

MEKELLE UNIVERSITY



**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE**

**AN EXPLORATION OF THE MAJOR FACTORS HINDERING
LEARNERS' SPEAKING ABILITY: THE CASE OF GRADE TEN
STUDENTS OF ALENE SECONDARY SCHOOL, MEKELLE**

BY

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**An Exploration of the Major Factors Hindering Learners' Speaking Ability:
the Case of Grade Ten Students of Alene Secondary School, Mekelle**

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**A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master
of Art in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)**

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CERTIFICATION

MEKELLE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND LANGUAGES

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

(GRADUATE PROGRAMME)

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Mebrahtom Hagos, entitled “An Exploration of the Major Factors Hindering Learners’ Speaking Ability: the Case of Grade Ten Students of Alene Secondary School, Mekelle” and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Art in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) complies with the regulations of the university and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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I, Dr. Mergiyaw Alene, confirm that I have read all parts of the MA thesis submitted for defence of Mebrahtom Hagos and have given him the necessary comments which he has incorporated duly. Thus, I recommend that this MA thesis submitted for defense entitled “An Exploration of the Major Factors Hindering Learners’ Speaking Ability: the Case of Grade Ten Students of Alene Secondary School, Mekelle” is ready for defence.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL	English as foreign Language
FL	English as a Second Language
L2	Second Language
TEFL	Teaching English as Foreign Language
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences

ABSTRACT

This study strived to assess factors that affect EFL students' speaking performance with particular reference to grade 10 students of Alene secondary School. A descriptive design with mixed methodology was employed to conduct the study. Data were collected from 222 grade 10 students who were selected using systematic random sampling method through questionnaire and from 6 EFL teachers who were selected using availability sampling method through interview. Classroom observation was also used to collect additional data regarding the factors hindering EFL students' speaking ability. Data collected via close-ended questionnaire were analyzed using frequency, percentage and mean score using the SPSS version 21. On the other hand, the interview data and data from the open-ended questionnaire were analyzed qualitatively. This research included a discussion session under headings to answer three research questions. The findings revealed that the EFL students were not good at their speaking performance and the main factors that affected their speaking performance were personality factors, socio linguistic factors, and teacher related factors such as lack of accuracy on the side of the teacher and methodological problems including feedback provision problems and ignoring the speaking skill as a whole. The factors also included poor language knowledge, limited vocabulary, poor pronunciation skill, incompatible teachers' assessment method with students' preferences, lack of confidence, anxiety and fear of making mistake. Based on these findings some recommendations for EFL teachers and students were forwarded to improve speaking performance of EFL students in speaking classes.

Key words: *speaking performance, factors affecting*

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Speaking is a fundamental aspect of language acquisition and communication, serving as one of the primary means through which individuals express their thoughts, ideas, and emotions. In educational contexts, particularly in language learning, speaking skills are often viewed as a critical indicator of proficiency and competence. The ability to communicate effectively in spoken language not only enhances academic performance but also plays a pivotal role in professional success and social interaction. Despite its significance, many learners encounter substantial challenges that hinder their speaking abilities, leading to frustration and decreased motivation (Richards and Willy, 2002)

The importance of speaking skills extends beyond mere communication; it encompasses a range of cognitive, social, and emotional dimensions. Effective speaking involves not only the correct use of vocabulary and grammar but also the ability to engage listeners, convey meaning clearly, and adapt language to various contexts. Research indicates that strong speaking skills are linked to improved academic outcomes, increased self-esteem, and enhanced career opportunities (Nunan, 2003).

More importantly, English language 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. A document from the Federal Ministry of Education (2007) also demonstrates that English is a corner stone in the development of Ethiopia's commerce, communication systems, technology and education.

Moreover, the main aim of English language teaching in foreign language context is to give learners the ability to use English language effectively and correctly in communication (Davies & Pearse, 2000). Similarly, one of the skills in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classes is speaking. As a productive skill, it is one of the skills that teachers strive to improve, besides, one of the main aims of language teaching is to enhance communication and one of the ways in which communication takes place is through speaking (Brown & Yule, 1989).

According to Ur (2000), of all the four language skills called listening, speaking, reading, and writing, speaking is the most important one that is very necessary for the effective communication. The major goal of all English language teaching should be to give learners the ability to use English effectively and accurately in communication (Davies & Pearse, 2000). However, not all language learners after many years studying English can communicate fluently and accurately because they lack necessary knowledge. According to Burns and Joyce (1997), teachers need to offer students clear reasons for speaking and how to assess their performance. Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information (Brown, 1994). In speaking, form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, physical environment and the purpose for speaking. However, the journey toward achieving proficiency in speaking is often fraught with difficulties.

The current researcher, therefore, believes that students are expected to improve their speaking skills by using English language in English classroom for various interactions and they have to get exposures out of the classroom and in order to use English in their day to day communication purposes. Nonetheless, learners' speaking performance is influenced by factors like performance conditions, affective factors, listening skill, and feedback during speaking tasks (Tuan & Mai, 2015). If teachers want to help learners overcome their difficulties in learning speaking skill, and they should identify some factors that influence their speaking performance. To enhance teaching speaking skills, it is expected from English language teachers to work in collaboration and solve the factors that affect students' speaking skills in English classroom.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The importance of speaking skills in language acquisition and effective communication is recognized. Speaking proficiency is often a critical indicator of overall language competence.

Despite the aforementioned reality, Ethiopian secondary school students' English language proficiency problem has been a recurring concern for teachers and researchers. In this regard, Tamene (2000) asserted that there is a widely prevailing complaint among teachers and researchers that secondary school students' English language proficiency is less than adequate to carry out the various academic activities. In addition, Negash (2006) indicates that the nature of the decline in the quality of education that prevails at secondary schools in Ethiopia mainly concerns the capacity of students to follow their lessons in English.

Negash (2006) further explains that secondary school students in Ethiopia have great difficulties to read, write, speak and above all to listen to spoken English. Specially, they cannot express their feelings and ideas in learning English as foreign/second language. This means, the students do not participate actively in speaking sessions. Some of the students keep silent all the time and sit passively. They do not speak English in classroom. Even sometimes, while they try to answer a simple question, they do not speak in English. Furthermore, when students are asked to discuss some issues in pairs or groups they shift the medium of instruction from English to their mother tongue language.

In addition, from the experiences of teaching English in secondary schools, the current researcher has observed the insufficient participation of students in English language classroom. This means, the students do not participate actively in speaking sessions. Some of the students keep silent all the time and sit passively. They do not speak English in classroom. Even sometimes, while they try to answer a simple question, they do not speak in English. Furthermore, when students are asked to discuss some issues in pairs or groups they shift the medium of instruction from English to their mother tongue language. To sum up, the researcher observed that, in English classroom students are failed to ask and answer questions, participate in group discussions, and classroom peer-teaching and oral presentations. In the same vein, English language teacher (colleagues) also complain about students' insufficient participation in speaking English. They regularly complain that the students do not involve themselves in the speaking activities such as in pair and group discussion, role playing, oral presentation, and tasks involving speaking.

Several studies have been conducted both at the international and national level regarding problems of speaking skills among EFL students. For example, Tanveer (2007) examined the factors caused anxiety for learners in learning speaking ability and the impact of anxiety on target language communication. The obtained results indicated that learners' feeling of stress and anxiety stop their language learning and performance abilities. The researcher emphasized that the high anxiety lowers the learners' speaking performance. In addition, Urrutia and Vega (2010) demonstrated that learners' oral performance was influenced by their lack of vocabulary, diffidence, and fear of being despised. It was also indicated that learners' cooperation, self-confidence, vocabulary knowledge, and the class environment encouraged them to improve their speaking skills.

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 is responsible for the speaking problem.

The researcher also tried to assess studies conducted in Ethiopia regarding factors that affect speaking skill. However, he found out that there is no a dearth of research in Ethiopian English language teaching context. Therefore, it requires further research as the problem still exists in the research setting. In line with this idea, there are a few local studies on speaking skills. For example, Taye (2008) and Jenenew (2006) studied how oral skills are taught. Taye made a comparative study of televised and non-televised speaking skills teaching techniques. Jenenew made a survey on teachers' and students' role in the implementation of EFL speaking

Therefore, investigating the factors that affect the development of students' speaking skills has a paramount importance. Accordingly, the current researcher triggered to assess the factors that affect students' speaking skills. In this study, therefore, an attempt was made to assess the factors that affect

the development of students' speaking ability in English language. It mainly focused on the challenges and experiences that affect students' speaking skills.

1.3 Research questions

This study intended to answer the following three research questions:

1. What are the factors affecting grade ten students' speaking ability?
2. How do Alene Secondary School EFL teacher help the students to develop their speaking ability?
3. What should the EFL teachers do to enhance their students' speaking ability in the EFL classroom?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study was to identify factors that affect EFL students' speaking ability with particular reference to grade ten students' of Alene Secondary School in Mekelle City.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

Specifically, this study intended to achieve the following specific objectives:

- To identify the factors that affect EFL students' speaking ability;
- To point out the strategies that EFL teachers use to support their students develop their speaking ability in EFL classroom;
- To suggest possible ways that EFL teachers can use to help their students develop their speaking skill

1.5 Significance of the study

The study highlighted the factors that affect Alene Secondary School students' speaking ability in EFL speaking class. Speaking is one of the productive skills that helps language learners to convey their message and has an important place in language teaching. The result of this study will benefit people who have access to it. For example, it may provide English Language teachers with valuable insights regarding the factors that affect students' speaking abilities. It also raises the awareness of the teachers to equip their students with the essential skills to

minimize problems that encounter in developing English speaking abilities. Furthermore, it gives clues to school administrators and supervisors on giving necessary support to teaching and learning speaking abilities. Finally, the study may initiate researchers to conduct further research on related issues.

1.6 Delimitation of the study

This study intended to analyze the factors that affect Alene Secondary School students' speaking ability in EFL speaking class. However, this study was delimited to only grade 10 students of Alene Secondary School and only on analyzing the factors affecting the students' speaking abilities. The factors that affect the students' abilities in the other macro and micro skills of the English language were not the concern of this study. In addition, this study was temporally delimited to the academic year of 2024/25.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

This study encountered some limitations. One apparent limitation was that there were some participants who were not at their working place and the researcher could not find them to sit with them for interview. Though the researcher could finally find them and conducted the interview with them, after a long waiting and searching, this could have affected the research findings as it didn't give the researcher time to deeply investigate the problem.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

Speaking According to Nunan (1995), speaking is to say words orally, to communicate as by talking, to make a request, and to make a speech In addition, Chaney (1998) defines speaking as the process of making and sharing meaning by using verbal and non-verbal symbols in different contexts. In this study, the term "speaking" is used to refer to any kind of attempt to communicate with people using utterance.

Speaking ability The ability of using language to communicate using verbal or non-verbal symbols orally in different context that can be improved through learning language.

Factors A circumstance, fact, or influence that contributes to a result. In this study, the word

“factor” is used to refer to the things that contribute to the students’ refrainment from taking risks in EFL speaking classes.

1.9 Organization of the Study

The study contains five chapters. The first chapter deals with the introductory parts: background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, hypotheses of the study, delimitation of the study, limitation of the study, definition of operational terms, and organization of the study. The second chapter is concerned with review of the related literature. Literature that is related with communicative language teaching and speaking ability is reviewed here. The third chapter presents the methodological part of the research. Research design, sample and sampling techniques, data gathering tools, method of data analysis and pilot testing are the concern of this chapter. In addition, the fourth chapter presents the data analysis part. The fifth chapter contains the summary, conclusions and recommendations part. Reference part is also presented at the end of the fifth chapter. Finally, necessary attachments that were used in the study are attached in the appendix part following the references’ list.

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Definition of Speaking

There are a lot of definitions of the word “speaking” that have been suggested by the researchers in language learning. In Webster New World Dictionary, speaking is to say words orally, to communicate as by talking, to make a request, and to make a speech (Nunan, 1995). According to Chaney (1998), speaking is the process of making and sharing meaning by using verbal and non-verbal symbols in different contexts. Brown (1994) and Burns and Joyce (1997) defined speaking as an interactive process of making meaning that includes producing, receiving, and processing information.

Bygate (1987) defined speaking as the production of auditory signals to produce different verbal responses in listeners. It is regarded as combining sounds systematically to form meaningful sentences. Eckard and Kearny (1981), Florez (1999), Howarth (2001), and Abd El Fattah Torky (2006) defined speaking as a two-way process including a true communication of opinions, information, or emotions. This top-down view regards the spoken texts as the collaboration between two or more persons in the shared time and the shared context.

2.2 The Importance of Speaking

Humans are programmed to speak before they learn to read and write. In any given, human beings spend much more time interacting orally with language rather than using it in its written form. Speaking is the most important skill because it is one of the abilities that is needed to perform a conversation. English speaking is not an easy task because speakers should know many significant components like pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Learners should have enough English speaking ability in order to communicate easily and effectively with other people. Rivers (1981) studied the use of language outside the

classroom situation and understood that speaking is used twice as much as reading and writing combined. According to Brown (1994), listening and speaking are learners' language tools.

Efrizal (2012) Pourhosein Gilakjani (2016) expressed that speaking is of great significance for the people interaction where they speak everywhere and every day. Speaking is the way of communicating ideas and messages orally. If we want to encourage students to communicate in English, we should use the language in real communication and ask them to do the same process.

Richards and Rodgers (2001) stated that in the traditional methods, the speaking skill was ignored in the classrooms where the emphasis was on reading and writing skills. For example, in The Grammar-Translation method, reading and writing were the important skills and speaking and listening skills were not of great significance. According to Ur (2000), of all the four language skills called listening, speaking, reading, and writing, speaking is the most important one that is very necessary for the effective communication.

The significance of speaking is indicated with the integration of the other language skills. Speaking helps learners develop their vocabulary and grammar skills and then better their writing skill. Students can express their emotions, ideas; say stories; request; talk, discuss, and show the various functions of language. Speaking is of vital importance outside the classroom. Therefore, language speakers have more opportunities to find jobs in different organizations and companies. These statements have been supported by Baker and Westrup (2003) who said that learners who speak English very well can have greater chance for better education, finding good jobs, and getting promotion.

Previous researches approve that persons cannot learn a language without many opportunities for meaningful repetition. Oral language interactions and the opportunity to produce the language in meaningful tasks provide the practice that is very important to internalizing the language. Asher (2003) supports the idea that very soon after teachers model the language, learners like to imitate what have been said. Krashen (1988) examined the relation between listening and speaking skills. He stated that when students speak, their speaking provides evidence that they have

acquired the language. This idea led some teachers to jump quickly from speaking teaching to reading and writing teaching.

When students learn English, speaking is significant to support their ability to apply the language. Speaking skill has been very important to the success of human beings. The significance of speaking skill is observed in the daily activities of persons. Speaking is an interactive activity and it occurs under the real time constraints. That is, persons can use words and phrases fluently without very much conscious thinking. Speaking skill enables individuals to produce sentences for the real communication, in other words they actually like to communicate in language to get specific objectives (McDonough & Shaw, 1993).

2.3 Characteristics of Speaking Skill

According to Mazouzi (2013), learners' activities should be designed based on an equivalence between fluency and accuracy achievement. Both fluency and accuracy are important elements of communicative approach. Classroom practice can help learners develop their communicative competence. So they should know how the language system works appropriately.

The first characteristic of speaking performance is fluency and it is the main aim of teachers in teaching speaking skill. According to Hughes (2002), fluency is the learners' ability to speak in understandable way in order not to break down communication because listeners may lose their interest. Hedge (2000) expressed that fluency is the ability to answer coherently by connecting the words and phrases, pronouncing the sounds clearly, and using stress and intonation.

The second characteristic of speaking performance is accuracy. Learners should be fluent in learning a foreign language. Therefore, teachers should emphasize accuracy in their teaching process. Learners should pay enough attention to the exactness and the completeness of language form when speaking such as focusing on grammatical structures, vocabulary, and pronunciation (Mazouzi, 2013).

According to Thornbury (2005), learners' correct use of grammatical structures requires the length and complexity of the utterances and the well-structured clauses. To gain accuracy in terms of vocabulary means to select suitable words in the suitable contexts. Learners sometimes apply similar words or expressions in various contexts which do not mean similar things. So learners should be able to use words and expressions correctly.

Thornbury (2005) declared that pronunciation is the lowest level of knowledge learners typically pay attention to it. In order to speak English language accurately, learners should master phonological rules and they should be aware of the various sounds and their pronunciations. Learners should also know the stress, intonation, and pitch. All of these elements help learners speak the English language easily and effectively.

2.4 Speaking Problems

There are some problems for speaking skill that teachers can come across in helping students to speak in the classroom. These are inhibition, lack of topical knowledge, low participation, and mother-tongue use (Tuan & Mai, 2015). Inhibition is the first problem that students encounter in class. When they want to say something in the classroom they are sometimes inhibited. They are worried about making mistakes and fearful of criticism. They are ashamed of the other students' attention towards themselves. Littlewood (2007) expressed that a language classroom can also create inhibitions and apprehension for the students.

The second problem is that learners complain that they cannot remember anything to say and they do not have any motivation to express themselves. This is supported by Rivers (1968) who thinks that learners often have nothing to say probably because their teachers had selected a topic that is not appropriate for them or they do not have enough information about it. Baker and Westrup (2003) also supports the above idea and stated that it is very difficult for learners to answer when their teachers ask them to tell things in a foreign language because they have little opinions about what to say, which vocabulary to apply, or how to use grammar accurately.

The third problem in the speaking class is that the participation is very low. In a class with a large number of students, each student will have very little time for talking because just one student talks at a time and the other students try to hear him/her. In the speaking class, some learners dominate the whole class while others talk very little or never speak.

The last problem related to the speaking ability is that when some learners share the same mother-tongue, they try to use it in the speaking class because it is very easy for them (Tuan & Mai, 2015). According to Harmer (1991), there are some reasons why learners use mother-tongue in their speaking classes. The first reason is that when teachers ask their learners to talk about a topic that they do not have enough knowledge, they will try to use their language. The second reason is that the application of mother-tongue is very natural for learners to use. If teachers do not urge their learners to talk in English, learners will automatically use their first language to explain something to their classmates. The final reason refers to the fact that if teachers regularly use their learners' mother language, their learners will feel comfortable to do so in their speaking class.

Hyland (1997) investigated learners from eight disciplines at five Hong Kong institutions. The findings of his research indicated that proficiency in English was a significant factor in the academic success of an English environment. The findings also showed that the learners' language difficulties were related to the productive skills of writing and speaking. Evans and Green (2007) examined the language difficulties experienced by the students at a Hong Kong university. The results of this study represented that the students' difficulties centered on the academic speaking such as grammar, fluency, and pronunciation and the academic writing like style, grammar, and cohesion.

2.5 The Role of Teachers in Teaching Speaking Skills

Learner responsibility can develop if teachers allow more room for learner involvement. In autonomous learning, the teacher is a facilitator of learning, an organizer of learning opportunities, a resource person providing learners with feedback and encouragement, and a creator of the learning atmosphere and a learning space (Kohonen, et al, 2001). Nunan (1991) suggests that a number of factors should be considered in order to develop the speaking skills.

He emphasizes the consideration of the size of the class, the arrangement of the classroom and the number of hours available for teaching the language. In addition to this he has written the role of the teacher as follows:

What, then, is your role as a language teacher in the classroom? In the first place your task, like that of any other teacher, is to create the best condition for learning. In a sense, then, you are a means to an end; an instrument to see that learning takes place. But, in addition to this general function, you have specific roles to play at different stages of the learning process (Nunan 1991: 1).

Furthermore, Nunan writes the role of the teacher at the presentation stage as informant-selecting the new material to be learned and presenting this in such a way that the meaning of the new language is as clear and memorable as possible. The role of the learners in this stage is listening and trying to understand. He mentioned that the teacher is the center of the stage, presenting the new language item systematically in an attractive way. He also warns not to spend too much time presenting. At the practice stage, he assigns the teacher as the conductor and monitor. To him, at this stage it is the students who do most of the talking. The teacher's role is to devise and provide the maximum amount of practice (which is meaningful and memorable). The teacher is there to monitor the performance of the learners. According to Nunan the role of the teacher at the production stage is to act as manager and guide/adviser. He has written his comment as follows:

... no real learning should be assumed to have taken place until the students are able to use the language for themselves, and unless opportunities are available for them to do outside the classroom, provision must be made as part of the lesson. At any level of attainment from elementary to advanced, the students need to be given regular and frequent opportunities to use language freely.. Thus, in providing the students with activities for free expression and in discreetly watching over them as they carry them out, you take on the role of manager and guide (Nunan 1991:2).

Another important role cited by Nunan is motivation. He suggests that a teacher should motivate his students, arouse their interest and involve them in what they are doing. To do so, he mentioned some key factors that the teacher should do-the teacher's performance: his mastery of

teaching skills, often dependent on careful preparation, his selection and presentations of topics and activities and his own personality (which language teaching must be flexible enough to allow him to be both authoritative and friendly at the same time). Richards and Rodgers (1986) point out that teacher's roles are related to the following issues:

- the types of functions teachers are expected to fulfill, e.g. whether that of practice director, counselor or model.
- the degree of control the teacher has over how learning takes place.
- the degree to which the teacher is responsible for content.
- the interaction patterns that develop between teachers and learners.

2.6 The Role of Students in Learning Speaking Skills

Besides the teacher's role, students play a great role in assigning teaching speaking skills. They are expected to participate in teaching-learning process in different ways. One of the most important outcomes of the movement towards more communicatively oriented language learning and teaching has been the enhancement of the role of the learner in the language learning process (Wenden, 1991). The current researcher believe that in formal educational contexts the most successful learners are autonomous (they accept responsibility for their learning; they constantly reflect on what they are learning, why they are learning, and with what degree of success of learning). Scharle and Szabo (2000) point out that autonomous learners are those who accept the idea that their own efforts are crucial to progress in learning language and behave accordingly. When doing their homework, or answering a question in class, they are not aspiring to please the teacher, or to get a good mark. They are simply making an effort in order to learn something. They are willing to cooperate with the teacher and other in the learning group for every one's benefit (Ibid). Hedge (2000) agrees that an autonomous learner is one who is self- motivated, one who takes the initiatives, one who has a clear idea of what he/she wants to learn and one who has his/her own plan for pursuing and achieving his goal. She also characterized autonomous learners as those who:

- ✓ know their needs and work productively with the teacher towards the achievement of their objectives.

- ✓ learn both inside and outside the classroom.
- ✓ can take classroom based material and can build on it.
- ✓ know how to use resources independently.
- ✓ adjust their learning strategies when necessary to improve learning.
- ✓ manage and divide the time in learning properly.

Within the context of education, Wenden (1991) also characterized autonomous learners as those who are motivated to learn, good guessers, choosing material, methods and tasks, selecting the criteria for evaluation, taking an active approach to the task and willing to take risks (Wenden 1991). Furthermore, Dickinson (1995) characterizes autonomous learners as „those who have the capacity for being active and independent in the learning process; they can identify goals; formulate their own goals, and can change goals to suit their own learning needs and interests; they are able to use learning strategies, and monitor their own learning”. Kohonen et al. (2001) insists that learners need to develop the following kinds of capacities:

- ✓ Confidence: sense of control and mastery of one’s body, behavior and the world.
- ✓ Curiosity: desire to find out about things.
- ✓ Intentionality: capacity to work with persistence and develop a sense of competence.
- ✓ Self-control: ability to modulate and control one’s action appropriately.
- ✓ Relatedness: ability to engage with others.
- ✓ Communication: ability to exchange idea, feelings and experiences with others developing trusts in others.
- ✓ Cooperation: balancing one’s needs with those of others in group situations.

However good a teacher may be, students will never learn a language unless they aim to learn outside as well as during class time. This is because language learning is too complex to learn in a classroom (Harmer, 2001). Besides, she claims that to compensate for the limits of classroom time and to counter the problem of learning language, students need to develop their own learning strategies so that as far as possible they have to be autonomous learners. To develop

their autonomy, teachers need to facilitate learners to increase their self-understanding and awareness of themselves (Kohonen et al, 2001).

2.7 Factors that Affect Students' Speaking Performance

The students' related factors that affect their speaking performance during conversation are discussed as follow.

2.7.1 Mother Tongue Interference

Foreign language students who have L1 (mother tongue) tend to use it outside and even inside the classroom because they feel more comfortable and less exposed to the target language. According to Baker and Westrup (2003: 12) "barriers to learning can occur if students knowingly or unknowingly transfer the cultural rules from their mother tongue to a foreign language." Therefore, the learners will not be able to use the foreign language correctly if they keep on being influenced by the use of their mother tongue. Moreover, learners from a specific first language usually produce many similar mistakes resulting from the influence of their mother tongue. The EFL learners try, for example, to use the foreign language the same way they pronounce the first language (Bluers, 2005).

Mother tongue is a great problem those who have another L1 that affecting Ethiopian EFL learners in teaching and learning process. This problem is again related with linguistic difficulty which is extremely influence the EFL students in Ethiopia. This is one of the factors that influence students' ability to speak fluently and appropriately to use the language in a particular situation. Therefore, the researcher will take in to consideration how L1 affect students of learning, especially during communication in the class.

2.7.2 Linguistic Factors

The appropriate use of language forms is important for learner's oral proficiency (Saunders & O'Brien, 2006). Linguistic factors include several features like pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. It is believed that pronunciation plays a vital role in intelligibility (Goh, 2007). In addition, grammar acts as an essential role in learning the structure of English, but the implementation of correct use of grammar in one's speech is more important than learning the accurate use of grammar. Larsen-Freeman (2001) cites that it seems difficult for EFL learners to transfer the appropriate grammar to their speaking. Vocabulary is essential for EFL learners since it is the building block of every language. If the receptive vocabulary is rather limited, learners can seldom put the "receptive vocabulary knowledge into productive use" (Nation, 2001, p. 129); therefore, it is necessary for EFL learners to keep a lot of vocabulary in their long-term memory. Furthermore, the ability to pick up words from one's mind may cover the speaking fluency (Carter, 2001).

EFL learners' speaking performance is characterized by not only their knowledge but also their ability to attend to some linguistic elements of the language such as phonology, syntax, vocabulary, and semantics. Each of these aspects will be described as follows. For EFL learners, especially Ethiopian particularly Amhara Region EFL learners, where their first language systems are quite different from those of English, phonology is quite a problematic aspect. It is widely understood that English is not a phonetic language, meaning that pronunciation of its words are not the same to its spelling. On several occasions, it even occurs when words with the same spelling are pronounced differently due to its surrounding contexts, such as tenses and phonemes following them. This becomes one of the main reasons why non-native speakers of English often get confused in pronouncing many English words, especially if their first languages are phonetically in nature is different from it. Besides, knowing the pronunciation of the language, in order to convey meaning, the EFL learners must also have the knowledge of words and sentences. They must understand how words are segmented into various sounds, how sentences are stressed in particular ways. Grammatical competence enables speakers to use and understand the structure of English language accurately and unhesitatingly, which contributes to

their fluency. Native English speakers can say what they want without much difficulty due to their familiarity of the language.

2.7.3 Students' Previous Learning Experience

The pedagogical background in which the students came across determines the interest they have to take part in cooperative tasks. For example, if students have experienced with teacher-centered approach in which the teacher plays the dominant role in teaching learning process, they prefer to listen to the teacher's lecture instead of learning through interaction in conversation. With this regard, Christon (1990) cited in Girma (2003) suggested that if students come to English foreign language classes they expect the traditional classroom arrangement, with the teacher in front of the class and students in straight row watching the teacher; they will be confused and hesitant. Similarly, Littlewoods and Liu (1997) suggested that most students enjoy inadequate speaking opportunities at school, if listening to teacher has been their most frequent classroom experience. This indicates that the students' past experience of learning language (or teacher-centered method) can have a negative impact on the students' participation during spoken activities. In general, from the discussion above, students' prior learning experience can affect their participation during speaking lessons.

Since students are familiar with teachers centered while they are at low level class, they expect every activity must be done by their teacher.

2.7.4 Socio-cultural Factors

Students usually come to class from different environment with varied social and cultural backgrounds. And the researcher assumes that most preparatory school students are affected by their socio-cultural norms since their parents restrict them from most social interaction at home concerning this view Sintayehu (2015) stats that, old parents in some nationalities restrict their children from speaking in front of their elders. So, this could hinder learners' attitude during speaking lesson in language classes. In most cases, learners who are raised within labor family

background tend to show passive speaking performance, not to say lower willingness to communicate in English. Same case happens from those who come from less advantaged economic background. On the contrary, the EFL learners who coincidentally grow up in more educated and well-established economic background tend to be more assertive in their speaking.

According to Latha (2012) ‘Rural background of learners where English is generally not used’ is another cause affecting the teaching and learning process. Most of the Ethiopian learners particularly Degollo grade eleven students coming from rural background are first generation learners of English language. Their parents being farmers and uneducated often results in the lack guidance the EFL learners receive from their elderly. When learners of such background are asked to do a speaking activity, they end up in saying nothing. Even if they try to speak, they often tend to use their mother tongue, resulting in the failure of the learning speaking process. Not only students who have rural background but also urban students may face difficulty of speaking performance during making conversation.

2.7.5 Lack of Topical Knowledge

Topical knowledge is defined as knowledge structures in long-term memory. In other words, topical knowledge is the speakers’ knowledge of relevant topical information. The information that topical knowledge provides enables learners to use language with reference to the world in which they live. According to Bachman and Palmer (1996) “Topical knowledge can affect speaking performance.” Therefore, Ethiopian foreign language learners may have a problem of speaking performance in conversation due to lack of topical knowledge. In line with this, preparatory students have difficulty on the topic that is contextually integrated with the conversational lesson in the EFL classroom. Thus, unfamiliarity with a particular topic results to low speaking performance to make an interesting conversation in the EFL classroom.

2.7.6 Lack of Motivation

Motivation is a key to students' learning success. With regard to the issue of motivation in learning, Nunan (1999) stresses that motivation is important to notice in that it can affect students' to speak in English. In this sense, motivation is a key consideration in determining the preparedness of learners to communicate very well during conversation. Zua (2008) further adds that "motivation is an inner energy for everybody." She says that no matter what kinds of motivation the learners possess it will enhance their study interest. It has been proven in many studies that students with a strong motivation to succeed can persist in learning and gain better scores than those who have weaker motivation of success showing that building students' motivation to learn is urgent for every teacher. Besides, it is encouragement for the students to make conversation during speaking lesson in the EFL classroom.

2.7.7 Personality Problems

Personality problem is one factor which affects students' speaking performance in EFL classroom. The personality factors are intertwined in which one factor is closely related to the others and they are most challengeable factors of EFL students' speaking performance, especially during conversation in speaking class. The dominant personal complexity constructs are: Foreign language anxiety, inhibition or risk taking, lack of confidence, and feeling shyness and other.

2.7.7.1 Foreign Language Anxiety

Foreign language in public or EFL class, especially in front of teachers who teach often leads to anxiety. Sometimes, extreme anxiety results in the learners being tongue-tied or lost for words in an unexpected situation leading to discouragement and a general sense of failure in the learners (Bashir, and Dogar 2011). Foreign language anxiety has a debilitating effect on the oral performance of speakers of English as a foreign language. In other words, FL students may feel as if they are in a vulnerable position in which they are expected to reveal and express

themselves to others without the security of their mother tongue. They often feel that they are representing themselves badly, showing only a small part of their real personality and intelligence. This is one of the major factors for the inability to speak in English during conversation either in pair or group.

Moreover, foreign language anxiety is rooted problem, particularly the one happens in the classroom learning, may stem from a classroom condition with a large and mixed ability learners. In such classes, learners are quite often split up into two categories, i.e. strong and weak ones, where the strong and quick learners are often seen to be dominating and overtaking the slow and weak ones. The weak learners do not get opportunity in the presence of the strong ones which result in the shrinking of the weak learners during speaking lesson.

In the EFL setting, Brown (2000: 151) identified three components of foreign language anxiety, i.e. (1) communication apprehension, arising from learners' inability to adequately express mature thoughts and ideas; (2) fear of negative social evaluation, arising from a learner's need to make a positive social impression on others; and (3) test anxiety or apprehension over academic evaluation.

2.7.7.2 Inhibition or Risk Taking

Closely related to and in some cases subsumed under the notion of self-esteem is the concept of inhibition. Inhibition is a feeling of embarrassment or worry that prevents someone from saying what she/he wants Cambridge A.L. Dictionary, (2008). According to Brown (2000: 147) humans understand of themselves and build sets of defenses to protect the ego. While making mistakes in EFL learning is part of the learning process, yet it surely poses threads to one's ego. These defenses discourage the learners to speak the language and tend to stay silent rather than being criticize or losing face in front of their speaking audience. Likewise,

Ethiopian EFL learners face a problem of speaking during conversation. Due to the feeling of embarrassment most of them face difficulties to participate during spoken lesson.

2.7.7.3 Lack of Confidence

It is commonly understood that students' lack of confidence usually occurs when students realize that their conversation partners have not been understood them or when they do not understand other speakers. In this situation, they would rather keep silent while others do talking showing that the students are lack of confidence to communicate. In response to this,

Nunan (1999) says that student who lack of confidence about themselves and their English necessarily suffer from communication apprehension. This shows that building students' confidence is an important part of teacher's attention.

In this case, many students think that their English is bad and they feel that they cannot speak English well. The other cause of students' lack of confidence also deals with the lack of encouragement from the teacher (Brown, 2001). As a result, as Brown adds, students find the learning de motivating rather than motivating. This suggests that encouragement becomes a vital thing in order to build the students' confidence. Therefore, giving students encouragement and showing that they will be able to communicate well in English plays a role in students' success of learning.

2.7.7.4 Feeling Shyness

According to Juhana (2012) "shyness is an emotional thing that many students suffer from at some time when they are required to make conversation in speaking class". This indicates that shyness could be a source of problem in students' learning activities in the classroom especially in the class of speaking. In line with this, Baldwin (2011) further explains that speaking in front of people is one of the more common phobias that students encounter and feeling of shyness makes their mind go blank or that they will forget what to say. Juhana (2012) explained also supported by the performance of students in which they participate in speaking as they say their inability to show their ability is fully affected by their feeling of shyness, especially during pair conversation. On the other hand, every conversation takes place in a social context within a

particular contexts culture. Thus, the participants may not realize it, but conversation is in many ways determined by these external contextual factors.

In fact, a lack of awareness of social and cultural language rules can often be the source of much more trouble and embarrassment for foreign language learners than gaps in their knowledge of grammar in the classroom.

2.8 Teachers' Related Factors that Affect Students' Speaking performance

Teachers have an important role to play in the success or failure of learners in acquiring the target language. Some of teacher related variable which affect students' speaking performance in English learning speaking skills are as follow.

2.8.1 Teachers' educational background

The basis for teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning a language is the educational and professional experiences. Freeman (1992) says that teachers' belief about a language may be based on their training, their teaching experience, or may go back to their own experiences as language learner. Thus, teachers' education beliefs and attitude are one of the most potential problems that direct their preferences for certain language learning activities Borg (1999) also states that teachers' language education, training background as teachers influence their beliefs and classroom activities. Most of Ethiopian English teachers, in post experience of learning English have made them uneasy with making their choices of teaching grammar method. This tendency of teaching English grammar will also lead to teacher dominated or teacher fronted classroom activities than student-centered. As a result, Ethiopian EFL learners face challenges to make communication, particularly during conversation in the spoken language classroom.

2.8.2 Lack of Giving Clear Instruction

Since giving clear instruction is a vital for developing speaking skill of learner's teachers have to give students clear instruction before students make conversation. However, when students lack of clear instructions, they fail to participate either in group discussion or pair conversation in the EFL classroom. Regarding to this, Yunteng (2004) cited in Mekonnin (2014) stated that clear instruction is a great importance to the success of their work.

Teacher's providing of clear instruction will bring more language production and more interaction in the activities in speaking lesson. Hence, when EFL teachers do not provide interesting instruction for conversation the foreign language learners could not make regular conversation either in group or pair during speaking classroom interestingly.

2.8.3 Lack of Teachers' Supervision

When students are allowed to work in group or pair conversation during speaking lesson, the teacher should not leave the activity to students and stay away from them. The EFL teachers need to supervise the students work effectively. However, if there is no supervision from the teacher, the students could not participate either in group or in pair in speaking lesson actively. Regarding to this, Mukalel (1998) stated that one possibility of students' activity in group work that they are relatively in a position to take learning responsibility.

Then, students need close support from their teacher over the time of practice. Furthermore, Brown (2001) also suggested that when students are working in group, the teacher should not sit at a desk and grade papers, should not leave the room and take break and should not spend undue amount of time with one group at the expense of others. Likewise, teachers should supervise what the pair conversation seems like and how the learners use the target language in speaking lesson in the EFL classroom.

Moreover, from the above scholars' points of views, it can be concluded that teachers should not leave the activity to the learners only when they converse with their classmate, especially in

groups and even during pair conversation. Rather, it is better to supervise every group members activity in which students are participating in and helping them as much as possible.

Here, when the teachers leave the activity while students are in group majority, of them do not take part in activity unless the teachers supervise. Students need assistance to accomplish the task to talk more about the given activities.

2.9 Ways to Overcome the Challenges of Learners' Speaking Performance

2.9.1 Relaxation

Relaxation is one of the popular ways of overcoming students' speaking performance and that could reduce their anxiety during speaking classroom. According to Kanar (2011, p.293) expression "learners can use relaxation before giving their speeches in order to feel much better." Especially EFL learners' particularly Ethiopian students have to join with this essential method that help to overcome their speaking performance in the EFL classroom.

Moreover, relaxation can be performed through following some techniques. For example, anxious learners should take a deep breath before speaking which may help them feel comfortable. Besides, Mekerrow (2007) Stated that 'learners can manage their fear of speaking through realizing that tension and nervousness are normal and they will be reduced the act of speaking.' Furthermore, when EFL teachers create relaxed situation during conversation either in group or pair the more EFL learners' speaking performance become attractive.

2.9.2 Role Play

Role-play is one of the methods that enable learners to improve a range of real life spoken language in the classroom (Cook, 2001); for example, EFL teachers choose a conversation from a book and after repeating aloud with students, teacher asked some students to be volunteers in role-play. This activity can help students to overcome their shyness, and foreign language

anxiety in the speaking lesson. Cotter (2007) explains that the role-play activities enable the teacher to create a supportive, enjoyable classroom environment in which students are motivated to effectively learn the target language. Besides, it is important to create a positive environment and they can express their ideas without feeling afraid of making mistakes. Furthermore, role play activity provides the students the opportunity to practice variety of socio-cultural speech acts that are appropriate to the situation for example, requesting, apologizing, and thanking etc. According to Hedge (2000) 'Role play will depend on the willingness and motivation of the students to change the personae.' The success of the role play depends on the choice of the topic and the teachers' motivation. Therefore, this activity or method of teaching has great role to overcome students' speaking performance in speaking lesson

2.9.3 Having Interactions

Spoken language has usually two functions: interactional and transactional. The essential goal of the former is to keep social relationships, but that of the latter is to pass information and ideas. Because much of our daily communication is interactional, being able to interact is imperative. Thus, language instructors should facilitate learners' with meaningful communicative situations about proper topics by applying learner-learner interaction as the key to teach communicative language (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Thus, Communication drives essentially from interaction Classroom communication includes meaning-focused activity and learners can learn how to listen and talk to others, how to negotiate meaning in shared context both verbally and non-verbally with the help of teacher (Richards & Renandya, 2002). In addition, in order to design speaking activities; teachers need to take into consideration the integration of four language skills as they interact with each other in natural behavior, because in real life situations as in the classroom, most tasks of any complexity involve more than one macro skill in the EFL classroom.

2.9.4 Provision of Feedback

Foreign language teachers should aware of providing feedback in the EFL classroom. In line with this, different methodologists look at providing feedback from several aspects. However, feedback is seen from the view point of accuracy i.e. form of the language used and fluency i.e.

content of spoken production activities. Besides, Harmer (2001) feedback on students' spoken language can be either positive or negative and may serve not only to let students know how well they have performed but also how bad they have performed to increase motivation and build a supportive climate. Besides, the techniques that they suggest for feedback on content/fluency includes: it is important that the teacher does not interrupt in 'mid-flow', since it interrupts the communication and drags the activity back to the start.

Moreover, the teacher may provide feedback immediately on how well or badly students have done, or make a note of mistakes and shift the feedback onto a future lesson. Most of the teaching specialists agree that providing feedback during spoken language depends on several aspects of which the most important are the type of activity and the kind of mistake that is made in EFL classroom.

2.10 Previous Studies on the Factors Affecting Speaking Skill

In this section, some studies pertinent to the factors influencing speaking skill are reviewed. Park and Lee (2005) investigated the connection between second language learners' anxiety, self-confidence, and speaking performance. One hundred and thirty two Korean learners participated in this research. The results obtained from this research showed that students' anxiety level had a negative relationship to their oral performance.

Park & Lee (2005) explored the relationship between L2 learners' anxiety, oral performance, and self-confidence. The finding of the study confirmed that the learners' anxiety level was negatively connected to their oral performance. They concluded that L2 learners' range of oral performance in relation to grammar and vocabulary was to a great extent, affected by their self-confidence. The higher the anxiousness was, the lower they scored in their oral performance.

Adding to that, Lukitasari, N. (2008) explored students' strategies in dealing with speaking problems in speaking classes. The population of her study was nine classes in level 1 speaking class, who were enrolled as first semester students, in Al Muhammadiyah University of Malang in Indonesia. The aim of the study was to know what the problems of learning speaking were, in addition to the students' strategies in overcoming the oral performance difficulties. The

researcher employed two of the nine sections, as a sample for the study. The instrument of the study was a questionnaire distributed to students, then analyzed by the researcher. The study indicated that students in the speaking class encountered a few obstacles such as inhibition, having nothing to utter, weak participation in class, and finally the usage of the mother tongue language. The study also revealed that the students' poor speaking performance was due to their non-proficiency in the basic elements of speaking which are Pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary.

Al Hosni (2014) conducted a case study that investigated the speaking difficulties encountered by young Omani EFL learners. The population of the study was taken from two basic education schools in Oman. The findings of the study revealed that there were three main speaking difficulties experienced by students at that level, and they are, Inhibition, first language use, and linguistic difficulties.

Al Nakhleh, A. (2016) examined the problems and difficulties of speaking that encounter English Language students at Al Quds Open University. The method used by the researcher was a qualitative one. The instruments of the study were a class observation to gather the needed data, and an open-ended interview conducted with students. The population of the study included all students studying English language at Al Quds Open University in Gaza. The finding of the study showed that there was a lack of support from the surrounding environment, in addition to the anxiety from the students' side. Furthermore, the results also showed that the instructors did not provide students with enough support while speaking English, yet they highlighted their speaking errors which affected the learners negatively.

Diep (2017) explored measurements of factors affecting English speaking skills of students at the Foreign Language Department of Van Lang University in Vietnam. This study aimed at finding out the reasons behind the non-fluency of the university students in English speaking. The researcher adopted the quantitative and the qualitative approach. The results of the study revealed that grammar, pronunciation and methods of teaching have the highest impact on the English-speaking skills of the university students. Consequently- and based upon this study -the instructors and administrators of the Foreign Language Department in Van University were able

to comprehend the obstacles encountered, hence look for acceptable and executable ways for training and teaching to help their students enhance their English-speaking skills.

Fareh (2010) highlighted that a significant challenge was inadequate teaching training of EFL instructors in Arab countries. Alhaisoni and Rahman (2013) echoed this concern; they also mentioned the need to equip students with sufficient knowledge of basic skills and recommended that English teachers in the Kingdom must abandon obsolete methods of teaching such as “the lecture mode of instruction and the dictation of notes” (p. 117).

Urrutia and Vega (2010) demonstrated that learners’ oral performance was influenced by their lack of vocabulary, diffidence, and fear of being despised. It was also indicated that learners’ cooperation, self-confidence, vocabulary knowledge, and the class environment encouraged them to improve their speaking skills.

This study, therefore, attempted to see the factors hindering students’ speaking performance in the Ethiopian context, particularly in the Tigray Regional State. The study also attempted to see the compatibility of the factors that affected students’ speaking skills with the factors the international studies found out.

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

In this study, the researcher employed descriptive design with mixed methods. According to Orodho (2003), descriptive design is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. It can be used when collecting information about people's perceptions, attitudes, opinions, habits, practices or any of the variety of education or social issues (Orodho & Kombo, 2002). Using descriptive design has its own advantage. The main advantage of this type of design is that it enables the researcher to assess and describe the situation of the study. The researcher therefore used the descriptive design to assess and describe the factors that affect EFL students' speaking ability in learning speaking. According to Cooper (1996), descriptive study is concerned with finding out who, what, where, and how about a phenomenon.

3.2 Research Method

This research utilized two types of data; qualitative and quantitative data. A method that suits to a research with this type of data is mixed method. This method is a combination of the qualitative and quantitative methods. According to Sigh (2006), a research method is determined by the nature and purpose of the research. Therefore, the researcher decided to use mixed type of methodology based on the nature of this research. This means both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed. In line with this, Creswell and Clark (2007) explain that a mixed method is a method whereby the quantitative and qualitative methods are separately used under the analysis part but simultaneously in the discussion part. Therefore, the quantitative method was used to analyze and interpret the close-ended questions of the students' questionnaire whereas the qualitative method was employed to analyze and interpret data from the EFL teachers' interview and open-ended questionnaire of students.

3.3 Location of the Study

According to Singleton (1993), the ideal setting is one that is related to the researcher's interest, is easily accessible and that allows the development of immediate report. Alene Secondary

School is found in Mekelle City of Tigray Regional State of Ethiopia. The choice of the district was determined by the familiarity of the researcher to the study area and the fact that the researcher is also a teacher in the school and observes severe problem of students in speaking performance. In addition, the researcher identified the problem in this school through informal observation and discussion with colleagues. Likewise, the researcher was familiar with the teachers and other participants of the study and its immediacy and ease access to the needed information. Finally, no similar research had been conducted in the school.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

According to Cooper (1996), population or universe for a study is any group of individuals or institutions which have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher. The target population for the study consists of EFL teachers and students in Alene Secondary School. The process of selecting the participants is called sampling and the people selected are called sample or subjects (Enon, 1998). Two types of sampling techniques were used in this study: probability and non-probability sampling techniques. The non-probability sampling technique was used to select the grade level for this study. Accordingly, grade 10 students were taken purposively and all the EFL teachers in the study school were taken using availability sampling. The rationale behind selecting grade 10 was that the researcher observed the problem of willingness to speak in that grade level.

There were 502 students in grade 10 who were enrolled in the academic year 2024/25. Then the researcher used Slovin's formula to select sample participants from this population. The formula is given below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: **N**= total population; **n**=sample subjects; and **e** =error tolerance. The researcher wants to maintain 95% confidence level, and this means there will 0.05 error tolerance. Therefore the samples were selected like the following:

$$n = \frac{502}{1 + 502 * (0.05)^2} = 222$$

Based on the above formula, 222 grade ten students were selected as samples. Following this, the researcher used systematic random sampling method using the formula $N/n=k$; **where N= total population; n= sample size; k= interval size.** ,

Based on the above formula, $502/222 \approx 2$. This means the interval size becomes approximately two and the researcher accessed attendance from the homeroom teachers of the sections. Next, the researcher chose a number between 1 and 2 randomly and every second student in the list was included in the sample. In addition, there were 6 EFL teachers in the school and all of them were taken using availability sampling technique. Hence the total sample size of the study included 222 students and 6 EFL teachers in the school. Total sample size of the study became 228.

3.5 Instruments of Data collection

Data gathering instruments are expected to be suitable for the nature of the research. Therefore, in the selection of the instruments used in this study, the researcher thought to ensure that the instruments chosen were suitable and appropriate by considering the level of the respondents and their availability. Accordingly, questionnaire, interview, and classroom observation were the three data gathering instruments used in this study.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaire was among the data gathering tools that were used in this study because the researcher believed that it would help to gather necessary information about the factors hindering learners' speaking ability. This tool was used to gather data from students on their view and witness on the factors that hindered their speaking ability. The researcher preferred to use questionnaire because it enables to get wider information from widely dispersed sample population and makes possible an economy of time and provides a high proportion of usable responses (Best and Kahn, 2003). In addition, questionnaire can be conducted at a low cost even when the universe is large; it is free from the bias of the researchers; respondents have adequate time to give well thought out answers; and remote respondents can be easily approached (Kothari, 2006).

3.5.2 Semi-structured interview

In addition to questionnaire, the required data were gathered through semi-structured interview with EFL teachers. The rationale for using semi-structured interview, as Burns (1999) cited in Cherie (2003) claimed, is that semi-structured interviews can help the researchers to get themes and topics which might not have been anticipated while designing the interview. Interview is advantageous as it gives chance for respondents to give detailed ideas and for the researcher to ask follow up questions for ideas that are not clear during the interview, an advantage that neither questionnaire nor classroom observation can give. The interview questions intend to achieve the desired objectives of the study; and the items were designed in line with the literature review.

3.5.3 Classroom Observation

Observation was used as additional data gathering tool for this study. This was because the primary focus of this study was to investigate the factors hindering learners' speaking ability, and they were mainly collected through questionnaire and interview. The researcher wanted to see the actual speaking performance of the students and take some notes on what was behind the poor speaking performance of the students. The researcher also felt that it was crucial for data collection to concentrate on what was done in the classroom rather than on what was said. The researcher's belief here is supported by Denscombe, (2010) who claim that observation provides direct and valuable evidence of what was being studied; it is a purposeful, systematic and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction or phenomenon as it takes place. There are many situations in which observation is the most appropriate method of data collection. It is appropriate in situations where full and/ or accurate information can't be elicited by questioning because respondents either are not co-operative or are unaware of the answers because of that it is difficult for them to detach themselves from the interaction. In summary when you are more interested to the behavior than in the perception of individuals, or when subjects are so involved in the interaction that they are an able to provide objective information about it, observation is the best approach to collect the required information (Ranjit, 1999).

The researcher found it unmanageable to conduct classroom observation for all the EFL teachers who participated in filling the questionnaire. Instead of this he selected three EFL teachers and observed one sample speaking lesson of each teacher to see how the students performed in the speaking lesson and what factors hindered them in the speaking lessons. The researcher took notes based on what he observed in the classroom.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

As it has been mentioned earlier, two types of data gathering tools were employed for this study. These were questionnaire and interview. The data gathered through the two data gathering tools were analyzed in both quantitative and qualitative ways. The quantitative data which were collected through questionnaire were analyzed using frequency, percentage and mean scores using the SPSS version 21. On the other hand, data gathered through semi-structured interview were analyzed qualitatively using thematic analysis and verbal description.

3.7 Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering procedure for this study was based on several steps. First the researcher was granted permission from the selected schools and the sample respondents. Then the researcher prepared data gathering tools and checked their validity and reliability. The questionnaire and interview were tested and necessary corrections were made to avoid ambiguity and confusion before conducting the final data collection. This was followed by the preparation of the final draft of the questionnaire. Then, the questionnaire was administered with the help of vice principals and unit leaders of the schools following the provision of the necessary orientation by the researcher. Next, appointment was made with the interviewees for interview sessions and the interview was conducted based on the schedule. Classroom observation was also carried out in three speaking classes. Finally, the collected quantitative data were coded and into SPSS version 21 and analysis were made using frequency, percentage, mean values, and standard deviation. The qualitative data from interview and classroom observation were also coded and thematically analyzed.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

3.8.1 Validity of Instruments

Validity refers to the test or measurement strategy measures and how well it does so. Compbell (1960) identified the most commonly used methods for demonstrating validity are referred to as content-related, criterion related, & construct-related validity. This study addressed content validity through the review of literature and adapting instruments used in previous research. It refers to the relevance of the instrument or measurement strategy to the construct being measured. On the other hand (Groth-Marnat & Baker, 2003) define content validity the extent to which the test or measurement strategy measures a theoretical construct or trait.

3.8.2 Assessing Reliability

To assure the validity of the instruments, much effort was made to develop the instruments by incorporating all the comments of the advisor, MA graduate colleagues and lectures in school leadership department. In addition, the reliability of the teachers' questionnaire was tested in one secondary school which was out of the study schools. The reliability coefficient was tested using Cronbach's alpha and the result was 0.82, which is good reliability. The piloting meant to ensure clarity of the final instruments for the actual data collection. The pilot study assisted to find out any weakness that might be contained in the instruments of the study. Moreover, to check the strength of the items in responding the objectives, the drafted items were given to two colleagues for review and the researcher received comments from them. After receiving their comments and suggestions the items were sent to the advisor for comment and the researcher modified them accordingly. Finally, the interview was carried out.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Each discipline should have its own ethical guidelines regarding the treatment of human research participants (Johnston & Vanderstoep, 2009). Research ethics deal with how we treat those who participate in our studies and how we handle the data after we collect them. The researcher had kept privacy (that left any personal questions), anonymity (protecting the identity of specific individuals from being known) and confidentiality or keeps the information confidential

(Saunders, 2007). In addition, the questionnaire distributing to voluntary participants and have a clear introduction and instruction parts regarding the purpose of the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter presented analysis of the data obtained through the two data gathering tools-questionnaire and interview-followed by discussion of results. The purpose of this study was to examine problems hindering EFL students' speaking ability and this chapter presents an analysis and discussion of the findings obtained from the field through questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The study samples were 228 respondents comprising of 6 EFL teachers and 222 EFL students. The data collected through questionnaire from students and through semi-structured interview from teachers were analyzed and interpreted in this chapter. In addition, this chapter presented the discussion of the findings.

4.1 Analysis of Questionnaire Data

This part of the data analysis and interpretation is concerned with the data obtained from grade ten students of Alene Secondary School in Mekelle City through questionnaire. The analysis is done under different themes and the students had given their witnesses regarding the problems hindering their speaking ability.

4.1.1 Background Information of Student Respondents

Table 4. 1: Student Respondents' Age and Sex

Sex				Age							
Male		Female		14-16		17-18		19-20		21 and above	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
121	54.5	101	45.5	64	28.8	87	39.2	58	26.1	13	5.86

Table 4.1above presents data about the gender and age of the student respondents. The first column of the table displays that more than half of the respondents (54.5%) are male and the remaining 45.5% are female. Similarly, the second column of the table presents the prevalence of student respondents across some age groups. Accordingly, 64(28.8%) of the student respondents

were between the age of 14 and 16 years old while 87(39.2%) of the respondents were found between the age of 17 and 18. In addition, the table shows that while 58(26.1%) of the students respondents were between the age of 19 and 20, the remaining few student respondents (5.86%) were 21 and above years old. From this data, we can understand that the number of male students was slightly higher and the students who were attending grade ten were not at the appropriate age for the grade level. The appropriate age for grade ten is 17. The fact that there were quite a lot of students above the right age could be due to COVID 19 and the subsequent war in Tigray.

4.1.2 Problems Hindering Students Speaking Ability

Table 4. 2: Students’ responses regarding to their learning experience in spoken English

No	Items	Rating Scale										Mean
		5		4		3		2		1		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1	I am poor in speaking because I have poor English learning experience.	75	33.8	100	45	26	11.7	21	9.5	0	0	4.03
2	Grammar oriented learning denied me the opportunity to exercise with speaking.	78	35.1	95	42.8	47	21.2	2	0.9	0	0	4.12
3	I am interested to learn English conversation as an optional class for to be fluent as EFL learner.	91	41	131	59	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.41
Grand Mean												4.19

Table 4.2 presents data about students’ responses regarding their learning experience in spoken English and how it affects their speaking ability. Accordingly, the first item of Table 4.2 reveals that a significant number of the respondents (33.8%) strongly agreed with the idea that they were poor in speaking because they had poor English learning experience. On the other hand, the remaining 100(45%), 26(11.7%), and 21(9.5%) of the respondents indicated that they agreed, remained indifferent and disagreed respectively. The mean value for this item is 4.03 which

indicate that the response of the student respondents lies on the “agree” column. This means that students believed that their poor speaking performance was the result of their poor English language learning experience.

Similarly, the second item of the table shows that while the majority 78(35.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the claim that grammar oriented learning denied them the opportunity to exercise with speaking, 95(42.8%) of them agreed with the assertion in the second item. on the other hand, 47(21.2%) of the respondents remained undecided and only 2(0.9%) of the respondents disagree with the claim that grammar oriented learning denied them the opportunity to exercise with speaking. Overall speaking, the mean response for the second item (mean=4.12) shows that the students thought the grammar oriented learning denied them the opportunity to practice speaking indicating that it is one of the factors that hinder their speaking ability.

The third item of the table provides data about students’ interest to learn English conversation as an optional class to be fluent as EFL learner. The results show that 91(41%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they want to learn English conversation in extra class. In addition, more than half of the students (59%) agreed with the item. The mean value for this item is 4.41 and it shows that the students were keen on learning extra class on optional classes. This may imply that they were not getting extra class option to improve their speaking ability as they already witnessed that the learned grammar oriented classes and their English speaking skills were poor.

In general, Table4.2 as a whole reveals that students’ learning experience was one obstacle that affected their speaking ability (Total Mean=4.19). this means, how the students learn English speaking was not helpful to improve their speaking ability, and, subsequently, their speaking ability remained poor.

Table 4. 3: Students’ responses regarding to their personality factors

No	Items	Rating Scale										Mean
		5		4		3		2		1		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1	I am afraid of making mistake in front of the class, so I am not interested to have conversation.	97	43.7	86	38.7	15	6.8	14	6.3	10	4.5	4.11
2	I feel shy so that I prefer to be silent when my teacher asks me to make pair conversation with my classmate.	94	42.3	87	39.2	21	9.5	0	0	20	9.5	4.06
3	I feel foreign language anxiety when my English teacher invites me to make conversation in speaking lesson.	105	47.3	96	43.2	14	6.3	7	3.2	0	0	4.35
4	I am unwilling to make conversation because I have no confidence with my speaking.	70	31.5	93	41.9	0	0	26	11.7	33	14.9	3.65
Grand Mean												4.038

Table 4.3 presents students’ responses regarding the contribution of personality factors to the poor English speaking skills of the students. Accordingly, as the first item of Table 4.3 shows, the students were presented with the assertion that they were afraid of making mistake in front of the class, so they were not interested to have conversation. To this item, while 97(43.7%) and 86(38.7%) of the students strongly agreed and agreed respectively, another 15(6.8%) and 14(6.3%) of the student respondents remained undecided and disagreed respectively. The remaining 10(4.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion. The total mean for the item (Total mean=4.11) shows that the fact that the students were afraid of making mistakes in front of their class mates was a hindering factor that contributed to the poor English speaking ability if the students.

As can be seen in the second item of the table, 94(42.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the claim that they felt shy so they preferred to be silent when their teacher asked them to

make pair conversations with their classmates. Similarly, 87(39.2%) of the respondents agreed with the item whereas 21(9.5%) of them remained undecided. Responses to the second item of the table show that only 20(9.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the item. the total mean (Total mean=4.06) for the second item reveals that the students felt shy so they preferred to be silent when their teacher asked them to make pair conversation with their classmates. This affects students' speaking ability negatively as it denies them regular practice on speaking.

Moreover, the third item of Table4.3 presents data about the students' regarding the fact that they felt foreign language anxiety when their English teacher invited them to make conversation in speaking lessons. To this item, around half of the respondents (47.3%) strongly agreed and another 96(43.2%) of them agreed with the assertion. The remaining 14(6.3%) and 7(3.2%) remained neutral and disagreed respectively. The mean value for this item was 4.35 and it shows that the student respondents' response about foreign language anxiety fell under the "agree" column revealing that foreign language anxiety was one of the major factors that affected the students' speaking ability.

Furthermore, the fourth item of Table4.3 presents students' response for the assertion that the students were unwilling to make conversation because they didn't have confidence with their speaking ability. Then the response by the students show that a great deal, (31.5% and 41.9%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively with the item. while no respondent remained undecided, 26(11.7%) and 33(14.9%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. The aggregate response of the student respondents to the fourth item of the table resulted in a mean value of 3.65 and it shows that the students didn't have the confidence with their speaking ability and this abstained hem from speaking practices in the classrooms.

Generally, the total mean for table 4.3 (Total Mean=4.038) shows the students had lack of confidence and this has affected their speaking skills as they don't usually practice speaking because of their lower confidence.

Table 4. 4: Students’ responses regarding to language related factors and socio-cultural factors

No	Items	Rating Scale										Mean
		5		4		3		2		1		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1	I am worried about my pronunciation when I speak via English in the class during conversation.	0	0	0	0	45	20.3	137	61.7	40	18	2.02
2	I have lack of vocabulary to make conversation in front of the class.	83	37.4	99	44.6	0	0	40	18	0	0	4.01
3	I use my mother tongue (Amharic) whenever I am asked to do activities in groups in speaking class.	82	36.9	86	38.7	27	12.2	10	4.5	17	7.7	3.93
4	I am imposed by socio-cultural factors, so I am afraid of speaking during conversation.	84	37.8	69	31.1	28	12.6	12	5.4	29	13.1	3.75
Grand Mean												3.43

Table4.4 presents data about how language related and socio cultural factors affect students’ English speaking ability. The table displays students’ responses regarding these factors. Accordingly, the first item of the table displays that 45(20.3%) of the students remained undecided with assertion that they were worried about their pronunciation when they spoke via English in the class during conversation while majority of them (61.7%) of them disagreed. The re remaining 40(18%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the first item of the table. The total mean for this item (mean=2.02) shows the fact that students mispronounce words while speaking in class was not considered as a significant factor in that negatively affected the students’ speaking ability.

The second item of Table 4.4 is about students' responses regarding their lack of vocabulary to make conversations in front of the class. To this item, while 83(37.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the assertion, 99(44.6%) and 40(18%) of the respondents agreed and disagreed respectively. The mean value for this item is 4.01, and it shows lack of vocabulary was a key factor that affected students' speaking ability in their English speaking classes.

The third item of the table provides data about students' use of mother tongue language whenever they were asked to do activities in groups in speaking classes. The results show that 82(36.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they used their mother tongue language in group discussions. In addition, 86(38.7%) of the student respondents agreed with the item. While another 27(12.2%) of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed, the remaining 10(4.5%) and 17(7.7%) of them strongly disagreed with the use of mother tongue language in their classroom discussions. The mean value for this item is 3.93 and it shows that the students agreed with the claim that they used their mother tongue language during discussions in their speaking classes. This would have an effect in the overall development of their speaking abilities as they wouldn't be looking for better expressions in the target language and it creates habit of depending on their mother tongue language.

Data for the 4th item of table 4.4 also shows that 84(37.8%) and 69(31.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively with the idea that they were imposed by socio-cultural factors and they were afraid to speak during conversations. On the other hand, 28(12.6%), 12(5.4%) and 29(13.1%) of the respondents remained neutral, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with the item. The mean value of the item (Mean=3.75) shows that the fact that the students were imposed by socio-cultural factors and they were afraid of speaking during conversations was an important factor that determined the students' speaking ability.

In general, table 4.4 as a whole reveals that students agreed with the claim that language and socio-cultural factors were determinant factors for students' speaking ability (Total mean=3.75). this means language difficulty such as lack of vocabulary, use of mother tongue language and imposition of socio-cultural factors on them negatively affected their speaking ability.

Table 4. 5: Students’ responses regarding to teachers’ giving clear instruction and motivating the learners.

No	Items	Rating Scale										Mean
		5		4		3		2		1		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1	I know what and how to speak because my English teacher gives me clear instruction for conversation.	34	15.3	23	10.4	24	10.8	45	20.3	96	43.2	2.34
2	I have developed courage since my English teacher motivates me to speak in front of my classmates.	0	0	23	10.4	41	18.5	88	10.4	39	31.5	2.08
3	I have developed good speaking performance because my English teacher uses teaching aids to motivate students.	10	4.5	14	6.3	31	14	80	36	87	39.2	2.01
Grand Mean												2.14

Table 4.5 above presents data regarding teacher-related factors that affect students’ speaking ability. Specifically, the table presents data regarding teachers’ giving clear instructions and motivation during speaking classes.

As indicated in the first item, 34(15.3%) and 23(10.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they knew what and how to speak because their English teacher gave them clear instructions for conversation. While only 24(10.8%) remained undecided, majority of the respondents (20.3% and 43.2%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with the assertion made in the first item. The mean response for this item indicates that the EFL students didn’t know what and how to speak may be because their English teachers didn’t give them clear instructions for conversations (mean=2.34).

The second item of table 2 also indicates that the students thought they hadn’t developed courage since their English teachers didn’t motivate them to speak in front of their classmates (mean=2.08). While none of the students strongly agreed, 23(10.4%) of them agreed with the

assertion made in the second item. on the other hand, 41(18.5%) of the respondents opted neutral to the assertion while majority of them (39.6% and 31.5%) of them disagreed and strongly disagreed with the given claim on the second item of table 4.5. This means lack of motivation from English teachers contributes to students’ poor speaking performance in English speaking classes.

In the third item of the table it is indicated that the students hadn’t developed good speaking performance because of conditions related to the English language teachers’ use of teaching aids to motivate the students (mean=2.08). Among the respondents, 10(4.5%) strongly agreed, 14(6.3%) agreed, and 31(14%) remained neutral with the idea that the students had developed their speaking performance because their teachers used teaching aids to motivate them. on the other hand, more than half of them (36% and 39.2%) disagreed and strongly disagreed with the item. From this we can infer that absence of teachers’ use of teaching aids hinders students’ from developing good speaking performance.

over all, the computed mean for the 3 items related to the teachers’ clear instructions and motivation suggest that the teachers’ lack of clear instructions and motivation contribute to low speaking performance of the students in speaking classes (mean=2.14).

Table 4. 6: Students’ responses on their teachers’ teaching experiences and their accuracy.

No	Items	Rating Scale										Mean
		5		4		3		2		1		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1	My English teacher gives emphasis on teaching language forms and structure than spoken language.	97	43.7	106	47.7	19	8.6	0	0	0	0	4.35
2	My English teacher uses the language accurately and fluently in the speaking classroom as an EFL teacher.	87	39.2	83	37.4	42	18.9	10	4.5	0	0	4.11
Grand Mean												4.23

Table 4.6 presents students' responses on their English language teachers' teaching experience and accuracy. The second item has been recorded by changing 5 to 1, 4 to 2, 1 to 5, and 2 to 4 while 3 remained as it was. This means the second item favors good quality of the English language teachers. It should be interpreted as poor quality of the English language teachers so that it hinders student' speaking skills in order to make mean value with the first item. The results show that 97(43.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed that their English language teachers gave emphasis to teaching language forms and structure than spoken language. Similarly, almost half of the respondents (47.7%) agreed with the assertion and the remaining 19(8.6%) remained neutral. When we see the mean response for this item, it was computed to be 4.35 and it shows that the students agreed with the fact that their English language teachers gave much emphasis to language forms than the spoken language. This could be one main reason that negatively affected students' speaking ability in the study area.

Reverse coded responses to the second item of the table also show counter responses to the claim that their English teachers used the language accurately and fluently in the speaking classroom as an EFL teacher. The responses showed that 87(39.2%) and 83(37.4%) of the students strongly agreed and agreed respectively that their English teachers did not use the language accurately and fluently in the speaking classrooms as EFL teachers. The remaining 42(18.9%) remained neutral with this item. very few of them(4.5%) indicated that they thought their English teachers used the language accurately and fluently as they disagreed with the claim that their teachers didn't use the language accurately and fluently.

The mean response for the two item show that teachers' experience and accuracy had huge effect on students' speaking skill as the total mean for the unfavorable items to teacher experience and language accuracy was high (Total mean=4.23). This means the teachers' experience in teaching forms rather than spoken language and their inability to use the language accurately and fluently may have a negative effect on the students' speaking skills.

Table 4. 7: Students’ responses on teachers’ methods of teaching and evaluating the learners’ speaking performance.

No	Items	Rating Scale										Mean
		5		4		3		2		1		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1	My English teacher uses group work method during conversation in the speaking lesson.	0	0	0	0	10	47.3	45	20.3	72	32.4	2.15
2	My English teacher evaluates my speaking performance during presentation in speaking class.	10	4.5	18	8.1	30	13.5	87	39.2	77	34.7	2.09
Grand Mean												2.12

Table 4.7 presents EFL students’ response to teacher related factors that affected their speaking skills. This table particularly dealt with teachers’ method of teaching and evaluation of the students’ speaking performance. According to the responses in the table, the students disagreed with the claim that their English language teachers used group work method during conversation in the speaking lessons. None of the students agreed with this claim. While almost half of the respondents (47.3%) remained neutral, 45(20.3%) and 72(32.4%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Therefore, it can be concluded that the students felt that their English teachers didn’t use group work method during conversations in the speaking lesson (mean=2.15). While group work method is believed to be among the most helpful ways to improve students’ speaking performance, missing this element would contribute to the speaking performance of the students negatively.

When we look at the second item of the table, we find out similar results as the first one. As it can be seen from the second item, 10(4.5%) and 18(8.1%) of the students strongly agreed and agreed respectively that their English teachers evaluated their speaking performance during presentation in speaking class. Meanwhile, 30(13.5%) opted undecided and majority of the respondents (39.2%) and 77(34.7%) disagreed and strongly disagreed with the claim respectively.

In conclusion, the students disagreed with the idea of their teachers evaluating them during speaking performances (mean=2.09). Evaluation and feedback play effective role in improving students' speaking performance, but the students' witnessed that was missing. Therefore, the fact that the EFL teachers didn't use group discussion and they weren't evaluating them is one key contributing factor to the low speaking performance of the EFL students in Alene Secondary school (Total mean=2.12).

Table 4. 8: Students' responses regarding relaxation, provision of feedback and having interaction for overcoming the challenges of their speaking performance.

No	Items	Rating Scale										Mean
		5		4		3		2		1		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1	I can improve my speaking performance when I feel relaxed in speaking lesson.	86	38.7	77	34.7	40	18	12	5.4	6	2.7	4.02
2	I can improve my English speaking performance when teacher gives me feedback while and after I make conversation in speaking class.	88	39.6	103	46.4	31	14	0	0	0	0	4.26
3	I can improve my speaking performance by having drills in and outside of the school compound.	102	45.9	78	35.1	11	5	19	8.6	12	5.4	4.08
Grand Mean												4.12

Table 4.8 displays data regarding students' response on how they thought they could improve their speaking skills in terms of relaxation, provision of feedback and having interaction for overcoming the challenges of their speaking performance. Accordingly, the first item of the table introduces the claim that the students believed they could improve their speaking performance when they felt relaxed in speaking lesson. The responses to this item showed that 86(38.7%) and 77(34.7%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively with the claim while 18(12%) of them showed neutral stand. On the other hand, the remaining 12(5.4%) and 6(2.7%) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. The mean for this item (mean=4.02) shows that

the students believed that they could improve their speaking performance when they felt relaxed in speaking lessons. This suggests that EFL teachers should present their speaking lessons in a more relaxed atmosphere.

The second item of the table also presented the idea that students can improve their English speaking performance when teacher gives them feedback while and after they make conversation in speaking class. According to the students' responses, 88(39.6%) and 103(46.4%) of the student respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively with the item while the remaining 31(14%) of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed. This shows most of the students agreed with the claim that feedback by their teachers while and after their conversation in speaking classes is helpful to improve their speaking performance (mean=4.26).

As it can be seen from the third item of table 4.8, around half of the respondents (45.9%) strongly agreed with the statement that the students could improve their speaking performance by having drills in and outside of school compound. the responses to the item also show that another 78(35.1%) of the respondents agreed with the item. meanwhile 11(5%), 19(8.6%), and 12(5.4%) of the respondents remained neutral, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. The mean response falls under the agree column implying that drill practice in and out of the school compound helps students to improve their speaking skills (mean=4.08).

The aggregate mean for table 4.8 also shows that feedback and interaction with classmates helps students to improve their speaking performance a lot (Total mean=4.12). This total mean also falls in the agree column and it shows the students believed that feedback and interaction helps them to improve their speaking performance. This means EFL teachers need to provide feedback while and after speaking performance and they should give practice tasks for the students to rehearse in and outside the school compound.

Table 4. 9: Summary of Factors that Affect Students’ Speaking Performance

No.	Factors that affect students’ speaking performance	Total Mean
1.	Students’ learning experience in spoken English	4.19
2.	Students’ personality factors	4.038
3.	Language related factors and socio-cultural factors	3.43
4.	Teachers’ way of giving clear instruction and motivating the learners	2.14
5.	Teachers’ teaching experiences and their accuracy	4.23
6.	Teachers’ methods of teaching and evaluating the learners’ speaking performance	2.12

Table 4.9 presents summary responses to the factors that affect students’ speaking performance. As it can be seen from the table, teachers’ teaching experience and their accuracy was the most important factor that affected students’ speaking performance (Total Mean=4.23) followed by students’ learning experience in spoken English (Total Mean=4.19), students’ personality factors (Total Mean=4.038), and language related factors and socio-cultural factors (Total mean=3.43). On the other hand, the table shows that teachers’ method of teaching and evaluation of the students’ speaking performance was found to be the least contributing factor to the poor speaking performance of the students (Total Mean=2.12) followed by teachers’ way of giving clear instruction and motivation to the learners (Total Mean=2.14).

Therefore, it can be concluded that the major factors that affected students’ speaking performance as the questionnaire data revealed were students’ personality factors, teachers’ teaching experience and accuracy, and language and socio-cultural related factors.

4.2 Analysis of Interview Data

This section of the data analysis is concerned with data gathered through semi-structured interview with EFL teachers at Alene secondary school. There were six EFL teachers in the school and the researcher conduct interview with all of them as the size was manageable and their contribution was worth considering. Therefore, five questions were asked to each of them and the results are thematically presented as follows:

Q1: How do you evaluate your students' speaking performance?

The first question that the researcher asked the EFL teachers of Alene Secondary School during the interview was how they evaluated their students' speaking performance. To this question, almost all of the teachers said that their students have poor speaking performance.

For example, one of the EFL teachers said, *"My students are poor in their speaking performance. Whenever, I make them come to the stage and talk, they tremble from fear, and they do not speak out any word."*

Another EFL teacher added similar point to the first one like the following:

I am always dissatisfied with my students' speaking performance. They do not have basic speaking skill. Above all, they are not willing to practice their speaking skill. When I invite them to the stage to speak on selected issues or on any topic they want, they refuse to participate and they don't seem to regret the fact that they are unable to speak. This makes it difficult to help them to improve their speaking. **EFL Teacher 4**

Similarly, the other teachers expressed their concern that the speaking performance of their students was highly worrisome and the students showed little interest in working hard to improve their speaking performance.

Q2: What techniques do you use to help your students improve their speaking performance?

During the interview, the EFL teachers made it clear that speaking was the most abandoned language skill in the EFL classes. One of the teachers, for example, said, "I don't usually teach speaking to my students because of many reasons. Students' unwillingness to talk, lack of time and large class size were among the hindering reasons".

Another EFL teacher said during the interview that he tries to help students to develop their speaking skills as follows:

I try my best to help my students speak. For example I give them presentations, dialogues to practice, and ask them questions to help them express their ideas. I also help my students come with any topic to talk about in class. I bring videos to the class and I help the students to model pronunciations and accent.

EFL teacher 2

Over all speaking, the EFL teachers admitted during the interview that they were not good at helping their students develop their speaking performance. According to the teachers they were poor in creating conditions that allow students practice speaking. However, they pointed out that they had done some attempts to make students feel free to speak in English.

According to the EFL teachers, they tried to convince students that they should practice using English in class if they wanted to develop their speaking skill. One of the teachers said he tried to show them videos on how students from other countries learn speaking. Also another teacher mentioned that he refrains from providing direct feedback to the students while they are speaking; rather he kept record of the mistakes and communicated with the students at the end of the class without pointing out who made which error in their speaking. According to the teacher, this helped the students avoid direct criticism and get the correct version of their wrong utterances.

Q3: From your experience, what are the factors that affect students' English speaking performance?

With regard to the factors that affect students' speaking performance in speaking class, the EFL teachers mentioned the following were the main factors:

- ✓ Poor grammatical knowledge
- ✓ Lack of vocabulary
- ✓ Lack of good pronunciation
- ✓ Family back ground
- ✓ Personality of the student
- ✓ Teachers' classroom management deficiency
- ✓ Nature of speaking activities

- ✓ Teachers' teaching method
- ✓ Teachers' assessment method
- ✓ Teachers' way of feedback provision

Q4: What challenges do you face when you try to engage students in speaking activities and tasks?

Regarding the challenges the EFL teachers faced in their attempt to engage students in speaking activities and tasks, the EFL teachers mentioned a lot of challenges. The researcher has condensed all the responses into some comprehensive themes. Therefore, all the responses by the EFL teachers have been summarized and the main challenges they faced during their attempt to engage the students in speaking activities were the following:

- ✓ Students' reluctance to take part in speaking activities
- ✓ Lack of parental support at home
- ✓ Lack of audio-visual materials to help the students speak
- ✓ Shortage of videos and audios to give sufficient sample for students' to speak
- ✓ Shortage of time to give much time for speaking skills
- ✓ Fear of criticism among students
- ✓ Negative remarks from peers to those who make attempt to take part in speaking abilities.

Q5: What do you think should be done to improve students' speaking performance and who should do them?

Finally when the teachers were asked to suggest possible solutions to the speaking problems, they suggested the following solutions:

- ✓ Students should speak regardless of their grammatical accuracy
- ✓ EFL Teachers should not lose hope and they should continue exerting their effort to help students speak.
- ✓ The school should buy audio-visual materials to attract students' attention.
- ✓ EFL teachers should continuously give speaking activities and contact parents to create conducive environment for their children to practice speaking.

4.2.3 Analysis of Classroom Observation

The third data gathering tool used for this study was classroom observation. The researcher carried out the classroom observation to supplement the data obtained through questionnaire and interview. Since the data was supplementary data, the researcher observed three speaking classes of three EFL teachers who were randomly taken from the EFL teachers.

During the classroom observation, the researcher took notes from the classroom interactions. Accordingly, it was found out that the students were reluctant to participate in the speaking lesson. The EFL teachers were also trying to teach speaking by speaking themselves. A teacher is expected to talk less during the speaking lessons and give much speaking time for the students. However, the teachers were not good at giving prompts for students to speak, scaffold them during their speech by providing basic expressions and supplementing their attempts. This showed that the teacher related factors to affect the students' speaking ability were evident in the three observed classes. In addition, the teachers were not fully comfortable with the language themselves, and this is lack of modeling for the students.

In addition, the researcher observed some hindering factors among the students themselves. First of all the students were reluctant to speak. They were self-conscious when they attempted to speak, and many of them were trembling from fear and shyness which is why they quitted their started sentences unfinished. Some students were also laughing which made the few students who attempted to speak feel unskillful. Above all, the students had severe lack of skill in the language. They had very limited vocabulary and their pronunciation was unnatural.

In general, the classroom observation came out with the following findings:

- Students were reluctant to speak
- Some students were making fun of their classmates
- EFL teachers were not encouraging the students to speak
- The teachers were not good at modeling the language
- The students had limited vocabulary
- The students were poor in pronunciation
- The teacher were not good at providing prompts for speaking lessons
- The students showed little care to improve their speaking skills

All the above findings show that the factors that affected the students speaking ability belong to a lot of categories: student related, teacher related and language related factors. The findings from classroom observation confirmed the findings from questionnaire and interview.

4.3 Discussion of Results

In this study, factors affecting EFL students' speaking performance in speaking class was assessed. The previous parts of chapter four presented the analysis of the data gathered through questionnaire and interview. This part of the chapter presents the discussion of the findings obtained from the questionnaire and interview data. For ease of discussion, the discussion part is divided into three sub-parts according to the research questions of the study. Therefore, the discussion is made under the following three headings:

4.3.3 Factors affecting grade ten students' speaking Performance

Data for the study was gathered through questionnaire and interview and it was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The first research question was about the factors that affected students' speaking performance. The findings from questionnaire data regarding this research question showed that the major factors that affected students' speaking performance as the questionnaire data revealed were students' personality factors, teachers' teaching experience and accuracy, and language and socio-cultural related factors.

Data from interview with the EFL teachers also came up with some findings regarding the factors that affected the EFL students' speaking performance. Most of the findings confirmed the findings obtained from the students' questionnaire. During the interview, the EFL teachers mentioned that the major factors that affected the EFL students' speaking performance were poor grammatical knowledge, lack of vocabulary, lack of good pronunciation, family back ground, personality of the student, teachers' classroom management deficiency, nature of speaking activities, teachers' teaching method, teachers' assessment method, teachers' way of feedback provision, and teachers' English language command.

Data from classroom observation also confirmed the findings from the interview and questionnaire. The main factors that affected the students' speaking skills were teacher related, student related and language related factors. The teachers were not good at providing speaking

opportunities for the students and they were not good at modeling the language for the students. The students were reluctant to speak and they were embarrassing their classmates by making fun of them. In addition, the students' language ability was very low with low vocabulary and unnatural pronunciation accompanied by poor grammar skill in their spoken utterances.

The findings of this study are in line with the findings by Lukitasari (2008) who claimed in his findings that students' poor speaking performance was due to their non-proficiency in the basic elements of speaking which are Pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. The findings of the current study were also partially compatible with the findings by Al Hosni (2014) who concluded that there were three main speaking difficulties experienced by students at that level, and they are, Inhibition, first language use, and linguistic difficulties.

Similarly, the findings of this study with regard to teacher-related factors met the findings by Al Nakhleh (2016) who examined the problems and difficulties of speaking that encounter English Language students at Al Quds Open University, and found out that the instructors did not provide students with enough support while speaking English, yet they highlighted their speaking errors which affected the learners negatively.

Diep's (2017) findings were also found in line with the findings of this study that said, grammar, pronunciation and methods of teaching have the highest impact on the English-speaking skills of the university students.

4.3.4 How Alene Secondary School EFL teacher help the students to develop their speaking performance

The second research question strived to find out data regarding how Alene Secondary School EFL teachers helped their students to develop their speaking skills. The findings to this question revealed that the EFL teacher were not good at helping their students to develop their speaking skills. During the interview, the EFL teachers made it clear that speaking was the most abandoned language skill in the EFL classes.

Over all speaking, the EFL teachers admitted during the interview that they were not good at helping their students develop their speaking performance. According to the teachers they were poor in creating conditions that allow students practice speaking. However, they pointed out that they had done some attempts to make students feel free to speak in English.

The classroom observation also revealed similar thing. The teachers were speaking a lot during the speaking class and they were not giving proper prompts for students to speak. They were not also modeling the language with its pronunciation to the students.

The findings of this study were against the suggestions by Kohonen, et al (2001) who say that learner responsibility can develop if teachers allow more room for learner involvement. In autonomous learning, the teacher is a facilitator of learning, an organizer of learning opportunities, a resource person providing learners with feedback and encouragement, and a creator of the learning atmosphere and a learning space.

However, the findings revealed that there were some attempts to help the students speak. According to the EFL teachers, they tried to convince students that they should practice using English in class if they wanted to develop their speaking skill. One of the teachers said he tried to show them videos on how students from other countries learn speaking. Also another teacher mentioned that he refrains from providing direct feedback to the students while they are speaking; rather he kept record of the mistakes and communicated with the students at the end of the class without pointing out who made which error in their speaking. According to the teacher, this helped the students avoid direct criticism and get the correct version of their wrong utterances.

4.3.5 Suggestions to enhance their students' speaking performance in the EFL classroom

The third research question was about the strategies that can help students to improve their speaking skills. The responses to this item showed that students indicated some suggestions to help them improve their speaking skills. Accordingly, the students claimed they could improve their speaking performance when they felt relaxed in speaking lesson. In addition, the students indicated that they could improve their English speaking performance when teacher gives them

feedback while and after they make conversation in speaking class. according to the EFL teachers, the students can improve their speaking performance if they the EFL Students speak regardless of their grammatical accuracy; when EFL teachers do not lose hope and they continue exerting their effort to help students speak; when the school buys audio-visual materials to attract students' attention; and if EFL teachers continuously give speaking activities and contact parents to create conducive environment for their children to practice speaking. In line with this, Kohonen et al (2001) asserted that to develop their autonomy, teachers need to facilitate learners to increase their self-understanding and awareness of themselves

CHAPTER FIVE

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.2 Conclusions

The main focus of this study was investigating factors that affect EFL students speaking performance in their speaking class. Based on the data obtained from questionnaire with students and semi-structured interview with EFL teachers, analysis and discussion were done. Hence, the following conclusions have been derived based on the main findings of the study:

- Research findings in the literature support the claim that speaking is one of the most important skills of the English language teaching. However, findings of the current study revealed that EFL students in Alene Secondary School were not good at speaking performance due to factors such as personality factors, socio linguistic factors, and teacher related factors such as lack of accuracy on the side of the teacher and methodological problems including feedback provision problems and ignoring the speaking skill as a whole.
- Low speaking performance is determined by many contributing factors. The fact that grade ten EFL students in Alene Secondary School had low speaking performance was because of their poor language knowledge, limited vocabulary, poor pronunciation skill, incompatible teachers' assessment method with students' preferences, lack of confidence, anxiety and fear of making mistake. Hence, teachers and students shared the factors that hindered EFL students' low speaking performance.
- EFL teachers' in Alene Secondary school were not doing well in implementing strategies to help their students develop the ability to speak well in speaking classes. This lack of implementing appropriate strategies might have emanated from either lack of knowledge and skill or lack of commitment among the EFL teachers.
- Though the EFL teachers held positive view towards teaching speaking as a means to help students develop their speaking skill, their attempt to instill the skill of speaking in the students was not promising.

- Both the EFL teacher and Students believed that frequent speaking practice supported by feedback from the EFL teacher and audio-visual materials would help students develop their speaking performance.

5.2 Recommendations

The aforementioned findings and conclusions initiated the researcher to forward some recommendations that she thought would be useful to the indicated stakeholders. Therefore, the following recommendations have been forwarded:

1. EFL teachers of Alene Secondary school should use different strategies to improve their students' speaking performance through frequent engagement of the EFL students in speaking practice. The teachers should convince their students that language learning is accompanied by making mistakes and it is normal to make mistakes when trying new structure.
2. Students are expected to be willing to speak English in any discussions and participations in EFL speaking class and they should not worry about making mistakes as they are part of their learning.
3. EFL teachers need to study their students' preferences for methods of providing feedback and they should look better ways of providing feedback that please individual students. The teachers should work hard to alleviate the affective filters that hinder students' willingness to speak in the speaking class.
4. Parents should help their children to freely talk about themselves so that they can transfer this freedom to classroom situations and become risk takers in their speaking classes.
5. The students need to read widely to boost their vocabulary and they should listen to native speakers' videos on YouTube channel so that they can develop their confidence to freely express themselves in speaking class.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire to be filled by Students

Mekelle University
College of Social Sciences and Languages
Department of Foreign Languages and Literature
Questionnaire for Students

Dear respondents:

My name is Mebrahtom Hagos. I am a post graduate student in Mekelle University doing my research conducting in partial fulfillment of degree of Masters of Arts in Teaching English as Foreign Language (TEFL). This questionnaire is designed to gather information on problems hindering EFL students' Speaking Ability in Alene Secondary School of Mekelle City. Here, I assure you that the information obtained from this questionnaire will be used only for recommendation purpose and your response will be kept confidential and anonymous in the report.

Filling the questionnaire is voluntary and you are kindly asked to provide the right answer and provide your genuine opinion; your cooperation is a valuable input for the research findings.

Directions I: The following items are related to your Personal Profile. Please the correct information that represents your gender and age.

1. **Sex:** _____
2. **Age:** _____

Directions II: There are different problems that hinder EFL students' speaking Abilities Please put a "√" mark under the column of your choice to indicate your level of agreement with the listed assertions based on the rating scales given.

(5) =Strongly agree; (4) =agree; (3) =undecided; (2) =disagree; 1=Strongly disagree.

No	Items	Rating Scale				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	I am poor in speaking because I have poor English learning experience.					
2	Grammar oriented learning denied me the opportunity to exercise with speaking.					
3	I am interested to learn English conversation as an optional class for to be fluent as EFL learner.					
4	I am afraid of making mistake in front of the class, so I am not interested to have conversation.					
5	I feel shy so that I prefer to be silent when my teacher asks me to make pair conversation with my classmate.					
6	I feel foreign language anxiety when my English teacher invites me to make conversation in speaking lesson.					
7	I am unwilling to make conversation because I have no confidence with my speaking.					
8	I am worried about my pronunciation when I speak via English in the class during conversation.					
9	I have lack of vocabulary to make conversation in front of the class.					
10	I use my mother tongue (Tigrigna) whenever I am asked to do activities in groups in speaking class.					
11	I am imposed by socio-cultural factors, so I am afraid of speaking during conversation.					
12	I know what and how to speak because my English teacher gives me clear instruction for conversation.					
13	I have developed courage since my English teacher motivates me to speak in front of my classmates.					
14	I have developed good speaking performance because my English teacher uses teaching aids to motivate students.					
15	My English teacher gives emphasis on teaching language forms and structure than spoken language.					
16	My English teacher uses the language accurately and fluently in the speaking classroom as an EFL teacher.					

17	My English teacher uses group work method during conversation in the speaking lesson.					
18	My English teacher evaluates my speaking performance during presentation in speaking class.					
19	I can improve my speaking performance when I feel relaxed in speaking lesson.					
20	I can improve my English speaking performance when teacher gives me feedback while and after I make conversation in speaking class.					
21	I can improve my speaking performance by having drills in and outside of the school compound.					

Directions III: please write your answers to the following questions

1. How do you describe your speaking ability in English class?

2. How do your teachers help you develop your speaking ability in the English class?

3. What factors affect your English speaking ability? Please list them in detail.

Appendix B: Guiding Interview Questions

1. How do you evaluate your students' speaking performance?
2. What techniques do you use to help your students improve their speaking performance?
3. From your experience, what are the factors that affect students' English speaking performance?
4. What challenges do you face when you try to engage students in speaking activities and tasks?
5. What do you think should be done to improve students' speaking performance and who should do them?

Appendix C: Transcription of Interview Data

Q1: How do you evaluate your students' speaking performance?

EFL Teacher 1: *My students are poor in their speaking performance. Whenever, I make them come to the stage and talk, they tremble from fear, and they do not speak out any word."*

EFL Teacher 2: *I have been teaching English for a long time. The students' speaking ability has reached its worst stage now. Most of the students in my classes do not have basic speaking ability. They don't communicate properly even in the very minor communicative contexts. But there are also few students who can speak well.*

EFL Teacher 3: *speaking performance has been challenging task for students lately. Many of the students in my class stagger with their speaking performance. After all they don't try a lot to improve their speaking. There are very few surprising students who perform well, but most of them have a very disappointing speaking performance.*

EFL Teacher 4: *I am always dissatisfied with my students' speaking performance. They do not have basic speaking skill. Above all, they are not willing to practice their speaking skill. When I invite them to the stage to speak on selected issues or on any topic they want, they refuse to participate and they don't seem to regret the fact that they are unable to speak. This makes it difficult to help them to improve their speaking.*

EFL Teacher 5: *speaking performance of my students is highly worrisome and the students show little interest in working hard to improve their speaking performance.*

Q2: What techniques do you use to help your students improve their speaking performance?

EFL Teacher 1: *speaking is the most abandoned language skill in the EFL classes. I don't usually teach speaking to my students because of many reasons. Students' unwillingness to talk, lack of time and large class size are among the hindering reasons.*

EFL Teacher 2: *I try my best to help my students speak. For example I give them presentations, dialogues to practice, and ask them questions to help them express their ideas. I also help my students come with any topic to talk about in class. I bring videos to the class and I help the students to model pronunciations and accent.*

EFL Teacher 3: *I must admit that I have not been good at helping my students to develop their speaking performance. I was poor in creating conditions that allow students practice speaking. However, I had done some attempts to make students feel free to speak in English.*

EFL Teacher 4: *I try to convince students that they should practice using English in class if they wanted to develop their speaking skill. I try to show them videos on how students from other countries learn speaking.*

EFL Teacher 5: *I usually refrain from providing direct feedback to the students while they are speaking; rather I keep record of the mistakes and communicate with the students at the end of the class without pointing out who made which error in their speaking. This helps the students avoid direct criticism and get the correct version of their wrong utterances.*

Q3: From your experience, what are the factors that affect students' English speaking performance?

EFL Teacher 1: *there are a lot of factors that affect students' speaking ability. These include shyness, lack of vocabulary, lack of commitment among students, low encouragement from teachers, criticism from other classmates etc.*

EFL Teacher 2: *The main factors that affect the students' speaking ability are poor grammatical knowledge, lack of vocabulary, lack of good pronunciation, family back ground, personality of the student and lack of encouragement from teachers.*

EFL Teacher 3: *Students' speaking ability can be affected by a lot of factors. The factors can be teacher related factors, student related challenges, and language related factors. Teachers' classroom management deficiency, nature of speaking activities, teachers' teaching method, and teachers' assessment method are also among the factors that affect the students' speaking ability.*

EFL Teacher 4: *There are a lot of factors that affect students' speaking ability. The main factors that affect the students' speaking ability are poor grammatical knowledge, lack of vocabulary, lack of good pronunciation, family back ground, personality of the student and lack of encouragement from teachers.*

EFL Teacher 5: *the main factors that affected students' speaking ability are students' reluctance to participate in the speaking lesson, EFL teachers' much speaking time, not being good at giving prompts for students to speak, lack of scaffolding students' speaking practice.*

Q4: What challenges do you face when you try to engage students in speaking activities and tasks?

EFL Teacher 1: *Most students do not have self-confidence. Only a few of them seem to have self- confidence. Because, they afraid of making mistakes in expressing them-selves and their classmate might laugh at them. As a result the students do not practice in the classroom and poor in speaking skills.*

EFL Teacher 2: *As far as my experience is concerned, beginning from elementary grades up to the secondary level the students do not actively participate in speaking activities. Whenever the teachers provide students speaking activities they do not try them in English, rather they prefer to utilize their mother tongue to express their ideas. They are not as such encouraged to speak in English language.*

EFL Teacher 3: *I face a lot of challenges in my teaching of speaking skills to my students. these include students' reluctance to take part in speaking activities, lack of parental support at home, lack of audio-visual materials to help the students speak, shortage of videos and audios to give sufficient sample for students' to speak.*

EFL Teacher 4: *shortage of time to give much time for speaking skills, fear of criticism among students, negative remarks from peers to those who make attempt to take part in speaking abilities were the most important challenges that I faced during my speaking classes.*

EFL Teacher 5: *Students' reluctance to speak is main challenge. Beginning from elementary grades up to the secondary level the students do not actively participate in speaking activities. Whenever the teachers provide students speaking activities they do not try them in English, rather they prefer to utilize their mother tongue to express their ideas. They are not as such encouraged to speak in English language.*

Q5: What do you think should be done to improve students' speaking performance and who should do them?

EFL Teacher 1: *a lot of things can be made to improve students' speaking performance. One thing is that students should speak regardless of their grammatical accuracy. EFL Teachers should not lose hope and they should continue exerting their effort to help students speak. The school should buy audio-visual materials to attract students' attention.*

EFL Teacher 2: *To help students improve their speaking skills, EFL teachers should continuously give speaking activities and contact parents to create conducive environment for their children to practice speaking.*

EFL Teacher 3: *It's very important for EFL teachers to inform and convince their students that they do not have to worry to express their ideas through speaking since the language is a foreign language that everyone in the class is also studying the language and has the same problem. In other words it's natural if they make mistake.*

EFL Teacher 4: *The students should try to keep practicing speaking and they should ignore all the things that would make him/her lost his/her confidence. Furthermore, teacher should give the students more chances to speak English.*

EFL Teacher 5: *To help students improve their speaking ability, teachers should teach them following some definite stages. The first stage is to create motivating condition for learning. This means creating a pleasant and supportive environment in the classroom. The second stage is to introduce initial motivating techniques by creating materials that are relevant for the students. The next stage is to take care to maintain and to protect students' motivation by offering stimulating activities and fostering self-esteem, self-confidence, and co-operation among students. The last stage is to turn evaluation and feedback into positive experiences*