

OBSTACLES FACED BY STUDENTS IN SPEAKING ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Case study of students at College of Arts and Science – Sharorah

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Abstract

Speaking is regarded as an indicator of language proficiency in general. It is believed that a learner who can speak a particular language fluently is regarded as a proficient learner of that language. In Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the English language is taken as a foreign language and taught from primary level to university level as a compulsory subject but Saudi students at schools and universities face many difficulties in speaking English fluently. Even after completing their graduate degree, some of them could not speak a little bit of English. This study tries to explore the difficulties faced by undergraduate level students and the possible causes of their difficulties in speaking skills. This is an empirical qualitative study in which the researcher adopted a questionnaire and semi-structured interview to collect data from 15 undergraduate level students studying at the Arts and Sciences College in Sharorah. The collected data were thermalized. This article analyzed the causes that make the students difficult to communicate in English and suggest some solutions that can overcome the difficulties. In this background, Descriptive nature of this present paper highlights the difficulties faced by college student in speaking English – a sociological reflection. Result revealed that student use English more frequent only inside the class and less frequent outside the class. Whereas, students" have limited time to learn English in class, and they still do not have enough encouragement to practice English outside the class in order to get familiar with English. Next, the Environment was the leading cause for the problems in learning English. Lack of reading habit and listening tends to challenge several problems in learning English. Recommendations in the light of findings are also discussed in this article. It also analyzed in terms of two broad categories: Difficulties and causes with four/four subcategories of the broad themes. The study explored mainly: personal, social, environmental, and linguistic problems for speaking difficulties and teacher and teaching, course content, overuse of mother tongue and classroom culture as the causal factors of speaking deficiency. The study suggested creating changing teaching practices, creating more speaking activities.

Keywords: *causes, classroom culture, difficulties, speaking skills*

INTRODUCTION

In Kingdom of Saudi Arabia English is taught as a foreign language, and it is learned at the school level and universities. In this world, you go everywhere the people can speak English language or even understand English language. English language plays a greater role for the people in a society. English language is an important subject for people whose English language is not their native language. For surviving in society, they have to learn, understand, and speak English language fluently. For communicating and sharing thoughts with people who belong to other regions who speak different languages, English language is a common language to communicate with them. English language is studying and learning all over the world. In every country, the students are compelled to study and learn English language. Students who want to go to the foreign country for studying purpose they have to understand and speak English language for the sake of surviving in foreign countries. Students study and learn English language from the low-level school to the higher-level university almost 16 years of education they study and learn English language.

But after 16 years of education and learning English language the students are not able to speak English language fluently, why?

What are the issues and problems by which the students are unable to speak English language? even after 16 years of learning and studying it. This is a very serious issue I am targeting what are the reasons behind it that after 16 years of learning, the students are unable to speak and understand English language. Now I am going to target and discussed all the problems faced by students in Speaking English Language.

Literature Review

In the 21st century, the English language has become an inseparable part of the educational curriculum in most countries where English is used as a second or foreign language (Akbari, 2015). The English language is considered a global language and its acquisition increases the opportunities for employment, traveling, higher education, and standard of life (Crystal, 1997). English language teaching is regarded as a challenging task especially in developing countries because the English language is included in the school curriculum from the very beginning to the university level and everyone must deal with this by hook and crook. Each part of human life is connected with English such as science and technology, education, health, entertainment, and others (Harmer, 2001). The latest technological and scientific innovations or resources are mainly written in English. Similarly, the rapidly growing use of information and technology, use of the internet forced everyone to learn English (Richards & Renandya, 2002). A vast number of students desire to learn the English language for their advancement and a better life because they believe; they will get a better job in their life if they have a good command of English (Harmer, 2001). Due to the power of the English language people want to travel and settle in English speaking countries and live a better life there; so the majority of the people, not only students but everyone in the world dream to settle in English speaking countries for their comfortable life, better and quality education (Crystal, 1997). Along with these positive consequences of learning English, there are so many difficulties of learning the English language experienced by the learners of English as a second or foreign language.

2.1 English Language Learning Difficulties

English language teaching and learning in non-English speaking countries is a really challenging job. The English language is kept as teaching the subject in school and university curriculum and even many schools or universities have adopted English as a medium of instruction in the countries where English is used as a second and foreign language but many students find English as difficult subject to learn (Akbari, 2015; Phyak, 2016). The majority of the students fail in English subject either at the school level or at university level due to difficult grammatical patterns of language and due to attitudinal or psychological problems of learners; they believe that English is a very difficult subject (Ahmed, 2015). There are various factors that affect language learning such as difficult grammatical patterns, difficult vocabulary, variation in L1 and L2, motivation, classroom practices and pedagogies, learners' attitudes and so many. Thu'aimah (1989) states that language learning difficulties may occur through a hearing problem, weakness of memories, impaired speech, mental disorder, more introvert, social, individual, and cultural variation of learners (cited in Sokip, 2020). He has concluded that learning difficulties are caused due to socio-cultural and learning strategies of learners they adopted. Language learning is not only affected by individual factors but it can also be affected by social or cultural factors of learners. Various factors such as low motivation of learners in learning, lack of concentration in learning, lack of confidence, teachers' attitudes, learning facilities, and infrastructure influence the ability and willingness of learners to learn their second (Dimayati & Mudjiono, 2010: as cited in Sokip, 2020). Moreover, Sokip (2020) further points out that language learning skills cannot be separated from the aspects of education such as the role of teacher, role of teaching materials and curriculum, the teaching method adopted by the teacher, teaching media, and infrastructure of the institution. The role of a teacher in the classroom as a facilitator may increase the learning proficiency of learners but if the teacher is authoritarian in the classroom then learners are just passive learners and do not get opportunities for language practice (Sokip, 2020). Therefore, the presence of the teacher and the way of teaching in the class play a crucial role in learning a language. So, we can say that language learning is not affected by the individual's learning factors only; other factors cause learning difficulties. Akbari (2016) reported some problems of learning English in her research article. She researched students of MA English in Iran and she has noticed the following difficulties MA students faced in learning the English language in Iran; they are limited vocabulary knowledge, limited grammatical knowledge, and weakness in four language skills, limited knowledge of pronunciation, and spelling, and lack of appropriate learning strategies. According to Akbari (2016), learning strategies are the special tools for enhancing the learning capacity of learners; adopting a special kind of learning strategy may boost up an understanding of the learners. She further stated that language learning difficulties may occur due to a lack of understanding of the key role of English plays in their life; that means

motivation plays a vital role in learning a language. If learners are informed about the use of English language in their life then they may be highly motivated to learn English language. If learners are motivated then they show their concentration in study and learning becomes faster. Raja & Selvi (2011) found environment, attitudes, and teachers' competence as the major factors of learning difficulties. They further said that if we could not create a conducive environment in the classroom, and focus on students learning needs or ability then students may not understand the content easily. Students need to be motivated or teachers should develop a positive attitude towards the English language in learners' minds for better learning. In the same way, they strongly noted that a teacher's competence is the crucial factor for learning difficulties; if he/she could not deliver the content clearly or based on students existing knowledge then students may feel difficulties in learning the language. So, they found that teachers' teaching strategies and classroom culture were found main problems of learning the English language. In the journal, "International Journal of Humanities, Philosophy, and Language" Nor et al. (2019) in their article stated the following problems in learning English as a second language: English is regarded as a difficult subject to learn, learners' learning depends on the English teacher's role, lack of conducive environment for language practice, insufficient or lack of appropriate exposure in the target language, limitation of vocabulary proficiency, lack of motivation, teaching pedagogy. A research was conducted in the Philippines on "English language difficulties of Korean students in a Philippine Multidisciplinary University" by Guzman et al. (2006). The study aimed to explore what kind of difficulties Korean students of undergraduate level face for learning English as foreign in the Philippines. They have summarized the major difficulties students faced during their learning as follow: different pronunciation, inability to understand what teachers say, limited vocabulary, errors in formulating correct sentences, trouble in expressing oneself, lack of practice in real life. In their research primarily found an accentual variation of teacher's pronunciation as the main difficulty of learning English. They have also found teachers' presence and teaching culture of the classroom as the main difficulty of learning the English language. Learning difficulties cause problems in developing various skills of language such as: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. There are various problems of speaking and causes faced by the EFL/ESL students.

2.2 Problems Faced by the Students in Speaking English Language

The problems faced by students are given below:

1. Common Grammar Mistakes While Speaking English Language

Common grammatical mistakes mostly the students faced in speaking.

Learning English grammar is very difficult for students. In speaking English language mostly, the students make grammar mistakes.

Usually, students make mistakes in tenses, active and passive, and vocabulary during speaking English language.

They used the wrong tenses sometimes they want to speak in the past tense but they used to speak in the present tense instead of the past tense.

They cannot easily differentiate between the difference and how to use the past, present, and future tenses.

2. Lack of Confidence in Speaking English Language

Lack of confidence is also one of the reasons by which the students cannot speak English language in public.

They are not confident about themselves speaking English language in front of people. This is usually caused by the teachers, the teachers not giving sufficient encouragement to speak English language in public.

Usually, the teachers didn't encourage them to speak English in the classroom or in front of people.

They learn English language but they didn't learn how to speak it. This one of the problems that mostly the students faced in the classroom or in front of people.

Self-Confidence plays a very important role in speaking English language if the students didn't believe and confident in themselves then they cannot speak English language.

The self-confidence and beliefs of the students are completely depending on the teachers. The teachers have to encourage and motivate them to believe in themselves and be confident in speaking English language in public.

If the students are worried about making mistakes in speaking, So, the teachers have to teach them that no one can be born perfectly, everyone learns from their mistakes.

They have been self-confident in speaking even they are speaking wrong. They will learn from their mistakes and correct them in speaking again.

So self-confidence in speaking English language is very important

3. Shyness in Speaking English Language

Shyness is also one of the biggest factors by which the students cannot speak English language. It's a kind of feeling which students feel while speaking English language.

They are unwilling in front of their teachers and their friends. By shyness, they are unable to speak what they are thinking and what they want to speak.

In shyness, they are not confident of themselves to speak, they are unable to remember the grammar rules and correct vocabulary in speaking English language.

Due to shyness, they feel uncomfortable and anxious in front of people speaking English language.

Teachers have to motivate the students to be self-confident, it's okay to feel awkward in front of people but they should know that they can do it and encourage them to speak English language as much as they can.

They have to overcome their shyness and speak English language confidently.

4. Fear of Making Mistakes When Speaking English Language

Fear of making mistakes in speaking English language is also one of the big problems that usually the students faced in speaking.

Learning English language is a means of learning how to communicate with other people in speaking English language. The students are afraid of making mistakes in speaking English language that their mates laugh at them or looking silly in front of their mates, or even criticize them in the classroom.

The fear of making mistakes has resulted in failure in speaking English language with other people.

Making mistakes is a normal thing. no one is born perfect, everyone makes mistakes but they should learn from their mistakes and overcome their mistakes in speaking English language.

5. Lack of Motivation in Students in Speaking English Language

Lack of motivation is also one of the reasons students cannot speak English language. Motivation plays a very important role in speaking English language.

Motivation can be driven by the teachers, other students, and also their parents. But they didn't motivate them very well to speak English language.

By the lack of motivation in speaking English language then they didn't take interest in speaking English language.

6. Nervous in Speaking English Language in Public

Nervousness and anxiety are also one of the reasons behind the students who cannot speak English language in public or in Infront of people.

By nervousness, the students feel uncomfortable and confuse in speaking English language and communicating in English language in public.

The students should learn how to overcome their nervousness about speaking in public. There are a few things students to keep in mind when they feel nervous about speaking English language

When students feel nervous in speaking English language in public, they have to breathe properly, stay calm and remember the reason why they learn English language, it helps the students to relax and confident to speak.

Research Methodology

This study was conducted at the Department of English, Arts and Sciences -Sharorah using a qualitative research design. The subjects of the study were the students from the third and fourth semester.

Fifteen participants were sampled using purposive sampling procedures, who were less fluent in speech (participants speaking skill was evaluated in terms of their classroom presentation). Being a faculty of the department, the researcher observed their presentation skill and spoken fluency in the classroom many times; so that the researcher selected students who were having problems in speaking. To collect the data, this study used a set of open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews for the participants.

Each student was asked mainly two questions

1. What difficulties do you face in speaking? Please write down at least 10 points.

2. What are the causes of difficulties? Mention at least 5 causes of speaking difficulties. In addition to this questionnaire, students were interviewed based on semi-structured interview protocols. The questionnaire was developed in Google form and distributed using email and messenger. After receiving the questionnaire, participants were requested for the interview. The interview was translated into English to form themes from their interviews. After that data were categorized into difficulties faced while speaking, their causes, and suggestions to improve English speaking skills by the students on the basis of their responses in the questionnaire and interview. The data were grouped into problems and causes for further analysis. Finally, their speaking difficulties are grouped into one category and causes of speaking difficulties in other categories for further analysis and discussion.

Findings

The data collected from the interview and questionnaire were categorized into mainly two categories: Problems of speaking faced by students and causes of difficulties for the analysis and discussion. Problems and causes are further analyzed into different subcategories which are analyzed as below:

4.1 Problems of Speaking The researcher asked what problems they face while speaking in English both in the questionnaire and interview. Out of the 15 respondents, nearly 20 different kinds of problems were found faced by the students which are given in the following table no.1. The most striking problems majority of the students faced were: feel nervous, lack of vocabulary, the inability of using grammatical patterns, pronunciation of words, fear of making mistakes, overuse of mother tongue, and lack of confidence. Their responses (both interview and questionnaire) were categorized into four subcategories: Personal, environmental, social, and linguistic problems. Each category is analyzed separately as follows.

Table 1: Problems of speaking

| Themes generated | Specific problems |
|------------------------|--|
| Personal problem | Nervousness lack of confidence hesitation anxiety |
| Social problem | Fear of Fear of criticism/ insult from the peer committing mistake Fear of correct pronunciation |
| Linguistic problem | Problem in choosing an appropriate word Problem in fluency Mother tongue comes first in mind Problems in using appropriate grammatical patterns |
| Environmental problems | Teaching method Classroom interaction Institutional system |

4.1.1 Personal Problems Here personal problems mean; how an individual gets into problems due to their personal characteristics such as anxiety, lack of confidence, nervousness, hesitation, and shyness. The Majority of the participants shared the main problem is nervousness. One of the students shared that "My body starts shaking when I go in front of the class" [S1]. His experience of speaking English reveals how nervous students feel when they face the mass in the classroom. In the same way, another student said that "My mind goes blank when I start speaking in front of my friend and teacher in the classroom" [S5]. This means students lose their confidence when they are asked to speak in the classroom. One student shared that "I feel hesitation when I try to speak in front of the teacher and my throat is blocked; no words come out"[S 4]. From the above expressions, it can be said that students are unable to speak or develop their speaking skills due to their personal behaviors.

4.1.2 Environmental Problems The Environment in this study means the classroom culture of the research site. Many researchers have explored the role of the environment in learning a language (Heriansyah, 2012; Sokip, 2020). In this study also many students pointed out the environmental problem as an important problem. One of the students [S2 in this study] expressed, "We do not have English speaking time in the classroom". In a similar context, another students [S4] said , " No friends are interested in speaking in English in the class, even I requested them to form English speaking club of our class but nobody became ready for that" He further shared , " My friends say ; when we try to speak in English it is like eating rice with a spoon". Their responses in the questionnaire and interview mainly focused on the lack of environment in the class and out of the class. There is nobody who encourages them to speak in English neither the teacher nor friends become ready to practice in English. If learners do not get a chance to practice any language either in the classroom or out of the classroom then it becomes very difficult to learn a language. From their responses, we can say that environment is another important factor for creating speaking difficulties.

4.1.3 Social Problem The Social problem here means the institutional of the research site. Here, the classroom is a society where students from various backgrounds present with different interests and attitudes. The classroom culture is quite heterogeneous in multilingual classes and students show various behavioral activities in the classroom. Different students might have different bits of intelligence and they may perform differently in the classroom. In the interview, a student [S4] shared, "my friends laugh at me when I speak in the class because my pronunciation is not so good." Here the student [S4] becomes hesitant to speak in the class because of fear of being mocked. The attitude of students towards committing mistakes is also another factor that discourages students to practice English in the classroom. In the same way, immediate correction by the teacher is also one of the major problems of speaking. In similar regards, one student [S8] said "Our teacher makes corrections in front of the class so that I feel ashamed among other friends." Teacher correction techniques also play a very vital role in learning a language. Students feel discouraged if they are corrected immediately in front of other students.

4.1.4 Linguistic Problem This is the main problem most of the EFL and ESL students feel. Students feel great difficulty to select words for expressing a particular view. Mainly EFL learners first think in their mother tongue and then they translate it into English to share their views in English, in such conditions, they feel a lack of suitable vocabulary to translate. One of the students [S10] pointed out his experience, "I feel quite difficult to find out the appropriate word to tell in English while speaking because when I try to speak in English then my Dotyali language comes in my mind."Speaking is a really difficult skill for EFL students because they have to involve in two tasks: translating from L1 to L2 and speaking continuously. Therefore, most of the students feel a lack of vocabulary as a problematic area. Similarly, another student [S15] expressed her feelings, "I feel difficulty in choosing appropriate tense while speaking." Based on their responses most of the learners focused on grammatical deficiency in speaking. They feel difficulty in using appropriate tense structure and prepositions in their sentence while speaking. Pronunciation was found another

problem for the students. Some of the students stated that they felt difficulty pronouncing some words correctly so that they do not use such words even if they know the meaning and use of the words. When EFL students speak in English; mother tongue comes first in their mind and speech is delayed due to translation from their mother tongue to the English language. Students also reported that they face problems while making sentences in English; they find problems in maintaining subject-verb agreement sometimes. From the above analysis, we can say that students face various kinds of problems not only linguistic but also non-linguistic problems that may also occur while speaking. From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the majority of the students face personal problems such as lack of confidence, hesitation, and anxiety while speaking. Along with that social problems such as the culture of class, fear of criticism, and fear of committing mistakes also play a vital role in speaking difficulties. Linguistic problems such as lack of appropriate vocabularies, problems in initiating the speech, creating linkage among the sentences, mother tongue interference, and pronunciation of the words inhibited adult students from speaking fluently.

4.2 Causes of Speaking Problems In the second part, the researcher asked questions related to the causes of speaking problems. The questions mainly focused to elicit the causative factors of speaking problems. Out of the total responses 15 common causal factors were derived and out of them; teacher and teaching factors, mother tongue factors, schooling factors were found highly focused. These causal factors are subcategorized into five groups: Teacher/teaching, overuse of mother tongue, poor schooling, course content, and classroom culture factors. These factors are mentioned in the following table and later they are discussed separately.

Table 2: Cause of speaking problems

| Themes generated | Specific causes |
|-------------------------------|--|
| teachers and teaching factors | Old fashioned teaching methods L |
| | Lack of motivation to speak English |
| | High teacher talking time |
| | Lack of proper English environment |
| Mother tongue factor | High use of mother tongue by the students |
| | Teachers' explanation in L1 |
| Course content factor | Courses focused on writing not in speaking |
| | No speaking activities in the courses |
| Classroom culture | Lack of motivation |
| | Linguistic deficiency |
| | Teacher centered activities |
| | Unfavorable classroom environment |

4.2.1. Teacher and Teaching Factors Teachers and his/her teaching style in the classroom have a direct impact on students learning. In this study, most of the students reported that the role of the teacher in developing speaking fluency was found the most important causal factor. From the responses of learners, it was found that teachers are more active in the classroom and students are just passive listeners. Harmer (2001) stated that students talking time should be increased than the teacher talking time in the classroom to make teaching and learning more effective. Teachers should play the role of just facilitator rather than the authoritative in the classroom to boost up learning achievement (Knowles, 1973). In the study, most of the students asserted that the teacher does not offer opportunities to the students to practice English. One of the students [S 9] stated, "Our teachers practice their own English but do not give us chance to practice English in the class". This means students are neglected in the classroom especially in the case of university classes. In a similar context, another students[S 5] reported, "English teacher never created English speaking environment in the classroom, rather he/she uses mother tongue with the students out of the class". From this statement, it can be said that teachers are the focal point or as a model for the students, if he/she uses English in the classroom and out of the classroom with the students then learners might be motivated to practice English. Teachers should motivate learners to practice English in the class and out of the class with their friends. Some of the students also pointed out the lack of motivation from the teachers' side and peers. They believe that lack of motivation or encouragement in the language is a must and teachers should play that role in the classroom. Friends make ridicule a person who tries to speak in English said by the participants. Based on their responses, it was found that neither teacher nor friend motivate them to speak in English. In this way, the study found the lack of motivation as a causal factor of speaking difficulty. Teaching methods are also taken as the important factors in developing learning efficiency. The way the teacher delivers the contents in the classroom has a great influence on the learning strategies of learners(Oxford, 1990). The participants of the study stated that the teaching methods of teachers do not focus on speaking skills. They teach following the traditional methods of language teaching neglecting the participation of the students. The participant reported, "Our teacher comes to class and gives a lecture on the content and asksto note down notes from her diary and finishes the class"[S12]. According to adult learning perspectives, learners' experiences and their participation in teaching and learning should be maximized to bring change in teaching and learning (Knowles et al., 2005). The study explored that teachers follow traditional methods of teaching even in the 21st century without considering the role of learners in making teaching and learning more effective.

4.2.2. **Mother Tongue Factor** The majority of the participants pointed out the lack of appropriate environment and interest of peers to practice in the classroom. They have mentioned that almost all the students use their mother tongue (Dotyali) in the classroom. "Even teachers also use their local language with students outside of the classroom and sometimes in the class also" reported by one of the students [S8]. In a similar context, another student shared, "We do not have such system in the class to ask questions in English; even teachers explain the content in Nepali and local language maximum time[S 5]." For the EFL learners classroom is only the situation where they can practice English but in case of an unfavorable environment in the classroom learners cannot develop their English language proficiency. The lack of a favorable environment discourages learners to achieve English language proficiency easily. One of the students questioned that, "If we use L1 maximum time in the classroom then where can we practice the English language?" In this way overuse of mother tongue is found one of the major causes of hindering developing English language proficiency in speaking

4.2.3. **Course Content Factors** During the interview, some of the students also pointed out that the course content provided in English does not support speaking activities. According to the students, the maximum time teacher asks us to write something in English, but we never get a chance to speak in English. One of the students argued, "If we do not have speaking activities in the course how we can practice English and how our teacher can teach us speaking? This is the fault of the university who has designed the course [S2]." As they reported we need to keep more speaking practice tasks in the course so that they can give more time for speech. In another context, one student denoted that "there are no any listening activities included in the course; if there is no listening then how can we speak fast [S6]." In the natural process of language learning, listening comes first; unless and until students get much exposure to listening, they cannot develop their speaking proficiency.

4.2.4. **Classroom Culture Factor** It is believed that the culture of class or institution has a direct impact on learning. Here, classroom culture means the systems, traditions, or position of teacher and learners and activities conducted in the class by the teacher and students. Kumaravadivelu (2006) stated that culture and learning are an inseparable part of each other. In this study also, students have pointed out the culture of class as an affecting factor. Some of the participants in the interview shared that students are from various backgrounds and they have a different opinions regarding classroom activities. One of the students [S6] shared; "we never talked to our teacher in English in the school level, and even did not go in front of the class. Our school teacher was very strict and he did not allow us to speak in the class, so we used to be silent." In the traditional classroom setting, pin-drop silent was regarded as the best class for the teacher. Participants also reported that they never took part in group and peer discussions. Therefore classroom culture is regarded as an important factor for speaking development. From the above discussion, it can be concluded that mainly teacher's role in the classroom, teaching methods he/she adopted for the classroom delivery, the environment of the classroom and attitudes of the teacher and students towards English, and the structure of course content of the university have a direct impact on students' speaking proficiency. What difficulties students face in developing their speaking fluency are caused by these major factors discussed above.

5. Discussion

This study explored nervousness, lack of confidence, lack of practice, fear of committing mistakes, not having a conducive environment, lack of rich vocabulary, and the inability of using grammatical patterns as the key difficulties faced by the students while speaking. These difficulties inhibit the learners to develop their speaking skills. These findings are in line with Ur (1991) as mentioned in her book. She has stated that low or uneven participation, mother tongue use, inhibition are the key problems of speaking. Most of the participants in this study also focused on the overuse of the mother tongue as the problem of speaking. In the same way, Brown (2001) also stated that lack of confidence, vocabulary, the inability of using grammatical patterns in an appropriate situation as the most common problems for speaking for the EFL learners. Brown further mentioned that lack of opportunity for interaction in the classroom is also another problem of EFL learners. The findings of this study also depict similar types of problems. Similarly, Richards & Renandya (2002) asserted that fear of committing mistakes discourages learners to develop speaking fluency in English. In this study also the majority of the participants reported that they feel quite uncomfortable in front of the class because of fear of mistakes they may commit and their friends may laugh at them. The study of Heriansyah (2012) also pointed out that lack of vocabulary, not being confident to speak, not being used to talk in class are the major difficulty in English speaking which are also similar in this present study. Alam and Ashrafuzzaman (2018b) also explored similar kinds of difficulties faced by the students in Bangladesh. They further state that lack of vocabulary, fear of mistakes, and self-confidence are the most common difficulties of speaking in Bangladesh which is in line with this study. Soki (2020) in his study in Indonesia found that fear of making mistakes, anxiety, less motivation were the major difficulty faced by the students of university level in Indonesia and this study also found similar kinds of problems. But the findings of Bashir et al. (2011) are different from these all studies. In their study teachers were found using EMI and classroom interaction to boost up English proficiency of the learners The second objective of the study was to explore the causes of speaking difficulties. The study is mainly categorized into three sections: teaching/teacher, environmental, and course content-related factors. Among them, the teacher's role and the methods he/she adopted, the classroom environment, and the contents focused on the cause are the primary causes of speaking deficiency on the basis of the participants' responses. In the study of Heriansyah (2012) he found twenty-two different causes of speaking difficulties, among them; nine causes were related to linguistic problems and 13 causes of non-linguistic problems. In this study also, most of the students reported that being nervous, lack of practice, anxiety,

teaching methods of teacher, less focus on speaking in the course are the major causes of speaking difficulties but in this study, some students also reported poor background of the students schooling as the main cause of speaking difficulty. Supporting this claim Sokip (2020) has also mentioned poor schooling as the main cause of students' poor speaking performance at the university level. In the same way, Akbari (2016) in her study also explored the role of a course book or content as the main cause of weakening speaking proficiency. She further noted that a lack of proper focus on speaking activities in the course may discourage learners from practicing the English language. From the above results and discussion it can be said that speaking is regarded as the most important skill among other skills in the English language, so that learners need to be exposed to plenty of opportunities to practice English in the classroom and out of the classroom (Brown, 2001; Richards & Renandya, 2002). The teacher needs to create a friendly environment where students can practice English. Various studies have revealed that involving students in classroom interaction and encouraging them to listen more to improve their speaking skills play a very vital role in developing speaking skills (Harmer, 2001; Sokip, 2020; Ur, 1991). Therefore, active participation of the learners in the classroom may increase the capacity of students in speaking skills. While designing courses equal focus should be given to all the skills but speaking should be of special focus so that learners can be fluent in English. Concluding the study with reference to its findings, it can be said that the present study found teaching methods, classroom culture, and background of the students, overuse of mother tongue are the main causal factors of developing speaking which is different from the studies reviewed in this study. Almost all the past studies mainly focused on linguistic and personal problems and causes but this study found other causes of speaking deficiency; therefore this study is different from other studies.

6. Conclusion

Speaking is taken as the toughest skill to get mastery by the students of EFL context, so is the case of Nepal too. Based on the research findings, mainly learners get four major speaking difficulties such as personal problems, linguistic problems, social problems, and environmental problems. Lack of confidence, poor vocabulary power, hesitation, anxiety towards speaking, fear of making mistakes, not having a suitable environment to practice English, no strong motivation from teachers were some common difficulties students faced while speaking in English. The second part or objective of the study was to explore the causes of speaking difficulties. Deducing the themes from the participant's responses, the researcher categorized causes into four main themes: teacher/teaching factors, environmental factors, course content factors, and classroom culture factors. Among the various causes mainly teacher-centered teaching method, the active role of the teacher in the classroom, lack of proper environment for speaking practice, poor schooling, overuse of L1 while teaching English in the classroom, classroom culture, and lack of intense focus on speaking skills in the course content of the university courses were found major causes of speaking difficulties. To eliminate these difficulties, the study also suggested creating a favorable English-speaking environment in the classroom, modifying existing English courses, and changing the teaching pedagogy and role of the teacher in the classroom. The study also suggested maximizing the group discussion among students and conducting speaking activities such as speaking contests, debate, public speaking, and other activities to offer learners speaking practice.

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