

# An Investigation of Challenges Teachers Face in Teaching Speaking Skill in Large Classes' Context: Secondary School EFL Teachers in Focus

Minwuyelet Andualem Desta

Department of English Language and Literature

College of Social Science and Humanities

Debre Tabor University, Ethiopia

Tel: 251-09-21-29-02-13 E-mail: minwuye2008@gmail.com

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges of teaching speaking skill in a large EFL classrooms. The study was conducted to find out the challenges EFL teachers face while teaching speaking skills in a large classrooms, analyze how the factors affect teaching speaking skill in large classes and see what strategies teachers employ to promote speaking skills in the context of large classrooms. Descriptive method was employed to establish the existence of phenomena by explicitly describing them. Six grade nine EFL teachers and 100 grade nine students were involved in the study. The data were collected by using three tools: questionnaires, classroom observation and interviews. Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods were employed to analyze the data. The study showed that there are a number of challenges that contribute not to practice teaching speaking skill in large English language classrooms. According to the findings, although English language teachers have positive attitude towards teaching speaking skill, there are a number of problems that challenge them to practice it. The major challenges were classroom atmospheres which are not convenient for pair and group works, the nature of chairs and desks which are not moveable, the students lack of adequate motivation and courage to speak, the failure of classroom teachers to be committed and use their effort in the teaching learning process, the wide coverage of the contents in the students text book, failures of teachers and students to use different strategies in order to make speaking classroom convenient and effective are some of them. Finally, it was recommended that all concerned bodies, including parents are the most responsible to overcome the challenges and create a conducive atmosphere to conduct speaking classes.

**Keywords:** Challenges, Large Class Room, Practice, Speaking Skill

## 1. Introduction

English language plays a very important role in various aspects of life globally. It is the language that expanded breaking the barriers of color, race and belief, and has continued to spread all over the world (Crystal (1997). As a result, it has become the language of international affairs. English has become the language that links the world all together. It is the medium through which technological, social, political and cultural information has been transmitted. In the Ethiopian educational system, the learning of English begins at the elementary level and it gives different functions at various organizations. Despite this fact, Woldu (1998) argue that most of Ethiopian students could not reach a reasonable level of proficiency. They added that the problem is believed to be observed even on teachers training institutes in the country. While asserting this, Woldu (1998:439) put that “having passed through several years of learning English beginning from primary grades up to higher levels of learning, subject teachers at the different teachers training institutions in the country are found to be deficient in their mastery of English language. This problem applies to English language teachers too”. (P. 439).

The status of English is very low in Ethiopian schools at all levels (MoE, 2004). Although the challenges are found in all language skills, the challenges in speaking skills are more serious when compared to other skills because of different challenges that influence teachers’ teaching productively and the students’ speaking performance such as inappropriate teaching methodology, students low motivation in learning English, classroom size, arrangement of desks and limited time of teaching learning process. Language learning mainly focuses on the mastery of the four language skills. Speaking is also an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information (Brown, 1994). Thus, student should have the ability to speak English in order that they can communicate with others.

Even though, there are various factors that affect teaching speaking skills in large classes that make students communicative competence unsatisfactory. A traditional limitation to developing students’ communicative competence is the inadequate interaction between teachers and students. Teachers simply spend much time lecturing while students take notes and seldom participate in class (Tirualem, 2003). On the other hand, in most high schools in Ethiopia large class teaching is still common practice. It is widely admitted that teaching English to a large class has disadvantage over a small class. In Ethiopia, large classes are still reality and continue to pose particular challenges to EL teachers in promoting students speaking performance. Wondwosen (2008) also finds out in his study that large class has a number of problems. He indicates that classroom factors such as arrangement of desks, class size, and numbers of tables affect both teachers and students in their teaching and learning process. Although studies had been conducted of teaching speaking skill on different time at different time in general were carried out, no attempt has been yet made to investigate the challenges of teaching speaking skill in large classes particularly.

This fact suggests a definite necessity to study and explore the existing reality about how EFL teachers teach speaking skills at the secondary schools and it is also different from the

previous studies in that it focused on the challenges of teaching speaking skill in large classes. This problem, of course, is very serious to be overcome soon since the purpose of LT is for communication.

Although studies had been conducted both in abroad and at the country level, in line with teaching speaking skill in in EFL classes in general were carried out, no attempt has been made to investigate the challenges of teaching speaking skill in large classes in particular. As a result, this particular study specifically focused on the challenges of teaching speaking skill in large classes at high school levels with special focus on grade nine secondary school students in west Gojjam zone. Moreover, it is almost none or little known about the challenges of teaching speaking skills in large classroom because the focus of language teaching and learning processes was on grammar part of the language. However, it is clear that teaching speaking skill is being implemented with the intention of improving learning and guiding teaching in particular and raising the standard of language education in general. It is thus, the main objective of this study is to assess the real challenges teachers' face of teaching speaking skills in large classes.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

### *2.1 The Research Design*

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the challenges that EFL teachers face while teaching speaking skill in large classes. In this study descriptive research design which applies qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection (mixed approach), and analysis was used. The researcher employed this method mainly because he believed that it was suitable and relevant for the study which looks into what actually happens in the classroom in the teaching learning process. This kind of research involves a collection of techniques used to specify, delineate or describe naturally occurring phenomena without experimental manipulation (Shahomy 1989). It is used to establish the existence of phenomena by explicitly describing them.

Mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) was used in order to answer the questions raised in research question section. The nature of the problem and the research objective invited the researcher to use this research method. Moreover, this method is more applicable for this study since the researcher supports quantitative data such as teaching speaking difficulties, and importance of teaching speaking skill with qualitative data obtain from grade nine students and teachers to validate and triangulate the responses from each respondent.

### *2.2 Participants*

A research participants are the units of analysis as they are the sources from which research data are being collected (Bless and Higson Smith, 2000). Therefore, data analysis should reflect an accurate picture of the research participants. In light of this, the analysis and the general discussion of this study revolved around students, and teachers at the secondary school levels. Hence, the subjects of the study were grade nine students, and their EFL teachers.

### *2.3 Population and Sampling Techniques*

In the Amhara National regional state particularly, in west Gojjam Zone, there are twelve towns at woreda level. From those, Dembecha town was selected purposively for its ease of accessibility of information for the researcher. There are three secondary and preparatory schools in Dembecha town from which the researcher selected Arbegnoch secondary school purposively to make the study more manageable and complete within the available time. For the purpose of this study and because of the constraints of time and budget only hundred students, that is, five students from each class were taken as a sample.

Systematic sampling technique was employed to select respondents. Systematic sampling is used when the population is very large and of no known characteristics. For the questionnaire, hundred students were selected systematically: Five students: every eighteenth was selected from each class. This was done by arranging all grade nine students alphabetically in each classroom. This method helped the researcher to collect relevant and valid data from the respondents. In the case of teachers, six teachers were assigned to teach those classes in this year. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, all of them were included in the study.

### *2.4 Data Collection Instruments*

The instruments used to collect data for the study were interviews, questionnaires, and classroom observation. These instruments were selected because of their suitability for gathering important data for the study. Each of these instruments is briefly described below.

#### *2.4.1 Interview*

Interview is a means of interaction in which the interviewees give information orally. The information gained by interview is personal and it helps to get detailed information (Lynch, 1996). It is used to get information concerning feeling, attitude, or emotion to certain questions which is not possible to answer through questionnaire and classroom observation (Koul, 1984 and shahomy, 1989). To the current study, unstructured interviews was conducted by the researcher for all grade nine EFL teachers who were teaching at Arbegnoch secondary school. Because, unstructured interviews was more flexible to collect the data for the current study as needed. Hence, semi-structured interview was prepared for all the 6 grade nine EFL teachers to get information about the way they teach speaking skills in large English language classroom and the challenges that they faced for practicing it.

During the interview the researcher recorded their responses with Tape Recorder for future analysis. The interview sessions with teachers lasted from ten to fifteen minutes. The open-ended questionnaire prepared for teachers was also included in the interview session since their number was small. During the interview time, the researcher recorded the teachers' responses for future analysis. Since, this kind of recording process helped the researcher to avoid or minimize loss or miss interpretation of information during the write up phase of the research. Thus, all the teachers were interviewed as well.

#### *2.4.2 Questionnaire*

Questionnaire enables a researcher to collect data from large groups of individuals within a short period of time, and it is also easy to administer to a number of subjects in one place at a time (Best and Kahan, 1989) and Sharma, 2000). In the current study, to get additional information to the data obtained from the teachers through the interviews, questionnaires were used as data collection instruments and were designed to collect relevant data from the sample students of the school. Using this instrument some aspects such as the challenges of teaching speaking skill, the role of the teachers during speaking sessions, strategies teachers use in teach speaking skill, were gathered. The questions were designed in their mother tongue to make clear and avoid information barriers.

#### 2.4.3 Observation

As to Kumar (1996), observations are important tool that can be employed in descriptive research and other qualitative research types for gathering genuine and pertinent data on teachers' and students' behaviors in the actual setting. In the current study, the researcher used this data gathering tool as supplementary instrument to collect the available information for the study. To this end, the researcher prepared classroom observation checklist in order to collect additional data and substantiate the results obtained through questionnaires. The checklist was prepared based on the objectives of the study which was focused on classroom instructional activities or techniques which were employed by teachers.

#### 2.5 Data Collection Procedure

In the course of collecting data for the current study, all the necessary procedures were followed. First, the researcher asked permission from the school principal and explained the purpose of the study before conducting those instruments. Accordingly, after getting permission from the school principal, the researcher observed teachers' speaking classes three times each at the different time. Then after holding the teachers' class room observations, the interview was held for all grade nine EFL teachers about their challenges while teaching speaking skill in large classes. All the teachers were interviewed one by one. Finally, next to the teachers' interview, the questionnaires were distributed for grade nine sample students of the school to see how their teachers teach speaking skill in their EFL classes.

#### 2.6 Methods of Data Analysis

For the current study, the researcher employed mixed method (data were analyzed through both quantitative & qualitative methods) to see the issue under study both from quantitative and qualitative perspective. The responses of close ended items of the questionnaires were tabulated and analyzed, and described quantitatively frequency and percentage values. Since, these statistical tools are important for this study because they provide information about the average participants score on a measure. However, the analysis of the data collected using the interview, document analysis and observation items were analyzed using qualitative method of data analysis through using narrative form and in an interpretive manner.

### 3. Results and Discussions

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the analysis and discussion of the data collected from subjects to seek answers for the basic research questions raised in the statement of the problem. The primary purpose of this study was to assess challenges teachers face in teaching speaking skill in Ethiopian large classes' context. Accordingly, 100 grade 9 students including EFL teachers responded to the questionnaires and the 6 EFL teachers responded to the interview, classroom observation as a sample were assumed to be adequate for the analysis. The analysis was made in terms of the basic research questions raised in the first chapter of the study.

##### 3.1.1 Results of the Study

#### 3.2 Analysis of Data Regarding the Challenges Teachers Face While Teaching Speaking Skills in Large Classrooms

In line with this, the challenges that hinder the teaching of speaking skill in large classrooms are presented based on the data gained from the respondents. Through the teachers and students engrossed with the practice of teaching speaking skill, there were different factors that hindered an effective practice of teaching speaking skill in their classes. The factors can be categorized in to physical environment (classroom atmospheres and seating arrangement), classroom activities of teachers and students.

##### 3.2.1 Causes Related to Classroom Atmospheres and Seating Arrangements

The following table presented how the classroom atmospheres and seating arrangements affect to teach speaking skill in such English classrooms.

As it can be seen from the following table (1), the seating space was found to be adequate for all students in most of the classrooms. Regarding this, 5 teachers and 87% of the learners said 'yes'. However, 1 teacher and 13% of the learner said 'no'. Similarly, classroom observation indicated that among the twenty classrooms observed, 16(80%) of them had enough seating spaces but, the rest 4 classes had no enough spaces for all students. However, in many of the classrooms the desks and chairs are not easily moveable. The result on this indicated that 5 teachers and 79% of the students said 'no'. But 1 teacher and 21% of the learners said 'yes'. In addition, classroom observation indicated that in 17(85%) of the classrooms, the chairs and tables are not easily moveable; however in 3 classes the chairs and tables are moveable.

Table 1. Classroom atmospheres and seating arrangements

No	Items	Respondents	Teachers and Students				Total	Things to be observed				Total
			Response					yes	%	No	%	
			yes	%	No	%		No	%	No	%	
1	There are enough seating spaces for all students in the class	T	5		1		6	16	80	4	20	20
		S	87	87	13	13	100					
2	Chairs and Tables are easily moveable	T	1		5		6	3	15	17	85	20
		S	21	21	79	79	100					
3	There is adequate space between chairs & desks for movement	T	-		6		6	3	15	17	85	20
		S	7	7	93	93	100					
4	The number of students/class size is appropriate	T	1		5		6	6	30	14	70	20
		S	14	14	86	86	100					

T= Teachers; S= Students; No = number of grade nine classes

Regarding space between chairs and desks, all teachers and 93% of the learners said 'no'. However, 7% of the learners said 'yes'. Similarly, classroom observation indicated, 17(85%) of the classrooms have no enough spaces which makes difficult for the teachers to move round in the classroom in order to give comments and advice for students.

The physical environment (classroom arrangement, classroom appearance and layout) contribute a lot to promote student centered learning (Squazzin and Graan, 1998). This implies that it is difficult to practice speaking skill in many of the classrooms. As it is stated in Silverman (1996) if the classroom arrangement is not appropriate, it is difficult to have active and communicative environment. He further explains if the physical environment (classroom condition) is favorable, it facilitates interactive learning. Furthermore, as it is explained in YE Jin (2007), in communicative classrooms the desks should be arranged in such a way that students can look directly at one another to create interactions among students. However, in most classrooms these kinds of classroom arrangements were not seen.

Beyond this, the data obtained from the teachers and students questionnaire and classroom observation proved that the number of students per class (class size) was not appropriate to teach speaking skill. The result for this indicated, 5 teachers and 86% of the learners said 'no' it is not appropriate and 1 teacher and 14% of the learners said 'yes' it is appropriate in the teaching learning process. Similarly, from the observed classrooms, in 14(70%) of them, the number of students are very large which is 76-80 in average and in the remaining 6(30%) of the classrooms the number of students are among 70-75. Hayes (1997) states the ideal size of language class is 30 at most, because only under such a scale can offer enough chances for the students to communicate with each other. This depicts us that in most of the observed classrooms, the number of students were large. As smith (1996) explains, as the class size increases teachers and students face many challenges that impede them not to create interactive classroom.

As it is indicated in the teachers' response from interview, there are a number of factors that

contribute for teachers not to teach speaking skill. One can understand from the teacher response that the nature of the classroom atmosphere affect him not to teach his students effectively. If the classroom atmosphere is not convenient, it is difficult to practice speaking skill in large English language classroom context and it makes challenging for both teachers and students in order to make speaking activities interactive.

Harmer (2000) also finds out in his study that large classes bring difficulties to both teachers and students in their process of teaching and learning. Here, the students also forwarded their feeling in their open ended questions indicated that, classroom condition is the major challenge for their learning. As they strongly indicated the number of students with varies background and interest affect them to learn in large classes. Moreover, they recommended that if their number is medium, they can have chances to learn the language in the classroom effectively.

All in all, both the classroom observation and the students and teachers responses indicated, the classroom atmosphere is not convenient for the teaching leaning process, especially for teaching speaking skill since it needs moveable chairs and relaxed classrooms. As the researcher observed, the number of the students and the class size were not balance. In most classes there were a large number of students with immoveable chairs and desks. So, what the classroom teacher did is stand at the front and gives simply lecture.

However, this is not the characteristics of language teacher especially, during speaking lesson. However, if the classroom condition is favorable and motivating, it facilitates interactive learning but, if it is not conducive, it has potential to impede the teaching learning process. Among the classroom condition: the availability, adequacy, and appropriateness of the furniture such as chairs and desks, seating arrangement and class size can be the major one.

### 3.2.2 Causes Related to Class Room EFL Teachers' Activities

Table 2. The Classroom Teachers' Activities

Items	No	Choices						Total		
		Teachers and students response				Total	Things to be Observed			
		Yes	%	no	%		Yes N=4		no N=4	
1. Introduce the speaking lesson and its' purpose by giving hints	T	4		2		6	2	2	4	
	S	78	78	22	22	100				
2. Let/arrange students to do the speaking lessons in pairs or groups	T			1		5		6	1	3
	S			12	12	88	88	100		
3 Moves round the classroom and encourages students while pair or group discussions are taking place	T	1		5		6	1		3	4
	S	7	7	93	93	100				
4. Allow students to come to the front and practice the speaking activities	T			1		5		6	-	4
	S	23	23	77	77	100				
5. Elicit correct responses from students instead of supplying answers	T			1		5		6	1	3
	S	13	13	87	87	100				

T= teacher S= student N= number of classes which are observed



As it is indicated in the above table, the data obtained from teachers and students' questionnaire indicated 4 teachers and 78% of the learners said that the classroom teachers introduce speaking lessons and its purpose by giving hints. However, the remaining 2 teachers and 22% of the learners said that the classroom teachers do not introduce the speaking lessons and its purpose by giving hints properly. Similarly, classroom observations show that 2 teachers did not introduce the purpose of each speaking activities by giving hints which has been necessary for the students. However, the rest 2 teachers did this, but they simply introduce the lesson without telling them its purposes in detail. Moreover, for item no. 2, 1 teacher said that he arranges students in pairs or groups according to the activities, but the other 5 teachers said 'no'. It means they do not arrange their students neither in pairs nor in groups.

Regarding this, data obtained from classroom observation indicated that 3 teachers do not arrange students neither in pairs nor in groups which are essential for teaching speaking skill and only 1 teacher did this. As Harmer (1991) states in the communicative language teaching classroom, most of the class time should be covered by students' activities. However, as the teachers and the learners' responses and the classroom observation revealed, most of the class time was covered by the teachers. In addition to this, regarding teachers movement in the classroom in order to facilitate teaching and learning process, only 1 teacher and 7 students said 'yes' but the other 5 teachers and 93% of the learners said 'no' as they do not go round and help the students.

Similarly, data obtained from classroom observation proved that 3 teachers do not move around the classroom and encourage students while pair and group works are in progress. However, only 1 teacher follows up students' participation in their activities or the given exercises and gives feedback. This implies that in most classes the classroom teachers were not doing what is expected from them in order to facilitate the students' classroom interaction and communication. As the response of the interview shows, the learners lack of interest to participate in role play and group discussion, large class size as well as teachers reluctance were found to be the major causes for this.

Thus, it is difficult to think the practice of teaching speaking skill in such kind of classroom. As it is stated in YE Jin (2007), the classroom teacher should facilitate the communicative process among all learners and between students and various tasks. He further explains that a teacher also gives guidance and advice when necessary. Apart from this, for item no. 4 which says 'Allow students to come to the front and practice the speaking activities' only 1 teacher and 23% of the learners said 'yes'. However, the rest 5 teachers and 77% of the learners said 'no'. Similarly, classroom observation indicated that all teachers (4) do not allow their students to come to the front and practice speaking activities. This implies that students are passive and they do not have chances to practice speaking skill in the classroom.

On the other hand, regarding feedback, only 1 teacher and 13% of the learner said 'yes' that the classroom teacher tries to elicit correct responses from students and the remaining 5 teachers and 87% of the learner said 'no'. They said the classroom teachers simply supply answers instead of eliciting correct response from students which is not the role of

communicative teacher. Regarding this, data obtained from classroom observation indicated, only 1 teacher tried to elicit correct responses from the students but the other 3 teachers did not do this. They simply supply answers instead of eliciting correct response from the learners. Many of the teachers and the students attributed this to the lack of time. As Lingjie (2005) says the role of communicative teacher should not be all knower and speaker who tells everything in the classroom, but he/she should be a facilitator in class so that the students could be relaxed and confident in their competence.

Also, as the learners respondent indicated, in language classroom the focus of the language teachers and the students are on the grammar part of the language. It is indicated that the classroom conditions which contains immovable chairs and desks, no place to move here and there, large number of students and their interest to learn speaking lessons challenge the classroom teachers not to focus on the speaking part of the language. In addition, the nature of the exam which are prepared by both classroom teachers and ministry of education made the students careless for the speaking lesson.

### 3.2.3 Causes Related to Learners Activities

In line with, the teachers and students response and the classroom observation result indicated the majority of the activities, which were expected to be demonstrated by pairs or groups, were not seen. The result for this shows that, 5 teachers and 89% of the learners said 'yes'. However, the rest 1 teacher and 11% of the learners said 'no'. Similarly, out of the 4 observed sessions, in 3 sessions they were working individually and only in 1 session they were working in pairs and groups. But, in the remaining 1 session, there was no individual work and in 3 of the sessions also there was no pair or group works. In addition to this, 1 teacher and 31% of the learner said they were participating genuinely in the discussions.

However, the remaining 5 teachers and 69% of the learner said 'no'. It means they do not participate genuinely in the discussions during speaking lessons. Moreover, data obtained from classroom observation indicated; out of 4 sessions, in 3 of the sessions learners were not participating genuinely in the discussions. As the classroom observation result revealed, instead of working the activities that were presented by the teacher, they do their own works. (I.e. do homework, chat each other...). This indicates that the students are not autonomous in their learning. However, since what was needed was the real classroom students' development of communicative competence, the speaking activities should have been performed either in pairs or groups and the students also work genuinely.

In light of these findings, one may assume that even though the main classroom speaking activities are expected to be accomplished in pairs or groups, they were performed individually. As the research finding showed, this is because of large class size to manage all students, lack of time due to large coverage of contents in the students text book, students unwillingness to participate genuinely (i.e. their interest was to learn grammar) and lack of motivation both in the teachers and students side and also the students are not autonomous in their learning. According to (Savignon, 2002), group work gives far more chances for them to communicate in English. As it is further explained, through pair and group work, students can work together and help each other to solve problems, prepare presentations and do different

kinds of exercises. They can also develop their skills from each other, which lead them to greater success in foreign language learning.

### 3.3 Strategies Teachers Employ to Enhance Speaking Skill in Large Class Room

Concerning this, what type of strategies do teachers and students made to overcome the challenges of teaching speaking skill were discussed based on the research questions “What strategies do teachers and students employ to promote speaking skills in the context of large classroom? This data was obtained from teachers and students open ended questionnaire, classroom observation and teachers interview. Teachers and students are expected to minimize the problems that they faced while teaching speaking skill in their EFL classroom in order to have an effective implementation of it. But they were not working well to have effective practice of teaching speaking skill.

#### 3.3.1 Strategies Teachers Employed for Effective Communication

Table 3. Strategies Teachers Used to create effective Communication

N <sup>o</sup>	Items	Choices		
		Yes	No	Total
1	The teacher encourage or motivate students to draw their attention	2	2	4
2	The teacher raises real life issues in the classroom in order to facilitate speaking lessons	1	3	4
3	The teacher provides context so that the students interaction will be meaningful	1	3	4

No = number of classes which were observed

In the above table, the observation result indicated that in some of the observed sessions, the classroom teachers encouraged students to draw their attention. For example, out of 4 sessions observed, in 2 sessions, the classroom teachers motivated their students. However, the rest 2 sessions indicated that the teachers were not encouraging their students. On the other hand, out of 4 sessions observed only 1 session showed that the classroom teacher raised real life issues in the speaking lesson classrooms, but in the 3 of the classroom observation sessions, the classroom teachers were not using students’ real life situations.

Alan et al. (2004) argue that instructor practices are more important than class size in producing positive student outcomes. Good teachers encourage contacts with students, stress students communication with the target language, have students reflect on their learning and try to relate to their daily lives, provide prompt feedback on performance and respect diverse talents and ways of learning. However, the classroom teachers were not seen doing these. In addition, in 1 observed session, the classroom teacher provided contexts so that the interaction was meaningful. However, the rest 3 observed sessions, the classroom teacher did not provide contexts. Simply, they taught what was already presented in the students’ text book. However, to facilitate learning and to make it meaningful, Brown (1994) suggests that

authentic language in real life context should be provided and students must be encouraged to produce language for genuine and meaningful communication.

But, the classroom teachers were not seen when doing this. When they were asked in the teacher's interview they replied that because of large number of students, it is difficult to focus on speaking skill. But if they use different strategies, it is possible to teach speaking skill in the large classroom. Mekonen (2006) states that many researchers mentioned class size as a big factor that affects teachers to teach speaking skill effectively. But, he argued that it could be the lack of strategies that could be used in large class that affect teachers.

It is good to apply the strategy by directly teaching when it is needed, bring real life situation when it is appropriate and lots of cooperative work to keep the classroom active and friendly. Since the purpose of language teaching and learning is for communication, the classroom teacher should create a pattern to classroom learning in which the students learn in a cooperative way (Johnson et al, 2000). So, EFL teachers should work efficiently by practicing different strategies until success is achieved.

### *3.4 Data Analysis obtained from Teachers Interview regarding Challenges they face while teaching Speaking Skill in Large Classes*

In addition to the teachers' checklist questionnaires, students' questionnaires and classroom observation, interview was employed to collect data from teachers. The purpose of the interview was to strengthen the data that was collected through other instruments since interview is helpful to probe and other clarification of questions. Hence, the result obtained through interview from the teacher respondents is presented below.

The findings obtained from the teachers' interview conveyed almost similar results with that of other tools. Thus the data obtained from the interview revealed that even though there are a few good things that can be done by the classroom teacher, there are also a lot of problems in teaching and assessing speaking skill in English classrooms. Most of the teacher respondents (5 of them) complained that the classroom physical environment and the class size, the students' interest, work load of teachers, motivation of teachers and students and the vast coverage of the text book are not convenient for teaching speaking skill and assess students speaking performance.

As they explained, most of the classrooms' chairs and tables are not easily moveable for pair and group discussions, and there was also no space between chairs and desks to move round and help each student. In addition to this, it is difficult to cover the wide contents of the students' text book with in the limited time. Moreover, it is difficult to manage and control 70-80 students in one classroom. Mesachie (1986) notes that, "Class size and method are almost inextricably intertwined. Thus, the research on class size and that on lecture vs. discussion overlap. Large classes are most likely to use lecture methods and less likely to use discussion than small classes" (p. 181). This naturally leads to the question of how learning outcomes achieved by courses taught with the lecture method-the dominant mode of instruction in large-class settings-compare with outcomes achieved in smaller-sized classes, where the discussion method is more likely to be employed.

All in all, as it can be concluded from the response of the interviewees, there are a lot of constraints that challenge teaching speaking skill not to be implemented in the large classrooms. As the respondents indicated the classroom conditions, large number of students, nature of chairs and tables which are not moveable, students background and interest towards learning and participating genuinely during speaking lesson, lack of commitment in both teachers and students, large coverage of contents and the interference of other bodies in the teaching and learning process are the major constraints for teaching speaking skill in large class.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Based on the results and discussions of the findings of the study, it is possible to conclude that grade nine EFL teachers faced many problems in practicing teaching speaking skills in large classes' context. This conclusion is drawn depending on the overall findings of the study investigated concerning the two major research questions. Although teachers realized how important teaching speaking skill for students speaking proficiency is, majority of them do not apply in the actual language classroom. They focused on the grammar part and mostly ignore teaching speaking skill.

All the teachers complain about the large number of students in each class which is inconvenient for them to make their learners participate in the oral group activities and monitor them closely. One of the best methods to teach speaking skill is making the teaching learning process student centered. This is, using pair work, group discussions, role play and Drama, storytelling etc. in the English classroom. To do this, the classroom conditions (class size, nature of desks, space between chairs and tables etc.) should be favorable (Silberman, 1996). However, the result of questionnaires, observations and interview indicated, the classroom condition was not favorable to teach speaking skill.

There were also failures of teachers that they do not encourage and help their students' while they are practicing speaking skill. The teachers do not let their students to practice speaking skill in pairs or groups and they also unable to encourage students to express their answers by their own words. The finding indicated that the majority of the classroom teachers and the students did not focus on the process of teaching speaking skill. Although some of the most important classroom activities that were expected from students in the teaching learning process of speaking skill are role play, pair and group work, games, problem solving activities etc., however, a few of them were seen in the classroom.

The study also showed that there is a mismatch between students and the goal of language learning. According to the findings, for students, learning a language means learning only grammar and passes the exam. However, language learning is more than that. The findings indicated that there was also lack of strategies which are expected from the language teachers which are used for creating genuine communication in the language classroom. It is a must that during speaking lessons, the classroom teachers should bring the real situation to the language classroom and contextualize the speaking lesson in order to motivate and raise the

students' attention. However, this was not seen in the language classroom. Similarly, students also do not use different strategies in order to develop their speaking proficiency. They are not autonomous; simply they are passive and grammar oriented learner.

There is also lack of basic skill in language teaching in the lower grade teachers that they do not shape their students in basic skill. Since the base of the language is in the lower grade, it should take emphasis. However, this was not seen. The finding identified that time is a very big problem in order to teach speaking skill. Since the content is very broad and the periods which are given to English subject are very short, it is a challenging process to cover all contents on time.

Thus, it can be concluded from the above findings is that there are so many challenges that impede teaching speaking skill not to be practiced in large English classroom effectively. Because of those challenges, the classroom teachers were not teaching speaking and the students also were not learning speaking skill. Thus, it can be generalized that speaking skill is negligible.

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## Declarations

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➤ Funding

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➤ Availability of data and Materials

Here, the author declares that on the presented research conclusions and problems, the data and detailed information were available as long as they needed. Furthermore, the author would like to confirm that data sharing is applicable in this research article.

➤ Competing Interest

In this study, there is no financial and non-financial competing interest as it is a single author's work.

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