prescribed textbooks, nor were there any specific curriculum (Hamdan & Abu hatab, 2009). After the independence from the occupation of United Kingdom in 1946, English language was taught in Jordanian schools at the age of eleven, for just one-hour lecture a week. But, in the early 1990s, English language was taught in all Jordanian schools at the early age of six. This means English language was taught in Jordanian schools extensively compared to the previous years.

The spread of English at school level led to an even wider spread at the University level. In 1962, there was only one English department in Jordan at the capital city of Amman. In 1985, the number of English departments in Jordan tripled and reached three. In 2013, the number of English departments in Jordan increased tenfold and reached thirty (Drbseh, 2013). Jordanian students are required to reach a certain





level of English literacy in their final year of school (Tawjihi) in order to gain admission to university. The level of English literacy is determined by a standardized test, General Secondary Education Examination, which is operated by the Ministry of Education in Jordan (Chatwin, 2017).

Nevertheless, there have been several concerns and complains in the field of higher education about the deficiency in English of school graduates who enter universities as English language students or as English language majors (Elttayef & Hussein, 2017). Also, there is widespread discontent among those in higher education who say that students are often not ready for the level of English expected by Jordanian universities. Statistics reveals that the number of students who did not pass the English language qualification entrance test for universities and who were thus enrolled in English language training courses nearly doubled in the 2007–2013 period, in spite of the fact they already passed the General Secondary Education Examination which is operated by the Ministry of Education in Jordan. This stimulates a critical question about the preparation of school students for academic life and, thus, lifelong learning (Alhabahba, et al., 2016).

So far, as revealed by Alhabahba et al., (2016), English language demonstrated by K-12 schools deteriorated pedagogically, politically and financially. Correspondingly, international organizations have revealed that as a result of the existing educational system in Jordan, English language proficiency is declining compared to global levels. One of these international organizations is EFEPI, Education First English Proficiency Index, which examines and ranks the average level of English skills in MENA, Middle East and North African, countries. Recently, EF





EPI reported that MENA countries scored lower than seventy countries around the world in English language proficiency. Among MENA countries, Jordan has scored below the global average from 2013 to 2015 and ranked in the same timeframe as very low-proficiency region (Alhabahba et al., 2016). This has raised many concerns about the capability of Jordan educational system in producing qualified language learners, also, about the process of teaching English from A to Z.

The above mentioned situation has captured a few of Jordanian researchers as can be noticed in the literature. These researchers mainly tried to investigate only the reasons behind this situation and no attempt has been taken to improve the current situation, this may due to the research environment in Jordan. However, The results of their studies indicated that the Jordanian EFL students were facing many challenges in learning English Language, those relating to psychological, social, and the linguistic domain, in addition to instructor domains (Khatatneh & Teh, 2018; Alrawashdeh & Al-Zayed, 2017; Al-Roud, 2016; Yassin, 2015; AlKhawaldeh, 2010).

Khatatneh and Teh (2018) further evaluate the challenges faced by teachers and the barriers faced by students in learning English language in Jordan. He concluded that there is a general deficiency in the achievement and learning of English among students. This deficiency emanated from several causes and situations, including issues with teacher-student, poor designed curriculum, and student inefficiency.

Alrawashdeh and Al-Zayed (2017) revealed that the instruction of listening comprehension in Jordanian schools has many issues. First, issues relevant to teachers'





level of proficiency. Teachers need more training courses to deal with their lack of experience. The insistence on learning other skills leads to divergence from the main objective of teaching listening comprehension. Second, the issues faced by teachers with regard to the teaching aids and availability of resources and the educational environment are related to the huge number of students inside the classroom and the lack of equipment, rich libraries, teaching aids, material support and audiovisual teaching facilities such as the English laboratory.

Al-Roud (2016) indicated that university students in Jordan were suffering from many problems in possessing English language speaking skill. The study revealed that students, educators and staff, parents and the society were responsible for the deficiency of English-speaking skill. Regarding to the instructor, it is clear that most of them concentrate on teaching grammar, reading, writing more than teaching speaking. They also use the native language (Arabic language) which impedes learning speaking skill. In addition to what was mentioned, the difficulty that teacher encounter is in evaluating speaking skill. Learning speaking skill is affected with linguistic skills, so the lack of vocabularies that the students possess causes a defect in learning speaking skill .The reason for that is that teachers of English language teach vocabulary in isolation not in situations.

Yassin (2015) focuses on some of the major challenges in teaching English language at universities in Jordan. His study was conducted to determine the obstacles that prevent students from learning and teachers from teaching in effective methods. The study revealed that one main reason among others is teaching methods and the environment of such schools. The current methods of teaching used in some schools





are similar to traditional methods of teaching. Students are seated, listening and waiting for the teacher to explain anything relevant to the class. As a result, most of the time, students of English would agree with their teachers. The outcomes of such a teaching method is not always sufficient and satisfactory for students because teachers forget the fact that students have different cultural backgrounds and learning preferences. On the one hand, teaching English in such environment challenges English language teachers and make teaching process difficult. On the other hand, English language learners are afraid of asking questions in classroom because they are afraid of making mistakes in front of their classmates. English language instructors assume that most English language learners comprehend in classroom whereas most of them are shy to ask questions. According to English language learners, the approaches used in these classes are inadequate and do not allow them to learn a new language smoothly. On the contrary, some of the approaches used in teaching make learning English a difficult task to achieve.

AlKhawaldeh (2010) studied the types of challenges that EFL teachers faced in the first and second directorates of education in Amman, the most developed city in Jordan which is expected to have the best quality of education. The findings of the study indicated that one of the obvious challenges is the inability of students to communicate in English besides the negative attitudes towards English. The researchers noticed that many teachers complain that teaching oral skills seems so hard in classrooms. Many teachers asserted that they usually find difficulty in teaching and assessing students' oral skills. Their students feel not only shy but also unable to speak English language although many oral exercises are included in the current Jordanian EFL textbooks.





Bani Abdo and Breen (2010) claimed that there is a serious deficiency and gap in Jordanian students' abilities to acquire and use spoken English effectively for the purpose of general and formal communication. The authors mentioned eight possible reasons behind that as follow:

First, significant differences between the two languages, Arabic and English, with regard to syntax, grammar, the overall linguistic logistics and alphabetic characters of the two languages. The variations between English and Arabic are too large to be described in depth here. In short, the differences are so vast that reliance on first language, Arabic, competence for building second language, English, competence would be severely limited for the typical Jordanian EFL student.



Second, while seemingly paradoxical, the fact that many EFL teachers are not

adequately trained, equipped and/or prepared to explicitly accommodate and understand the different linguistic learning styles of some Jordanian native students is another obstacle to successful EFL instruction in Jordan. One would believe that Jordanian EFL teachers who teach Jordanian students would easily exercise successful pedagogical techniques with their own country's learners; however, some studies (Yassin, 2015; Bani Abdo & Breen, 2010) have found that some Jordanian students still struggle to acquire English, partly because instructors do not apply effective EFL teaching methods.

Third, Jordanian students tend to focus more on achieving good grades in their EFL classes than on learning the language itself. As EFL / ESL literature generally shows (Beckett, 2005, Nero, 2005, Freeman & Freeman, 2004 ), and as common sense





dictates, If ESL / EFL students prioritize grades over knowledge / competence (which happens to be a common problem among many students around the globe), this attitude makes students reluctant and unwilling to learn. This perspective and thought style significantly interferes with their understanding, focus and eventual comprehension of English, especially when it comes to learning other languages, especially those that differ substantially from their own (Peregoy & Boyle, 2004).

Fourth, one teaching technique implemented by Jordanian EFL teachers is that when a word is taught in English and the students do not gain immediate comprehension of that word, the teachers return to Arabic to clarify what the word means. Resorting to Arabic in translation is typically counterproductive since students need to hear and understand as much English as possible while explaining. This linguistic return in the explanatory cycle is also a common practice that prevents EFL learning across a wide range of cultures (Nero, 2005; Swick, 2004). Use English as an alternative to describing difficult words maximizes student exposure to English, thus increasing the amount of English they hear and potentially understand. Using more Arabic in this way appears to slow down the process of acquiring the EFL, thereby hindering the linguistic progress of learners and reducing the intrinsic and desired advantages of learning the language quickly and effectively.

Fifth, the linguistic competence of students in the same classroom varies widely in most Jordanian classrooms where EFL is taught, but there seems to be little tolerance for the readiness of individual learners to acquire English. A failure to take account of individual learners is a common barrier to learning through multiple geographical settings in many classrooms (Beckett, 2005; Yawkey & Minaya-Rowe, 2005).





Sixth, overcrowding contributes to ineffective pedagogy in Jordanian EFL classrooms. Because EFL instructors have limited time to teach and are unable to accommodate, meet and respond to each student at each point of the lecture. Due to the lack of an individualized teacher-student climate, many students left behind and may stall in their learning process. There is also a lack of motivation in some students due to this deficit in individualized communication with each learner. On the one hand, this is partially the fault of the teachers, since they obviously cannot devote special efforts to inspiring the student to learn effectively (Roessingh, 2006). On the other hand, the students are also partly responsible for this lack of motivation, because they too are responsible for wanting and trying to learn the language by any means possible, even if this means learning outside the classroom.



In this situation, the theory of social presence which claims that the social

effects of a medium are caused primarily by the degree of its social presence to its users (Tanis, 2003), can clarify why some students feel that their teachers lack a personalized interest in them, probably because of this over-sized classroom. Put it another way, when learners feel that teachers who are supposed to guide them are not being handled with and given sufficient attention, the expectations of the teachers by the students decrease, often causing a loss of respect and willingness to listen to the EFL instructor. This impairs the learning atmosphere and creates a block in interpersonal communication and pedagogy.

Seventh, many Jordanian students often feel that the language itself is not a necessity, some of them think that English language is not a practical tool that they will use in the future for job or communication purposes. Actually, such kind of attitude is





a misconception at times, because English language does become a necessity. It therefore depends on the goals of the individual students and whether they want to move into careers or circumstances requiring a fluent or usable level of English comprehension, including oral and written communication skills.

Eighth, a major flaw in the teaching of English, which is due to how the government controls the advancement of student learning of English for native Jordanian students, is that while a student may not learn and excel in understanding the language, the educational system is designed to only allow a student to fail once (Joffe, 2002). To make clear, if the learner fails the first time, the learner should retake the same class again the next year. The second time, teachers are instructed to pass and forward the learner to the next level of English, even if that learner is not prepared or capable to handle the next level of English. In other words, the learner automatically moves forward in the EFL program even if the quality of his work is equivalent to a failing grade.

To come to the point, under these circumstances, Jordanian EFL students' level of English proficiency in general and oral communication in particular has severely affected which resulted in a serious deficiency and gap in Jordanian students' abilities to acquire and use spoken English effectively for the purpose of general and formal communication.





#### 1.4 Statement of the Problem

Jordanian EFL students are facing many challenges in learning English Language; those relating to psychological, social, linguistic domain, instructor domains, teaching aids, availability of resources and the educational environment as indicated in the previous section (1.3). Under these circumstances, Jordanian EFL students' level of English proficiency in general and oral communication in particular has severely affected which resulted in a serious deficiency and gap in Jordanian students' abilities to acquire and use spoken English effectively for the purpose of general and formal communication (Khatatneh & Teh, 2018; Alrawashdeh & Al-Zayed, 2017; Al-Eiadeh et al., 2016; Alhabahba et al., 2016; Al-Roud, 2016; Yassin, 2015; AlKhawaldeh, 2010).



The problem as observed by the researcher, most Jordanian EFL students give the impression to have competence and to be successful on paper but the case is different with their oral communication. Some students are unable to express themselves successfully even in simple sentences. In 2007, Qureshi precisely identifies the problem "It is the problem of the student who is structurally competent but who cannot communicate appropriately" (p.4). Recently, Al-Eiadeh et al., (2016) emphasized that in Jordan context "the problem of teaching English to students, especially the problem of oral communication has not been solved yet" (p.182).

Like most EFL students, oral communication is challenging to Jordanian students. Continuous research in Jordanian literature as well as international FL literature revealed that this situation existed mainly, among others, due to the lack of





exposure of English language inside and outside the classroom (e.g., Khatatneh & Teh, 2018; Alrawashdeh & Al-Zayed, 2017; Mahi, 2017; Al- Eiadeh et al., 2016; Alhabahba et al., 2016; Al-Roud, 2016; Khan, 2015; Yassin, 2015; Bahrani & Tam, 2012; Al-Nawrasy, 2012; AlKhawaldeh, 2010; Bani Abdo & Breen, 2010).

### 1.5 Purpose of the Study

In order to tackle the research problem, the study investigates Jordanian EFL students' perceptions of their linguistic proficiency, finds out the correlation between the students' perceived linguistic proficiency and their level of confidence in using English, and examines the effect of self-directed learning using movies on the students' perceived oral communication proficiency.

It is anticipated that the data gathered will show Jordanian EFL students' self-image as language learners, what has influenced this perception, and their confidence in using English language, and to end with identifying effective ways of improving the students' current situation especially the one related to their low level of oral communication proficiency.





## 1.6 Research Objectives

The main aim of this study is to investigate Jordanian EFL students' perceived linguistic proficiency also to help these students improve their oral communication proficiency out-of-class. To achieve that, this study has been designed with the following objectives:

RO1 To investigate the students' perceived level of linguistic proficiency.

RO2 To find out the correlation between the students' perceived linguistic proficiency and their level of confidence in using English.

RO3 To examine the effect of self-directed learning using movies on the students' perceived oral communication proficiency.

## 1.7 Research Questions

In order to achieve the main objectives of this study, the following three research questions are addressed and unpacked into several sub-question:

RQ1 How do Jordanian EFL students perceive their level of linguistic proficiency?

The first research question has six sub-questions as follows:



1. What is the students' self-assessment of their linguistic proficiency?

a- What is the students' assessment of their listening skill?

b- What is the students' assessment of their speaking skill?

c- What is the students' assessment of their reading skill?

d- What is the students' assessment of their writing skill?

2. Do the students feel satisfied with their linguistic proficiency level?

3. Do the students need to improve their linguistic proficiency level?

4. Why do the students want to improve their linguistic proficiency level?

5. What kinds of methods have the students tried to improve their linguistic Proficiency level?

6. What do the students think can improve their linguistic proficiency level?

RQ2 What is the correlation between the students' perceived linguistic proficiency and their level of confidence in using English?

The second research question has three sub-questions as follows:

1. How confident are the students in using English?

2. Do the students' self-assessment scores correlate with their level of confidence in using English?
3. Does the gender of the students affect their confidence and/or self-assessment?

RQ3 What effect does self-directed learning using movies have on the students' perceived oral communication proficiency?

The third research question has four sub-questions as follows:

1. Have the students used video to improve their own linguistic proficiency?
  2. Do the students think using video can be an effective way of improving linguistic proficiency?
  3. Why do the students think video can be useful in improving linguistic proficiency?
  4. Can movies help improve the students' perceived oral communication proficiency?
    - a. Can movies help improve the students' perceived listening skills?



b. Can movies help improve the students' perceived speaking skills?

## 1.8 Research Hypotheses

Based on the addressed three main research questions in the previous section (1.8), three research hypotheses were devised. The three hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: The students will not perceive their own linguistic proficiency as good or higher.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a significant positive correlation between the students' perceived linguistic proficiency and their level of confidence in using English.

Hypothesis 3: Self-directed learning using movie will have a positive effect on students' oral communication proficiency.

## 1.9 Significance of the Study

The result of the current study would be beneficial to EFL learners in general and Jordanian students in particular. As mentioned earlier, the main reason behind EFL students' low level of oral communication proficiency is most EFL students have little or no exposure to the English language outside and inside the classroom. For that





reason, the students mainly need to be provided with authentic exposure and input to the targeted language. One possible tool proposed by the current study is digital movies. Therefore, it seems valuable and significant to examine the effect of movies on the students' oral communication proficiency.

The current study is also significant to the international literature as well as Jordanian literature. Practically, there was no evidence of literature neither investigating Jordanian EFL students' perceptions of their linguistic proficiency nor examining the effect of movies as a tool to improve EFL students' oral communication proficiency out-of-class.

The study is also significant to the field of TEFL/TESL self-assessment research because it addresses the lack of self-assessment tests and the absence of an Arabic self-assessment test for linguistic proficiency. Therefore, the researcher in the current study decided to develop an EFL self-assessment test for Arabic native speakers. The new test was adapted from Japan Language Proficiency Test (2012).

### **1.10 Theoretical framework**

Imenda (2014) stated that a theoretical framework is the application of a theory that a researcher chooses in his/her research to guide him/her. She also describes the theoretical framework as the soul of the study by determining, investigating, and contributing to solve the research problem. She defines theoretical framework by stating "is the soul of every research project. It determines how a given researcher





formulates his/ her research problem – and how s/he goes about investigating the problem, and what meaning s/he attaches to the data accruing from such an investigation” (p.185).

However, the theoretical framework in this study is mainly the application of seven theories; constructivism, multimedia, dual coding, communicative competence, self-determination, Branden’s self-esteem, and difference theory. In line with the current study’s theoretical framework, constructivism theory supports self-assessment. Multimedia theory and dual coding theory support the use of video as a learning tool. Communicative competence theory supports linguistic proficiency and oral communication proficiency. Branden’s self-esteem theory supports self-confidence. Self-determination theory supports out-of-class language learning (OCLL), in the current study’s context (self-directed learning using movies with the help of the researcher). Last, Difference theory supports the insertion of gender. This study used these seven theories to support the study design and to establish the connection between variables.

Constructivism theory is formalized by Jean Piaget. Constructivism is a knowledge theory which argues that human generates meaning and knowledge from an interaction between their ideas and their experiences. Constructivism theory explains how humans might acquire knowledge and learn. It considers learning as an active process where the learners build on their own representations by giving points to their prior knowledge (Pange et al, 2010). Knowledge does not exist independent of the learner (Kouicem & Nachoua, 2016). Knowledge is actively constructed by individuals and not passively transferred to them (von Glasersfeld, 1989, as cited in





Chen, 2008). Based on the notion of constructivism theory, it can be claimed that knowledge is the product of the interaction between ones' prior experience and following experience. It also can be claimed that involve oneself deeper in a particular experience (learning) would lead to a richer experience (better learning).

Dual Coding theory and Multimedia Learning theory propose that learners apply two types of information process systems; verbal and visual. Allan Paivio theorized that cognition and memory are assisted by two different symbolic systems, with one addressing nonverbal information (or imagery) and the other addressing verbal information. Paivio assumes also that the two distinct systems were simultaneously independent and interconnected (Christiansen, 2009). The type of information which is processed throughout both channels has an extra positive effect on recall (Mayer & Anderson, 1991; Najjar, 1995). Based on the notion of dual coding theory, it can be claimed that learners learn better when the learning material involves both verbal and non-verbal channels. In line with movies, movies can stimulate both channels verbal and nonverbal with its unique both elements audio and visual, respectively.

Regarding the notion of Communicative Competence theory, Hymes (1972) defined communicative competence not only as an inherent grammatical competence but also as the ability to use grammatical competence in a variety of communicative situations, thus bringing the sociolinguistic perspective into Chomsky's linguistic view of competence (Kurcz, 2004). Bagarić (2007) traced the history and the debates among linguists about communicative competence theory until the last agreement, however, the last agreement states that knowledge about language is not enough to achieve





successful language user but both knowledge and skill to use it in communication is the key.

Self-determination theory (SDT) is a broad umbrella theory which includes sub theories about motivation and basic needs. According to SDT, individual needs the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs (relatedness, competence, and autonomy) which are universal and innate in order to be motivated (Dincer & Yesilyurt, 2017). When these needs are satisfied, the individuals become more motivated to act and show greater positive outcomes in the education setting (Deci & Ryan, 2002). SDT also examines how individual differences and social contexts facilitate different types of motivation, especially controlled motivation and autonomous motivation, and in turn predict psychological health, performance, learning, and experience (Deci & Ryan, 2015). SDT is associated highly with learner autonomy and relates motivation to the students' willingness to take responsibility for their own actions (Dornyei, 1998). It can provide a good framework for OCLL, since successful OCLL depends largely on learners' self-determined behaviors and actions (Mobarhan et al., 2014; Reinders, 2014, as cited in Fathali & Okada, 2018).

Branden's self-esteem theory became a widely understood and referenced theory. Branden (1969) considers that self-esteem is made up of two components: "(a) to consider oneself effective, to trust in one's ability to think, learn, choose and make correct decisions, and to overcome challenges and produce changes, and (b) to respect oneself" (Abdel-Khalek, 2016, page. 4). It can be noticed that these two components are closely related to successful language learners' characteristics and affect also the process of self-assessment.





Difference theory was developed by Deborah Frances Tannen. Tannen's main study has focused on the expression of interpersonal relationships in conversational interaction including differences in conversational style as connected to the gender. However, Difference theory often presents the female and male genders as being two separate cultures (Sunderland, 2006). To that end, two separate cultures means two separate languages since language embedded in culture.

All in all, the following figure (1.1) explains the relationship among the theories of the study.



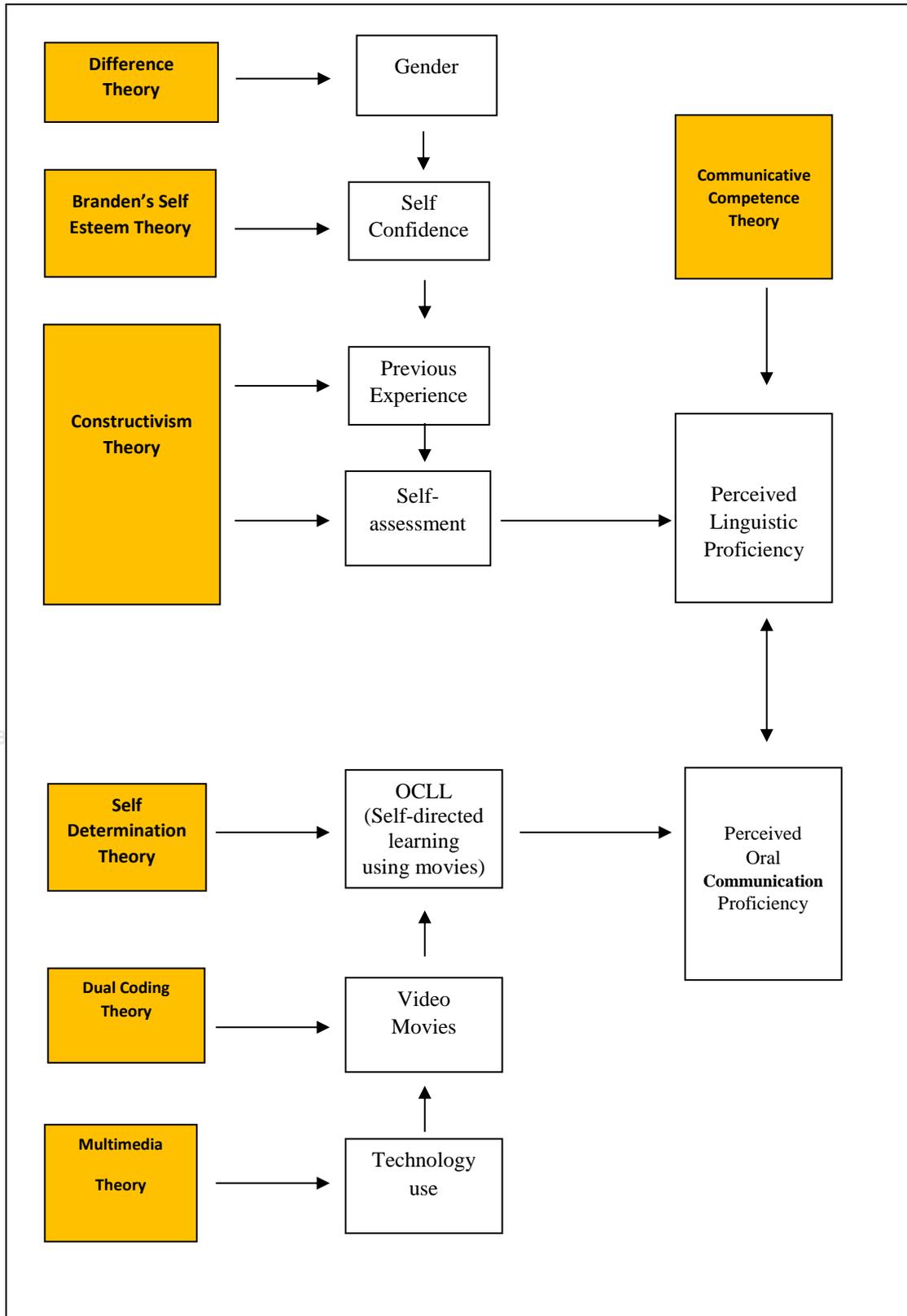


Figure 1.1. Theoretical Framework



### 1.11 Conceptual framework

In terms of variables, the current study has eight main variables; linguistic proficiency, oral communication proficiency, self-assessment, movies, gender, the need and the ways of improving proficiency, previous learning experience, and self-confidence in using English. When exploring the causal relationship between any two variables, one variable becomes a dependent and the other an independent.

Regarding the first two variables (linguistic proficiency and oral communication proficiency), communicative competence theory assumes that both knowledge and the ability to use this knowledge in real life situations are the indicators of linguistic proficiency. Following that assumption, it can be claimed that if any positive change is caused to knowledge or ability would lead to improve linguistic proficiency. To achieve this study's aim which is to help Jordanian EFL students improve their oral communication proficiency, we hope that positive change will occur to the students' level of oral communication proficiency as a result of using movies. Therefore, one of the main objectives of this study is to investigate the effect of movies on oral communication proficiency. In this study, movie is the cause of effect, and oral communication proficiency is expected to be affected by movies. Based on that, oral communication proficiency is marked as a dependent variable.

In addition, while dealing with communicative competence theory which assumes that both knowledge and the ability to use this knowledge in real life situations are the indicators of linguistic proficiency, it can be noticed that several obvious variables are at play. On the first hand, knowledge has a great connection with previous





learning experience. On the second hand, ability is influenced by self-confidence. Therefore, it seems valuable to include both learning experience and self-confidence as variables in the current study. However, other variables also may influence or play a role in what we observed. To limit that, this study deals with respondents who are likely sharing the same conditions such as age, major, nationality, and background. However, gender was difficult to be isolated, therefore it is included and investigated as an independent variable in the current study.

Regarding the treatment variable (movie), both dual coding theory and multimedia assumes that knowledge is processed through two channels (verbal and pictorial). Both theories also claimed that learners learn better when the learning process involves both verbal and non-verbal channels. Based on this study's exploratory phase, lack of exposure is the main reason behind students low level of linguistic proficiency, it is hoped that video with its unique both elements (audio and visual) can stimulate both channels (verbal and nonverbal) effectively. Then, provide students with effective exposure and input to English language. In other words, movie is expected to affect both knowledge and ability (linguistic proficiency) by providing exposure and input. In this scenario, the more movies (cause), the more effect on linguistic proficiency. Based on that, movie is marked as an independent variable, precisely a treatment variable since it can be manipulated by the researcher.

The need and the ways of improving proficiency are connected to the prior learning experience. In the current study, learning experience is considered independent variable based on the notion of constructivism theory. Constructivism theory explains how humans might acquire knowledge and learn. Knowledge is the





product of the interaction between one's prior experience and following experience. In that sense, if any change is caused to learning experience, it would lead to effect on knowledge. In the current study' context, knowledge is specific to linguistic proficiency. Therefore, learning experience is used as a control variable in order to find a logical explanation for extreme scores, if any, which emerged from the data, especially self-assessment scores.

Self-confidence is an important effective variable in successful foreign/second language learning. Branden's self-esteem theory considers that trust in one's ability to think, learn, choose and make correct decisions, and to overcome challenges and produce changes are the key components of one's self-esteem. It can be noticed that these components are closely related to successful language learner's characteristics and affect also the process of self-assessment. In the current study, students' self-confidence and self-assessment scores were used as variables. However, there are no independent variables in correlational relationship; all variables are dependent.

All in all, the following figure (1.2) explains the relationship among the variables of the study.



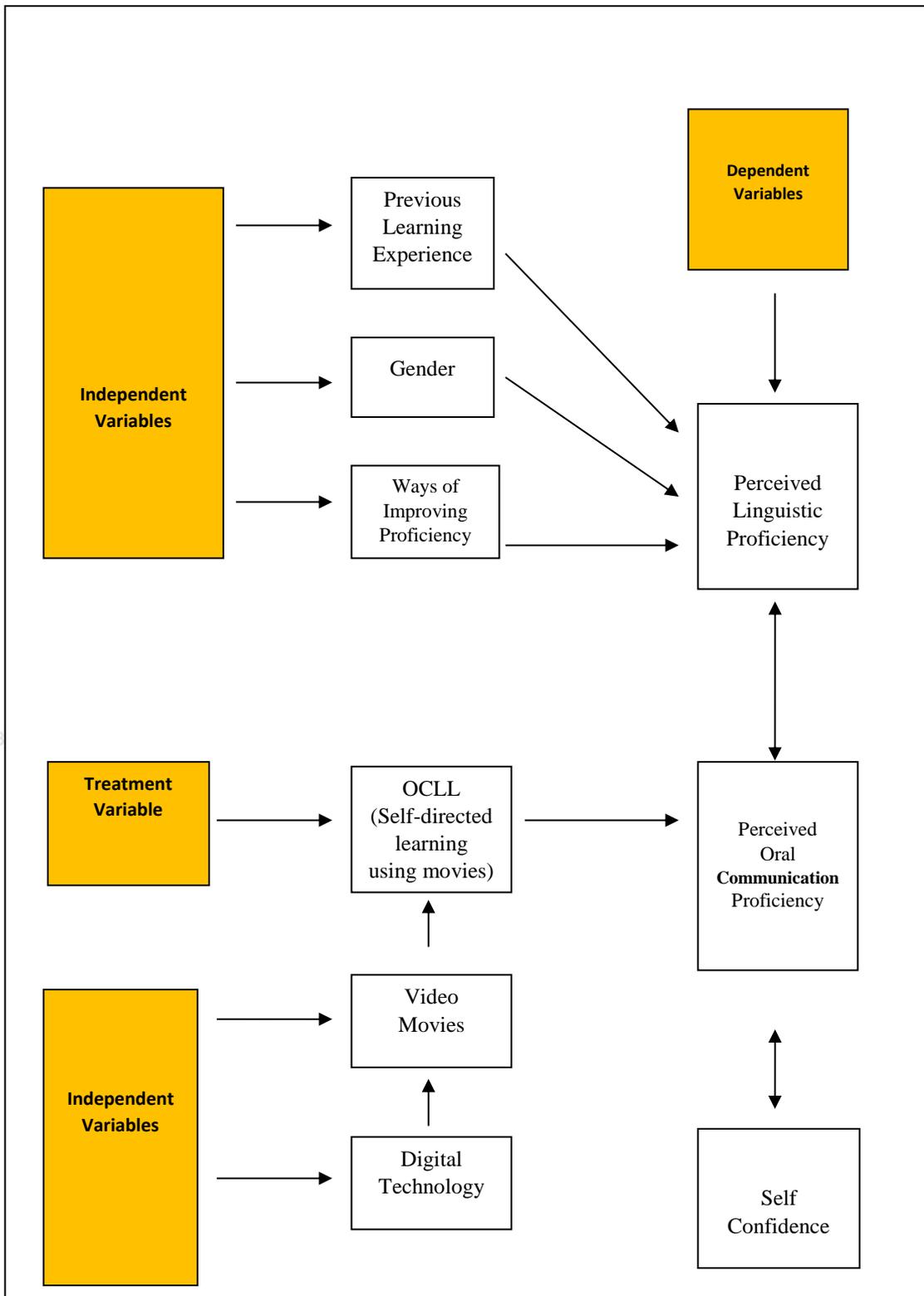


Figure 1.2. Conceptual Framework



## 1.12 Definition of Terms

**Linguistic Proficiency:** “the extent to which an individual possesses the linguistic cognition necessary to function in a given communicative situation, in a given modality (listening, speaking, reading or writing)” (Hulstijn, 2011).

**Oral Communication:** “refers to the speaking and listening skills needed to participate verbally in discussions, exchange thoughts and information, make clear and convincing presentations, and interact with a variety of audiences” (Mherzog, 2012).

**Self-Assessment:** “a process of formative assessment during which students reflect on and evaluate the quality of their work and their learning, judge the degree to which they reflect explicitly stated goals or criteria, identify strengths and weaknesses in their work, and revise accordingly (Goodrich, 1996; Gregory et al., 2000; Hanrahan & Isaacs, 2001; Paris & Paris, 2001; Andrade & Boulay, 2003)” (as cited in Andrade & Du, 2007, p. 160).

**Out-of-class Language Learning (OCLL):** “any kind of learning which is happening anywhere else except inside the classroom and involves self-instruction, naturalistic learning and self-directed naturalistic learning” (Benson, 2011).

**Self-directed Learning:** “a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and





implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes”  
(Knowles, 1975, as cited in Cottrell, 1996, p. 375)

**Video (movie):** a type of visual communication which uses a sequence of images combined with sounds to entertain people, tell stories, or teach them something.

The operational definitions chosen for this study are as follows:

**Linguistic Proficiency:** the overall knowledge of a language four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and the ability to use it in real life situations.

**Oral Communication proficiency:** the overall knowledge of a language verbal skills (listening, and speaking) and the ability to use it in real life situations.

**Perceived Linguistic Proficiency:** the overall knowledge of a language four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and the ability to use it in real life situations as measured through can-do self-assessment test.

**Perceived Oral Communication proficiency:** the overall knowledge of a language verbal skills (listening, and speaking) and the ability to use it in real life situations as measured through can-do self-assessment test.

**Self-Assessment Test:** A calibrated can-do self-evaluation survey to measure and evaluate the level of linguistic proficiency.





**Out-of-class Language Learning (OCLL):** any language learning activity which takes place beyond the classroom whether it is orientated or autonomous.

**Self-directed Learning:** an orientated learning process in which learners take a part in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes.

**Orientated Learning Process:** a learning process where learners are provided with opportunity to learn out-of-class.

**Video (movie):** a type of learning material which uses different communication genres in dual channels (verbal and pictorial) to produce exposure to authentic English language as well as input.

In this study, the students are referred to EFL freshmen university students in Jordan. Secondly, linguistic proficiency is referred to the four skills of English language (speaking, listening, reading, and writing). In the same manner, oral communication proficiency is referred to speaking and listening skills. Also, in this study usage, self-assessment test is referred to the modified version of can-do self-evaluation survey of language proficiency. In addition, movie and video are used interchangeably to refer to any type of visual communication which uses a sequence of images combined with sounds. Lastly, language proficiency and linguistic proficiency are used interchangeably to refer to the overall knowledge of English language's four skills and the ability to use it in real life situations.





### 1.13 The study limitations

In spite of the careful designing to achieve all purposes stated, this study is not free of limitations. The limitations are as the followings:

First of all, the fact that the study was conducted with only one university in Jordan may limit the extent to which the results can be generalized to the whole population. However, in the process of selecting the perspective students, there were no specific criteria but to be first year English major. This criterion allows students from other universities to participate without limitations. In addition, Ajloun National University has students from many different geographical areas.



Secondly, this study employs students' self-assessment for the data of the

students' linguistic proficiency level. Consequently, there would be inaccurate assessment of students' linguistic proficiency level. However, self-assessment reliability is discussed in the second chapter of this thesis.

Last and not least, the sample size of the case study may be small to generalize the findings of this study. However, the focus of the case study is on analytical generalization rather than statistical generalization. Analytical generalization means testing theories in real life situations.





## 1.14 Summary

This chapter begins with the overarching research question ‘How do Jordanian EFL students perceive their level of linguistic proficiency, and is there a way of helping these students improve their oral communication proficiency out of class?’ and moves on to offer the background for answering that question. Then, followed by discussing the contextual background of the study which revealed that Jordanian EFL students are facing many challenges in learning English Language; those relating to psychological, social, linguistic domain, instructor domains, teaching aids, availability of resources and the educational environment. These challenges affected Jordanian students’ abilities to acquire and use spoken English effectively for the purpose of general and formal communication. This situation in Jordan contributed to the formulation of the research’s problem, purpose, significant, objectives, questions and hypothesis. Based on the seven theories selected and discussed, the theoretical and conceptual frameworks were designed. Definition of terms and operational definitions were presented. Finally, the study limitations were pointed out.

