Challenges Faced by Bachelor Level Students While Speaking English

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ARTICLE INFO	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 the context of Nepal, the English language is taken as a foreign language and taught from elementary level to university level as a compulsory subject but Nepalese students in general and university students in particular, face a lot of difficulties in speaking English fluently. Even after completing their graduate degree, some of them could not speak a little bit of English. This present study tried 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 University. The collected data were thematized and 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, poor schooling, and classroom culture as the causal factors of speaking deficiency. The study suggested creating a favorable environment, maximizing learner autonomy, changing teaching practices, revising courses, and conducting speaking activities time and again.

1. Introduction

In Nepal, English is taught as a foreign language, and it is learned at the school level and university level either as a subject or as a medium of instruction. Historically, the English language was first introduced in Durbar High School in 1850-51 by the Rana Prime Minister Janga Bahadur Rana after returning from his Europe visit. Observing the development in Europe Junga Bahadur Rana was impressed and thought about the necessity of the English language in Nepal, especially for the children of his dynasty. He thought that getting the western education system might be a great milestone in the life of Rana's children, as a result;

he started the provision of teaching English at Durbar High School(Sharma, 1990). Since the inception of Durbar High School in Nepal, the English language has been given due importance either at the school level or at the university level curriculum. With several ups and downs in the political situation of Nepal; the English language has also crossed one and half-century facing similar kind's challenges for its implementation (Bista, 2011). Along with challenges and opportunities, at present, in Nepal, the English language has got a prestigious position in the school and the university curriculum.

English is taught from grade one to university level as a compulsory subject and as a major subject from intermediate to post-graduate level in Nepal (Sharma, 1990). English is used as a medium of instruction from the elementary level in private schools but at present, some of the government-funded schools have also been shifting from Nepali as a medium of instruction to English as a medium of instruction (Ojha, 2018). Many universities have also adopted EMI policy in many faculties like engineering, medicinal, science, and technology for both classroom instruction and assessment systems but in some faculties, classroom delivery is in Nepali, and assessment systems that is exam papers are in English language. They believe that setting examination paper in English may enhance the quality of education.

English language in Nepal has been increasing rapidly either in government schools or in private schools. Along with the progressive position of English in Nepal; there are so many problems in the context of English language teaching such as problems -related to curriculum, textbook, pedagogy, and use of resources both at school or university level, but very few studies have been carried out to recommend solutions of these problems. The effect of these problems can be seen on the student result; the majority of the students fail in English subject either in school or at college level which can be proved by analyzing the result of SEE or university final examination result. If we analyze the result of different universities, it clearly depicts the scenario of higher education in Nepal. The pass percentage of Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University, is 15.11% in 2015, 18.20 % in 2016, 14.04% in 2017, 20.05% in 2018, and 16.65% in 2019 (University Grant Commission, 2019). Similarly, the faculty of management has also similar condition, it has also not crossed the border of 25% since 2014(University Grant Commission, 2019). In the same way, the Faculty of Education, Far Western University has also been facing similar kinds of challenges. Being a faculty member and having a decade-long experience in the field of teaching and evaluating students' answer books, the researcher found 75% of students only fail in English subjects, especially in the faculty of education. Along with that, the majority of the students could not even give their introduction standing in front of the class.

Among the four skills of language, speaking seems intuitively the most important and difficult skill for ESL and EFL learners (Ur, 2002). It is a common fact that, if a person learns a language that means he/she should be a competent speaker of that language. In most cases, the users of that language need to involve in various kinds of discussion or conversations, therefore they need to be proficient in speaking. Richards & Renandya (2002) have stated that a large number of the world's language learners study English to develop proficiency in speaking. Therefore, speaking skill is regarded as the most important skill. In contrast with this natural fact, a large number of students in the university cannot speak the English language fluently. Alam & Ashrafuzzaman (2018a) conducted a study to find out the challenges of developing speaking skills through classroom interaction of EFL learners and found the nervousness, fearfulness, inattention to the class, mistakes in grammar were the

main problems faced by the EFL students. In the same way, Heriansyah (2012) found lack of vocabulary and being afraid of making mistakes as the main problems of developing speaking skills. The findings of a study conducted in Pakistan by Bashir et al. (2011) on factors affecting students' English speaking skills are different from the previous studies. The study found that students and teachers using English as a medium of instruction (EMI) to improve speaking skills in the classroom; both teachers and students use interactive techniques to boost up speaking skills. Another study by Sokip (2020) on overcoming the problems of learning foreign language skills in the classroom, found that in speaking skills students encounter mainly motivation problems, students are often worried about committing mistakes while speaking which are similar to the study of Heriansyah and Alam and Ashrafuzzaman. In their study also, fear of committing mistakes was found the main problem. Similarly, Anandari (2015) carried out research on Indonesian EFL students' anxiety in speech production: possible causes and remedy and explored mainly three causes of foreign language anxiety in speaking: fear, shyness, and discomfort and to reduce this anxiety self-reflection strategy played a key role. The findings of this study are more in a similar line with previous studies mentioned above. Al-Roud (2016) stated in his study that university-level students mainly face four domain problems: social, psychological, instructor, and linguistic domains. The study also pointed out that students, teachers, parents, and the whole community are responsible for the speaking problem. This study has covered many areas not only the classroom but also the community and family environment which is totally different than the other studies mentioned above. In another context, a study was conducted to explore the speaking difficulties and their causes (Nakhalah, 2016). In this study, fear of mistakes, shyness, anxiety, and lack of confidence was found the major problems faced by the students while speaking English.

Almost all the studies studied above (Al-Roud, 2016; Alam & Ashrafuzzaman, 2018a; Heriansyah, 2012; Nakhalah, 2016) are related to the present study and one of them is related to speaking anxiety and another one is related to affecting factors. Going through these studies and other available literature, The researcher could not find any studies carried out in Nepalese or even in Asian context especially in university-level students. Many other studies were carried out in the related fields but they focused on the school level. The researcher has found that most of the students in the university in Nepal cannot speak even two /three grammatically correct sentences confidently in front of the mass. So, the main concern of this study is; why learners even after studying for more than 12 years of English courses they could not speak fluently? Considering this issue, the study would like to explore the causal factors of students' speaking deficiency and the problems students face while speaking. What inhibits learners to be competent in speaking skills? What problem do they experience when they start speaking? These were basic guiding research questions of the study.

2. 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

and every 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   Speaking Difficulties and Their Cause

One English language skill that must be mastered by any foreign language learner is the ability to speak English fluently in day-to-day context or formal situations. Nunan (1991) argues that for most people, mastering speaking skills is the single very important part of

learning English and their success is measured on the basis of the ability to involve in conversation in English. While speaking speakers need to be aware of various things or must possess the knowledge of mechanics of language (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary), functions of language (requesting, greeting, getting permission, etc.), and the socio-cultural norms (turn-taking, rate of speech, length and pause, etc) (Burnkart, 1998: cited in Heriansyah, 2012). Therefore mastering speaking is regarded as the most difficult skill in a second language. Students face various problems while mastering speaking skills; among these various problems. Ur (1991) has mentioned the following problems students face in mastering speaking skills: Inhibition, nothing to say, low or uneven participation, and mother tongue use. According to Ur (1991), learners are often inhibited trying to say things in a foreign language in the classroom, worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism. Similarly, even if learners are not inhibited, they cannot say anything, because they do not have anything to say due to low motivation. The third major problem of the learners is low or uneven participation in the classroom. Talkative or brilliant students may dominate the class or even if that domination is managed they do not have sufficient time in the classroom to talk. The final problem Ur mentioned is the use of mother tongue. Learners feel easy and safe using their mother tongue in the class to share or discuss on the subject matter to avoid misunderstanding and fear of criticism from the peers. Therefore they prefer using mother tongue in the classroom which hinders English language learning.

In the same line, Brown (2001) has pointed out the following problems of speaking: Clustering, redundancy, and reduced form, and performance variable, colloquial language, rate of delivery, supra-segmental features, and interaction. In connected speech speakers need to use phrasal form rather than word by word, so learners may feel difficulty in phrasing the target language. In the same way, contracted or reduced forms are frequently used in fluent speech but second or foreign language learners are not habituated to using such forms in speech, therefore they feel difficulty in reducing some words in the English language and speaking becomes clumsy. Use of colloquial language by the native speakers may inhibit the learners to interact with them which cause exposure reduction; if students are not familiar with the colloquial language that may create problem in speaking. The overuse of gap filler or hesitation markers, correction, and backtracking may cause a deficiency in the speed of speech. Lack of appropriate vocabularies and grammatical patterns speakers may not speed up their delivery in speech; therefore they may be heisted to continue their conversation. English is termed a stress-timed language, so students need to manage stress; rhythm, and intonation in their speech, which the majority of non-native speakers feel difficulty.

Mastering in speaking may be affected by various factors like lack of vocabulary, grammar, classroom culture, and so many other things. According to Richards & Renandya (2002) following are the major causes of speaking difficulties: Age or maturation constraints, aural medium, socio-cultural factors, and affective factors. Among so many factors, age is regarded as the most determinant factor of language learning. Various scholars like, Krashen, Long, Scarcella (in Richards & Renandya, 2002) argued that learners who begin their second or foreign language at an early age may learn that language more easily than those who have learned it later age. Oyama (in Richards & Renandya, 2002) also points out that many adults fail to reach native-like proficiency in a second language in case of late starting off learning the language. The mother tongue interference may cause speaking difficulty in adult learners. The second affecting factor of speaking is the aural medium. Most of the researches

has proved that listening plays a vital role in mastering speaking skills (Ur, 1991). He further states that speaking feeds on listening, which precedes it. So, speaking is closely related to listening, through which learners internalize the language rules. If learners do not get appropriate exposure in listening, then it may slow down the speed of speaking of a learner. Another most important affecting factor of speaking pointed by Richards & Renandya is socio-cultural factors. Learning a language means becoming familiar with the social or cultural aspects of the target language; so learners need to know some tradition or culture of speaking of that target language to involve in effective conversation. Along with the knowledge of verbal communication system of language, speakers need to be accustomed with nonverbal communication systems such as eye-contact, body language, facial expression and so many others. Therefore lack of knowledge of socio-cultural factors may create problems in communication system in target language. Many scholars such as (Brown, 1994; Khasinah, 2014; Oxford, 1990) pointed out the role of affective factors in speaking problems. The effective factors such as emotions, self-esteem, empathy, anxiety, attitude, motivation (Oxford, 1990), the feeling of uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, and apprehension (Brown, 1994) play an important role in slowing down the speed of speech of an individual while speaking.

From the above discussion on literature review, it can be concluded that various learning, especially speaking difficulties may occur on the way of mastering speaking skills of second and foreign language learners. The difficulties may be inhibition, lack of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fear of mistake, being unfamiliar with socio-cultural system of communication and so many others. Along with the verbal communication system, learners need to be familiar with the non-verbal communication system to be competent in speaking skills. Lack of appropriate vocabulary and use of mother tongue are the major causes of speaking difficulties. Many researches were conducted worldwide on learning difficulties and pointed out various difficulties and their causes. But this present study has focused on speaking difficulties faced by Nepalese students especially at the university level which is the most burning issue in the field of education in Nepal. Almost all reviewed researches were carried out on children or based on the pedagogical principles; no researches have been conducted on how adult learners feel difficulty in speaking. Adult learners are self-directed and learning-oriented (Knowles et al., 2005) so that they possess some kinds of experiences in relation to their own problem. This study focuses on how adult learners feel about speaking difficulties and what potential causes of speaking deficiency they see. The study also analyzed whether speaking difficulties are the same for all the students worldwide or not.

3. Research Methodology

This study was conducted at the Department of English Education, Far Western University using a qualitative research design. The subjects of the study were the students from the sixth and eighth semester, studying major English at the undergraduate level. 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. Questions and interviews were developed using mainly two sections: Speaking difficulties faced by the students and

possible causes of difficulties. 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. The interview was conducted using the telephone and with their permission, the interview was recorded.

After receiving the questionnaire, participants were requested for the interview and the interview was conducted using Nepali language with a maximum of 20 minutes time for each 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.

4. 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 criticism/ insult from the peer
	Fear of 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
Teacher and teaching factors	Old fashioned teaching methods
	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

Poor schooling	Students from poor schooling
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 asks to 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. Poor Schooling

From the data, it was found that students have realized poor schooling as the cause of poor English performance. One of the students shared [S9],*"we have a very poor background of English from the school level only, now it is very difficult to improve English at this age*." According to their experience, if they could get a good environment at the school level to practice in English then they could speak fluently in English at this time. So school environment is also found a key factor for not having good English fluency at the university level.

4.2.4. 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.

4.2.5. 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. Sokip (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 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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