

# Teacher Related Factors Affecting Afghan EFL Undergraduates' Speaking Skill

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**Abstract-** Reading, writing, listening and speaking are the four primary and required skills of every language. Of the four skills of a language, speaking is the skill that always matters the most for a language learner, and it is considered essential. According to Nazara (2012), speaking is an important and essential skill of the four language skills, and as an EFL student, one needs to master the speaking skill. However, the majority of Afghan EFL undergraduates face difficulties in this all-important skill of the language. According to Zia and Sulan (2015), for most of Afghan undergraduate EFL learners, reading and writing are easy, but in oral communication, they are not accurate and fluent. Hence, this study was conducted to investigate the factors that affect the Afghan EFL undergraduates' speaking skill at Sayed Jamaluddin Afghani University Kunar, Afghanistan. The study specifically investigate teacher-related factors that affect students' speaking skill. A mixed method was used for this study, i.e., quantitative (questionnaire) as well as qualitative (interview). The data of the questionnaire was descriptively analysed in SPSS version 20 and presented in figures and tables. The interview data were thematically analysed and presented. A total of 90 students (40 junior and 50 senior) were purposively selected and participated in this study. The findings revealed that the rare use of speaking activities like pair work, group work, role-plays, group presentations and improper method of teaching were some of the factors on the part of teachers that affected students' speaking skill. It is hoped that the findings of the current study will help teachers as well as educators to be attentive toward their related responsibilities to reduce the factors that affect students' speaking skill.

**Index Terms-** Afghan EFL Undergraduates, Speaking Skill, Teacher-related Factors

## I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of speaking is not a new one, and almost everyone is somehow familiar with the concept. However, it is challenging to cover the concept of speaking in the size of few words or sentences. According to Aouatef (2015), speaking is the way of conveying of one's ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

Similarly, Bygate (1991) considers speaking skill as the skill of using oral language for delivering ideas, thoughts, feelings, and intentions to others and to make them understand. "Speaking is a multi-sensory activity as it deals with paralinguistic features, i.e., eye-contact, facial expressions, body language, tempo, pauses, voice quality changes and pitch variation which affect conversational flow" (Thornbury, 2005, p.9). This is backed by Aouatef (2015), who assert that in speaking the speaker needs to take the context of the speech, facial expression, gestures and body language into consideration which will make it easy for the speaker to pass on the message.

For better understanding of the challenges Afghan EFL undergraduates face, it is necessary to have a look over the Afghan EFL undergraduates' background of English language. According to Nov 2009 BBC News report, the last three-decade of civil war and disorder in the country (Afghanistan) has damaged every sector including education. The invasion of Soviet Union in 1979 till 1989 has severely affected every sector of the government. Around 562000 to 2000000 of civilians were killed, and millions of Afghans have left the country and went as refugees to different countries, mostly to Pakistan and Iran (Lacina & Gleditsch, 2005). After the fall of Soviet Union, the civil war erupted in the country for almost six years which finally ended with the rise of the Taliban government in 1996. The education system was in a deplorable and critical situation in all these periods. However, after 2001, with the establishment of new government and with the help of international community the conditions started to improve for education. According to Sep 2016 World Education News, and Reviews, before 2001 nearly one million students were going to school, and this number rose up to 9 million since then. In the past, English as a subject was studied at grade seven, but the new government introduced English as a subject to the curriculum of grade four (Ministry of Education of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2010). With the arrival of international communities for the developmental works of Afghanistan, interest in the English language learning increased, and the English language became a requirement for jobs. Reacting to the situation the Ministry of Education brought necessary changes in the school syllabus for improved English subject.

Similarly, looking at the importance of English language and for enabling students to deal with English language environment nationally and internationally, the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), Afghanistan has also taken stern steps. The Ministry of Higher Education has introduced and emphasized the English language in all departments of different faculties. New departments of English language are introduced in every university which offers BA (honor) degree (Ministry of Higher Education Afghanistan, n.d).

However, with all these efforts, the students are still faced with certain challenges in the English language. One of the significant challenges, Afghan EFL undergraduate, are faced with is the speaking skill. They are outstanding in other language skills and achieve high marks in their exams, but in speaking, they are not performing well. This not only affects their grades but hinders their self-belief and self-confidence which frustrate them as well as their teachers. It is a point of immense concern and needs to be solved as it puts questions on their future career.

Studies have been done in the field but not in the context of Afghan EFL undergraduate. There is one related study so far in the Afghan context conducted by Zia and Sulan in the year 2015. The study carried by Zia and Sulan (2015) state that most of the Afghan undergraduates faced problems in speaking is due to the anxiety they had while participating in classroom speaking activities.

This study aims to investigate the possible factors that affect Afghan EFL undergraduates' speaking skill in the part of the teacher which will help teachers to be attentive towards their particular responsibilities and to make speaking classes more vivid and productive.

## 1.2 Research Objectives

The objectives of the research are:

- i. To identify the speaking activities used by the teacher in the speaking class.
- ii. To identify the learning strategies used by the teacher in the speaking class.

## 1.3 Research Questions

The research questions are:

- i. What are the speaking activities used by the teacher in the speaking class?
- ii. What are the learning strategies used by the teacher in the speaking class?

## 1.4 Conceptual Framework

The role of the teacher is always pivotal in the process of learning speaking. However, there are certain downsides on the part of teachers that ultimately affect students' speaking skill (Pal, 2015). For a better outcome, a teacher should use proper teaching method for the speaking class. Grammar translation method which significantly involves the use of the first language will not be a better choice for teaching speaking as compared to the direct method. The direct method which significantly involves teaching in the target language appeared as a reaction to the grammar-translation method for its ignorance to spoken language (Samah & Zohra, 2015). Another issue is teacher

inexperience for the speaking class. Gashaw (2014), states that the lack of proper pronunciation knowledge and lack of material design are some of the issues on the part of the teacher. Likewise, some teachers miss a number of in-class activities that are considered vital for improving speaking skill.

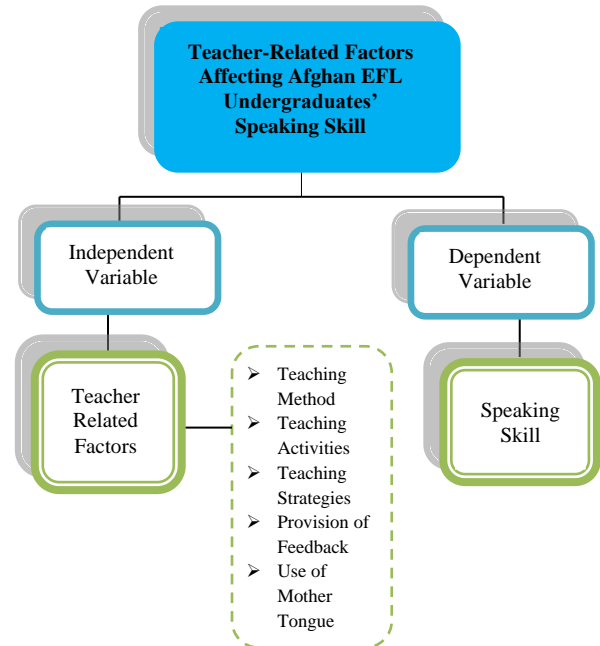


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Speaking Skill

Baker and Watsrup (2003) define speaking skill as using language for a purpose. According to Oxford Advanced Dictionary (2015), speaking is to express or communicate opinions, feelings, ideas, and thoughts by talking. It involves activities - psychological, physiological (articulator) and physical (acoustic) - on the part of the speaker. Speaking is considered the most essential skill of a language that uses verbal and nonverbal symbols to convey meaning. According to Chaney and Burk (1998), speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts. Huebner (1960) says the language is essentially speech and speech is communication by sounds. He adds that speaking is a skill which one can use in daily life communication whether at school or outside.

### 2.2 Factors Affecting Speaking Skill

There is a number of studies (Shteivi & Hamuda, 2016; Afshar & Asakereh, 2016; Juhana, 2012; Mezrigui, 2011) carried in the field of speaking skill and these studies have come up with several different findings. The significant factors affecting students' speaking skill found were an improper method of teaching, students' psychological factors, the use of mother tongue in speaking class and the limited opportunities for the learner to speak English inside the classroom. The following are

some of the findings from different countries that elaborate the major factors affecting students' speaking skill.

A study carried by Mezrigui (2011) shows that the major problem Tunisian EFL learners have in speaking is because of inadequate exposure to the English language inside as well as outside of the class and at the same time the use of the improper method of teaching for speaking class. The inadequate exposure to the English language as a factor of poor speaking skill was also found by Shteiwi and Hamuda (2016). Shteiwi and Hamuda (2016) conducted a research in the context of Libya and found that the majority of students at the English language department do not have enough opportunity to speak, and this is considered to have a primary defect while dealing with the English language. Likewise, Tuan and Mai (2015) had carried a study to investigate the speaking problem of the students at Le Thanh Hien High School and factors affecting their speaking performance. They achieved the same results like Mezrigui and Shteiwi's studies that the students either participated very little in the speaking or did not participate at all. They used a considerable amount of Vietnamese language instead of English while working in groups. They did not participate enough in the class and were not motivated enough to express themselves. Along with these findings, they also found that it was the students' constant fear that they will be criticized or they will lose their face in case they are wrong while speaking.

Similarly, Juhana (2012) carried a study and found that numerous psychological factors prevent a student from speaking fluently in the English class. She adds that the most notable factor affecting students' speaking skill is the psychological factor. They feel fear while speaking in English. This fear is caused because of the fear that in case of error, friends will laugh at them. Similarly, anxiety and shyness are the other factors that hinder students' speaking skill. These findings were supported by Afshar and Asakereh's study (2016), who carried a study in the context of Iran and revealed that along with other factors like a weak educational system of the country and linguistic factor, the major problem was the psychological factor that hinders students' progress in speaking. The findings of the study also report that there is no difference among Iranian EFL first-year students and seniors in having problems in speaking.

In short, studies (Shteiwi and Hamuda, 2016; Afshar & Asakereh, 2016; Tuan and Mai, 2015; Juhana, 2012; Mezrigui, 2011) show that topical knowledge, grammatical knowledge, listening ability, motivation to speak, teacher's feedback during speaking activities, confidence, pressure to perform well, and time for preparation are some of the significant factors that influence speaking performance of the students.

## 2.2.1 Teacher-Related Factors

The main aim of language learning is to communicate in that language, so it is essential to master the speaking skill to communicate correctly. However, there are some factors on the part of teachers that hinder students from effective speaking (Pal, 2015). Some teachers are unaware of their students' need for improving English pronunciation and the problems they encounter while speaking. The reason may be the lack of materials to teach, or they may have not enough information about pronunciation and what it involves (ALEMU, 2007).

ALEMU (2007) adds, teachers usually ignore essential exercises and class activities that could improve learners' speaking abilities and on contrary, students are blamed and discouraged by the teachers for not speaking correctly.

### 2.2.1.1 Method of Teaching and Class Activities

The use of proper method and class activities play a vital role in the success of students in speaking skill. There are several methods of teaching, and each method has its area of application. Without applying the proper method and in-class activities, it is impossible to have positive results from the speaking class. The proper method and in-class activities for speaking class are presented next.

According to Hughes and Reed (2016), the spoken form of language was usually ignored in the traditional language teaching methods. In the last few decades, a considerable reconsideration has been done in language studies, and some language teaching methods that insist on the importance of speech in language teaching emerged as a reaction to the drawbacks of the grammar-translation method. Among these methods is the direct method which prefers speaking the language in its pedagogy. Direct method uses the language lesson on speech-based interactions between students and teacher. Along with direct method, there are other methods, i.e., situational and audio-lingual method that give more emphasis to speaking the language and their pedagogy of teaching stresses on teaching and learning through speech. According to Samah and Zohra (2015), direct method came into existence as a reaction to the grammar-translation approach and its ignorance to the spoken language. The teachers who practice direct method believe that students learn how to communicate in the target language.

#### 2.2.1.1.1 Warm-up Activity

According to Bourezzane (2015), the nature of warm-up activities is that they are short. Holmes (2004) suggests that it is a good idea to start a class with an activity of introduction where students introduce each other and make the classroom environment friendlier. This is possible by students interviewing each other and then with the help of collected information introduces his/her partner to the class. Teachers are required to provide students with vocabulary, expressions or idioms which can help them in the context. They should be very attentive in such activities to motivate students by asking them about the synonym, antonym or about the meaning to engage them in the class.

#### 2.2.1.1.2 Pair Work and Group Work

Group work is an activity that allows students to work together as a team and it may consist of three to five students, who are asked to do certain tasks which need a group decision like writing a group story, role play or discussion on given topic (Harmer, 2001). Similarly, pair work is a form of learning with a partner to accomplish a task such as writing dialogue. It has several advantages in enhancing students' language fluency. Two heads are better than one, i.e., it increases students' amount of speaking in the classroom. It helps the students in developing autonomy and develop their speaking fluency. Byrne (1991) has

divided pair work into three categories, i.e., open pairs, fixed pairs and flexible pairs. In open pairs, learners talk to one another across the class under the teacher's control while in fixed pair learner goes on working with the same partner to complete a task and flexible pair involves the changing of partners, i.e., interviewing other classmates. Similarly, Raja and Saeed (2012), state that it was in the 70s that pair work and group work started to attract the attention of educationists. The educationists were in favour of more teacher talking time in the language classes. It was the period between the 1980s and 1990s where the communicative language teaching came with all important change in the student's role (Nunan & Lamb, 1996).

### **2.2.1.1.3 Drama**

Drama is an appealing activity which promotes cooperation, collaboration, self-control, goal-oriented learning as well as emotional intelligence skills. The use of drama has undeniable benefits for the learning of language. It encourages students to speak, it provides students with a chance to communicate, even with limited language. Drama improves the oral communication of the students and provides students to have real communication (Zyoud, 2010).

### **2.2.1.1.4 Role-play**

Role play is one of the activities that promote speaking. Through role play activities the students learn how to express ideas, opinions or feelings to others by the help of using words or sounds. Role play can improve a learner's speaking skill in any situation and help the learner to interact with each other (Susanti, 2007). Students imagine they are in various social contexts and have a number of social roles. The teacher usually provides students with information in role-playing, i.e., who they are and what they think or feel.

### **2.2.1.1.5 Oral Presentation**

The oral presentation is an extension of the oral communication skill (Nadia, 2013). In an oral presentation, students come to the front of the class to give information or persuade other students about a topic that they know well about for a fixed duration of time. In oral presentation, the student can choose a range of topics. With the help of an oral presentation, EFL learners can increase their information, improve all of the four skills at a time and they can help encourage each other as well as help themselves to be autonomous (Bouezzane, 2015).

### **2.2.1.1.6 Discussion**

The discussion aims to provide students with a platform to share their ideas so that they can freely speak with each other. Students are asked by the teacher to speak and provided them enough time to structure the materials they are going to say (Nadia, 2013). According to Thornbury (2005), the majority of teachers accept that the best discussion is the one where students naturally speak either about something personal or may be the topic of the course book to start the discussion.

### **2.2.1.1.7 Interviews**

Students can conduct interviews on various topics with numerous persons. It will be a better idea that the teacher provides students with rubrics so that they know the type of question which can be asked or what path to follow, but it is the students who will prepare the questions. After that they have conducted their interviews, they should present their study to the class (Susanti, 2007).

### **2.2.1.1.8 Picture Describing**

This is the activity in which students will create groups, and each group is provided with a different picture. Students discuss the picture with their groups, and then a representative of each group describes the picture to the whole class. This activity fosters creativity and imagination of the learners as well as their public speaking skills (Susanti, 2007).

### **2.2.1.1.9 Language Games**

Language games allow the students to practice the language with the help of games (Bouezzane, 2015). According to Leo and Cely (2010), there are a number of games that encourage students to participate and improve the speaking skill of which include: picture games (involving compare and contrast), sound games (involving listening and speaking), words games (involving spelling, meaning), and memory games (involving talking about events).

### **2.2.1.1.10 Dialogues**

Practicing dialogues has a very extended background in the teaching of language as the nature of language is dialogic. It is a very important way for making students to perform (Thornbury, 2005).

### **2.2.1.1.11 Storytelling**

According to Pederson (1995), storytelling is the genuine form of teaching. Using storytelling in English classroom is one of the enjoyable activities to motivate students to study (Jianing, 2007). Storytelling plays an essential role in stimulating the students' imagination as well as in the development of language abilities (Koki, 1998).

## **2.2.1.2 Teacher Use of the Speaking Strategies**

It is the teacher's job to provide students with such strategies by which students could speak efficiently and effectively. According to Shanthi, Pothan, and Rao (2014), the strategy is a procedure or techniques which are followed to accomplish the goal. For the teacher, it is essential to know various learning strategies and to use them in his/her teaching. If teachers, as well as the students are aware of the learning strategies used in the class, the learning will become more efficient. Hamad (2013) carried a study to investigate what affect speaking skills at Saudi colleges for girls in the south and along with other factors found that instructors did not use strategies that could help the student in developing speaking.

### **2.2.1.2.1 The Role of the Teachers to Help the Students**

Teachers play a vital role in the progress of a student.

As a teacher, he/she can be a guide to help a student in the class. According to Byrne (1991), the role of a teacher is just like an actor and like an actor-teacher should act differently in different situations, i.e., in some activities he/she will work as a stimulator, manager, and consultant while in other activities he/she will work as a conductor, organizer and monitor. However, in all these roles the teachers will aim to set up the activities and be available to help the learners.

#### 2.2.1.2.2 Provision of Feedback

According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), feedback plays an essential role in learning and achievement. Information provided by the teacher, peer, book, parent, and experience about one's performance or understanding and usually comes later to instructions meant for the improvement of a particular attitude. Based on behaviourist theories, positive feedback is more effective as compared to negative feedback, as positive feedbacks encourage students that they have done a certain task in the approved manner which directly boosts their motivation (Nunan, 1989). Oliver, Yeo, and Tucker (2012) promote that it is a student who needs to know that the main part of a teacher's job is to give feedback on the activities students do to reach the outcomes of learning.

#### 2.2.1.2.3 The Use of Mother Tongue

There is a continuous debate, on how mother tongue affects EFL classes. However, Harmer (2001) states that it will not be a wise decision to eliminate the mother tongue from use. This will not work but instead will discourage the students who are with the idea that it is helpful in some areas. Hamad (2013) carried a study to investigate what affects speaking skills at Saudi colleges for girls in the south. Along with other factors, Hamad found that instructors allowed students to use their mother tongue in the class when the student was unable to speak English.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design

In order to collect in-depth data about the research problem, the researcher has used mixed method approach for the study. This means that the researcher has used both quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection. The researcher used mixed method for this study to see in detail the factors that affect the students' speaking skill. The practitioners of mixed method research argue that the use of mixed method provides the researcher with a complete understanding of the research problem than does the use of quantitative or qualitative approach alone (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2016). The quantitative approach helps in quantifying the problem and helps in the understanding, how common is the possible result to the large population. It is also used to help in collecting the numerical data, since it is easy and fast to code, analyse and interpret to fully understand the research problem. The qualitative approach is put into action and provides the descriptive data. The descriptive data provide us with the ability to describe and explain in greater depth of the population characteristics or the

phenomenon which is studied.

#### 3.2 Research Setting

The study is carried at the department of English language, Education Faculty, Sayed Jamaluddin Afghani University. The Sayed Jamaluddin Afghani University was founded in 2010 in the city of Asadabad, Kunar, Afghanistan. The university is among one of the fastest growing universities in Afghanistan. The university is named after Sayed Jamaluddin Afghani, the Islamic ideologist of the 19th century. The university started offering admission in three faculties: education, theology, and agriculture. Over the years, it expanded its services and currently is considered a reliable institution in the region for its fast educational and academic development and improvement in just seven years. The university offers admissions in five faculties, i.e., Education, Sharia, Agriculture, computer science and economics faculty. The university offers twenty-one-degree programs under the related faculties.

#### 3.3 Subjects and Sampling

The population of the study is 190 EFL undergraduate English major students at the Department of English Language, Education Faculty, Sayed Jamaluddin Afghani University, Kunar, Afghanistan. There are 50 senior and 40 junior undergraduates at the department of English language. So, the total number (90) of junior and senior undergraduates was purposively selected as the sample for the study. The junior and senior undergraduates are purposively selected the participant of this study as they are studying for three and four years respectively in the English language department and can provide the researcher with detailed data. *"In purposively sampling the researchers do not simply study whoever is available but rather use their judgment to select a sample that they believe, based on prior information, will provide the data they need"* (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2016, p.101). All these students are male. Their ages range from 22 to 24 years.

#### 3.4 Data Collection Instruments

In order to get in-depth data, two instruments were used. These two instruments were questionnaire and interviews which help in the descriptive analysis of the data.

##### 3.4.1 Questionnaire

In order to examine the learners' reaction to the teacher related factors that affect speaking skill, a four-page questionnaire is administered to the participants of the study. Using questionnaire as an instrument for research enables the researcher to provide systematic data for a study (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). The questionnaire is adopted and adapted from the study carried by Pal (2015). The questionnaire contains closed-ended questions with a five-point Likert type scale. The questionnaire contains a total of 20 items, and it is designed in such a way that it collects data in two parts, i.e. activities used by the teacher and strategies used by the teacher in the speaking class.

### 3.4.2 Interviews

The interview provides the qualitative data for this study. Qualitative interview data often gather more in-depth insights on particular attitudes, thoughts, and actions (Kendall, 2008). There is a total of 90 students as participants of this study, and only ten students are selected for the interview. The interview provides the researcher with additional information and helps to validate the data collected by the questionnaire. The interview took place after the questionnaire had been answered by the students. There are overall 9 questions that try to find information about the factors that affect students' speaking skill on the part of the teacher.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

As the study used both qualitative as well as quantitative data, their analyses are carried separately. For qualitative analysis, SPSS is used. For data analysis, descriptive statistics are used such as mean, standard deviation, frequency, percentage, and tabulations. The obtained data is organised, coded and tabulated under similar category and is analysed and interpreted using SPSS version 20.

The data obtained from the interview is analysed thematically. Thematic analysis is a type of qualitative analysis and used to analyse classification and present themes (patterns) that relate to the data (Alhojailan, 2012). Alhojailan (2012) further says the thematic analysis is considered the most appropriate for any study that seeks to discover something using interpretations. It provides a systematic element to data analysis. It allows the researcher to associate an analysis of the frequency of a theme one of the whole contents. This provides accuracy and intricacy and enhances the research's whole meaning. The thematic analysis gives an opportunity to understand the potential of any issue more widely (Marks & Yardley, 2004). It illustrates the data in great detail. Each interviewer is assigned with a code name. For example, "Y4S1" means fourth-year student 1, so in the thematic analysis, these codes are used to refer to the student while reporting the student response.

The process of the interview consists of four steps (Figure 3.1). First, the respondents' responses were recorded with a voice recorder. Secondly, the researcher listened to each response carefully and then transcribed each response in the Pashto language. Finally, the researcher translated the transcribed Pashto data into the English language.

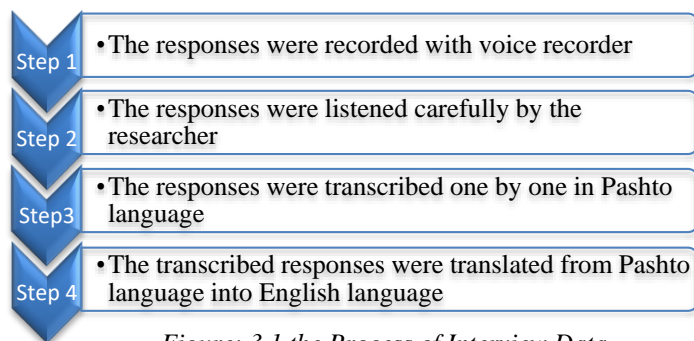


Figure: 3.1 the Process of Interview Data

## IV. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

### 4.1 The Results Of The Questionnaire

#### 4.1.1 RQ1: Activities Used by the Teacher in the Speaking Class

The following responses are about the activities and techniques which the teachers used in speaking class. The respondents were required to provide the information about how often their teachers used the following activities and techniques and the effect which these techniques have on their English-speaking skill. The results are shown in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1**  
The Frequency and Percentage Showing Teacher Use of Speaking Activities

| No | My English Teacher:            | Frequency | Alternatives |        |           |         | Total |        |
|----|--------------------------------|-----------|--------------|--------|-----------|---------|-------|--------|
|    |                                |           | Never        | Rarely | Sometimes | Usually |       | Always |
| 1  | Uses questioning and answering | Fre       | 0            | 0      | 46        | 35      | 9     | 90     |
|    |                                | %         | 0            | 0      | 51.1      | 38.9    | 10    | 100    |
| 2  | Uses pair work                 | Fre       | 19           | 34     | 36        | 1       | 0     | 90     |
|    |                                | %         | 21.1         | 37.8   | 40        | 1.1     | 0     | 100    |
| 3  | Uses group work                | Fre       | 24           | 46     | 17        | 3       | 0     | 90     |
|    |                                | %         | 26.7         | 51.1   | 18.9      | 3.3     | 0     | 100    |
| 4  | Uses role-play and drama       | Fre       | 56           | 33     | 1         | 0       | 0     | 90     |
|    |                                | %         | 62.2         | 36.7   | 1.1       | 0       | 0     | 100    |
| 5  | Uses picture description       | Fre       | 24           | 62     | 4         | 0       | 0     | 90     |
|    |                                | %         | 26.7         | 68.9   | 4.4       | 0       | 0     | 100    |
| 6  | Uses panel discussion          | Fre       | 49           | 38     | 3         | 0       | 0     | 90     |
|    |                                | %         | 54.4         | 42.2   | 3.3       | 0       | 0     | 100    |
| 7  | Uses story telling             | Fre       | 53           | 30     | 7         | 0       | 0     | 90     |
|    |                                | %         | 58.9         | 33.3   | 7.8       | 0       | 0     | 100    |
| 8  | Uses peer interview            | Fre       | 47           | 43     | 0         | 0       | 0     | 90     |
|    |                                | %         | 52.2         | 47.8   | 0         | 0       | 0     | 100    |
| 9  | Uses individual presentations  | Fre       | 0            | 0      | 13        | 54      | 23    | 90     |
|    |                                | %         | 0            | 0      | 14.4      | 60      | 25.6  | 100    |
| 10 | Uses group presentations       | Fre       | 46           | 41     | 3         | 0       | 0     | 90     |
|    |                                | %         | 51.1         | 45.6   | 3.3       | 0       | 0     | 100    |

Table 4.1 shows the frequency and percentage of the student's responses to items showing teacher use of speaking activities. 10% of the respondents responded to sometimes, usually and always respectively. The data shows that 19 (21.1%), 34 (37.8%), 36 (40%) and 1(1.1%) of the respondent responded never, rarely, sometimes and usually respectively to the question of using pair work in the class (item 2). From the responses of respondent to the question of the use of group work by the teacher in the class (item 3) revealed that 24 (26.7%), 46 (51.1%), 17 (18.9%) and 3 (3.3%) of the respondents responded to never, rarely, sometimes and usually respectively. 56 (62.2%), 33 (36.7%), 1 (1.1%) of the respondents responded never, rarely and sometimes respectively to the question of the teacher uses role-playing and drama in the speaking class (item 4). The responses of the respondents to the question of teacher use of

picture description in the speaking class (item 5) were 24 (26.7%) never, 62 (68.9%) rarely, 4 (4.4%) sometimes.

Likewise, the responses of the respondents to the question of teacher use of panel discussion in the speaking class (item 6) were 49 (54.4%) never, 38 (42.2%) rarely, 3 (3.3%) sometimes. The responses of the respondents to the question of the teacher using storytelling technique in the speaking class (item 7) were 53(58.9%) never, 30 (33.3%) rarely, 7 (7.7%) sometimes. The responses of the respondents to the question of teacher use of peer interviews in the speaking class (item 8) were 47 (52.2%) never, 43 (47.8%) rarely. The responses of the respondents to the question of teacher use of individual presentations in the speaking class (item 9) were 13(14.4%) sometimes, 54 (60%) usually, 23 (25.6%) sometimes. The responses of the respondents to the question of teacher use of group presentations in the speaking class (item 10) were 46(51.1%) never, 41 (45.6%) rarely, 3 (3.3%) sometimes.

#### 4.1.2. RQ2: Learning Strategies Used by the Teacher in the Speaking Class

The following responses are about the learning strategies which the teachers used in speaking class. The respondents were required to provide the information about the strategies their teacher use in the speaking class. The results are shown in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2**  
The Frequency and Percentage Showing Teacher Use of Learning Strategies

| No | My English Teacher:                                   | Fre. | Alternatives |        |           |         |        | Total |
|----|---|------|--------------|--------|-----------|---------|--------|-------|
|    |   |      | Never        | Rarely | Sometimes | Usually | Always |       |
| 11 | Allows me to ask for feedback                         | Fre. | 81           | 9      | 0         | 0       | 0      | 90    |
|    |   | %    | 90           | 10     | 0         | 0       | 0      | 100   |
| 12 | Allows me to ask for mistake correction               | Fre. | 26           | 62     | 2         | 0       | 0      | 90    |
|    |   | %    | 28.9         | 68.9   | 2.2       | 0       | 0      | 100   |
| 13 | Present pronunciation points                          | Fre. | 73           | 17     | 0         | 0       | 0      | 90    |
|    |   | %    | 81.1         | 18.9   | 0         | 0       | 0      | 100   |
| 14 | Has good speaking activities design                   | Fre. | 19           | 0      | 65        | 5       | 1      | 90    |
|    |   | %    | 21.1         | 0      | 72.2      | 5.6     | 1.1    | 100   |
| 15 | Used learner-centered approach                        | Fre. | 73           | 17     | 0         | 0       | 0      | 90    |
|    |   | %    | 81.1         | 18.9   | 0         | 0       | 0      | 100   |
| 16 | Give time for speaking exercises                      | Fre. | 85           | 5      | 0         | 0       | 0      | 90    |
|    |   | %    | 94.4         | 5.6    | 0         | 0       | 0      | 100   |
| 17 | Does not scold students for not speaking correctly    | Fre. | 0            | 0      | 3         | 60      | 27     | 90    |
|    |   | %    | 0            | 0      | 3.3       | 66.7    | 30     | 100   |
| 18 | Does not scold students for speaking with poor accent | Fre. | 0            | 0      | 0         | 69      | 21     | 90    |
|    |   | %    | 0            | 0      | 0         | 76.7    | 23.3   | 100   |
| 19 | Uses project-based                                    | Fre. | 79           | 9      | 2         | 0       | 0      | 90    |
|    |   | %    | 87.8         | 10     | 2.2       | 0       | 0      | 100   |

| activities         | Fre. | 85   | 5   | 0 | 0 | 0 | 90  |
|--------------------|------|------|-----|---|---|---|-----|
| 20 Uses monologues | %    | 94.4 | 5.6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 |

According to Table 4.2, to the item the teacher allowing students to ask for feedback (item 11), the majority of the respondents 81 (90%) responded to never and 9 (10%) of the respondents responded to rarely. To the teacher allowance of the students to ask for mistake correction (item 12), 26 (28.9%) of the respondents responded that they were never allowed to ask for mistake correction while the majority of the respondents 62 (68.9%) replied that they were rarely allowed to ask for mistake correction and only 2 (2.2%) of the respondents responded that they were sometimes allowed to ask for mistake correction. To the teacher presenting pronunciation points (item 13), the majority of the respondents 73(81.1%) responded that they were never presented the pronunciation points by the teacher while 17 (18.9%) of the respondents replied that they were rarely provided with pronunciation points by the teacher. To the teacher designing speaking activities (item 14), 19 (21.1%) of the respondents responded that the teacher never designed speaking activities, while the majority of the respondents responded that their teacher sometimes designed speaking activities. 5(5.6%) of the respondents responded that their teacher usually designed speaking activities while 1 (1.1%) of the respondents replied that their teacher always designs speaking activities. To the approach used by the teacher in the speaking class (item 15), the majority of the respondents 73 (81.1%) replied that their teacher never used learner-centred approach while 17 (18.9%) of the respondents responded that their teacher rarely uses learner-centred approach.

Likewise, to the teacher giving time to speaking exercises (item 16), the majority of the respondents 85 (94.4%) responded that their teacher never gives time for speaking exercises while 5 (5.6%) of the respondents responded that their teacher rarely gives time for speaking exercises. Similarly, 3(3.3%) of the students replied that their teacher sometime does not scold the students for not speaking correctly (item 17), majority of the students 60 (66.7%) replied that their teacher usually does not scold them when they do not speak correctly while 27 (30%) of the students replied that their teacher always do not scold them for not speaking correctly. To the teacher does not scold students for speaking with poor accent (item 18), the majority of them 69 (76,7%) replied that their teacher usually does not scold them for speaking with poor accent while 21 (23.3%) of the respondents responded that their teacher always does not scold them for speaking with poor accent. To the teacher using project-based activities (item 19) the majority of the students 79 (87.8%) replied that their teacher never uses project-based activities while 9 (10%) of the respondents responded that their teacher never uses project-based activities and 2 (2.2%) of the respondents replied that their teacher sometimes uses project-based activities for speaking class. To the teacher using monologue in the speaking class (item 20), the majority of the respondents 85 (94.4%) replied that their teacher never uses monologue in the speaking class whereas 5 (5.6%) of the respondents responded that their teacher rarely uses monologue in the speaking class.

## 4.2 The Findings of the Interviews

### 4.2.1 The Teacher Use of Learning Activities

Concerning the teacher use of pair work in the speaking class, the majority of the students (Y3S1, Y3S3, Y3S4, Y4S1, Y4S3, Y4S4) replied that the teacher sometimes allows them to work in a pair in the speaking class. However, there were few students (Y3S2, Y4S5) who said that their teacher very rarely allows them to work in pairs and one student (Y3S5) replied that his teacher had not used pair work in the class yet. They advocated for the use of pair work in the class, and the majority of them said that pair work is a practical activity which plays an important role in the learning of a language. As pair work is done in by two students, both students get a chance to help each other and share their ideas with each other. The following excerpts are some of the examples of learners' responses to the question regarding the teacher use of pair work in the speaking class and the students' stances towards it.

**Y4S1:** "Aaaa, sometimes our teacher allows us to **work in pairs**. Mmmm, pair work is a part of practical activities that play an important role in the learning of a language. As **pair work** is done by two students, so both students get a chance to help each other and share their ideas with each other". (Line 1-8)

**Y3S1:** "In the whole semester we **work in pairs** just three or four times. **Pair work** is significant activity in the speaking class in which two students share their information with each other". (Line 1-3)

**Y4S4:** "Sometimes our teacher allows us to **work in pairs**. **Pair work** is very effective in case when two students of different ability **work in pair**, where the weaker students get benefit from the brilliant one". (Line 1-3)

Concerning the teacher use of group work in the speaking class, the majority of the students (Y3S2, Y3S3, Y3S4, Y3S5, Y4S1, Y4S2, Y4S3) replied that the teacher very rarely uses group work in the speaking class. A few students (Y3S1, Y4S5) said that their teacher had not used the group work activity up to now in the speaking class. Their comments about the use of group work in the speaking class were that it is one of the critical methods of practical learning, so it has a significant effect on the learners. Because there are students with different talent so when they work in a group, they help each other, share ideas with each other and take feedback from each other. This method is fun too for the students where students do not feel tired and bored. The following excerpts are some of the examples of learners' responses to the question regarding the teacher use of group work in the speaking class and the students stances towards it.

**Y3S5:** "Teacher does not usually allow us to **work in groups**. In my opinion **group work** is very important in speaking class". (Line 3-4)

**Y4S1:** "Mmmm, teacher rarely allows us to **work in groups**, and usually we work individually. **Group work** is also one of the important methods of practical learning, so mmm it has a great effect on the learners. Because there are students with different talent so when they **work in a group**, they help each other, share ideas with each other and take feedback from each other. Aaa, this method is a kind of fun too for students where students do not feel tiredness and boredom". (Line 9-19)

**Y4S5:** "Up to now we have not **worked in groups** in the speaking

class. **Group work** plays an important role in the building of confidence, and usually there are students of multiple talents in class so if they **work in a group**, will help to learn from each other". (Line 4-7)

In response to the question; how often their teacher allowed them to have discussion and dialogue in the speaking class, the majority (Y3S1, Y3S3, Y3S4, Y3S5, Y4S1) of them replied that their teacher rarely allows them for discussion and dialogue in the speaking class. Some students (Y4S3, Y4S4) said that their teacher sometimes allows them for discussion and dialogue, while there were three students (Y3S2, Y4S2, Y4S5), who said that their teacher never provides them with the opportunity to have a discussion and dialogue in the speaking class. In their answers to the question that how they feel about the discussion and dialogue in the speaking class, the majority of them advocated that discussion and dialogue play an essential role in the improvement of speaking. In dialogue, a student gets the chance to express what he or she has in the mind which can play a significant role in the articulation and fluency of the learner. The following excerpts are some of the examples of learners' responses to the question regarding the teacher use of discussions and dialogues in the speaking class and the student's stances towards it.

**Y3S2:** "We do not have **discussion and dialogues** in the speaking class, and I do not remember when the teacher allowed us for **discussion and dialogue**. **Discussion and dialogues** are very effective in the speaking class and these activities improve our boldness". (Line 6-9)

**Y4S2:** "Our teacher does not allow us for **discussion and dialogues**. The **dialogue and discussion** are important activities and help students to practically use what they have in their memory". (Line 5-7)

**Y4S5:** "Up to now we have not used **discussion and dialogue** in the class. **Discussion and dialogues** both helps a lot in the improvement of speaking, and it is an important mean of sharing information with each other". (Line 7-9)

In the students responses to the question; how often their teacher allows them to have a role play in the speaking class, the majority (Y3S1, Y3S2, Y3S3, Y3S4, Y3S5, Y4S3, Y4S5) of them replied that their teacher has never allowed them to have a role play in the speaking class. A few students (Y4S1, Y4S4) replied that they had done role play in the speaking class only once in the last six semesters. Their views about the use of role play in the class were very positive. The majority (Y3S1, Y3S2, Y3S3, Y3S4, Y3S5, Y4S2, Y4S3, Y4S5) of the students, expressed that role play, group work, pair work, debate or discussion provides a chance for the learner to practice speaking. Role play is a technique that provides the learner with a chance to practice daily life conversation i.e. he/she may play the role of a teacher, interpreter, an elder, shopkeeper, journalist, minister or president and when the students talk in the role of these personalities that definitely increase their vocabulary and make them confident. The following excerpts are some of the examples of learners' responses to the question regarding the teacher use of role play in the speaking class and the students' stances towards it.

**Y3S5:** "To be honest, we did not practice **role play** in the whole semester. **Role-play** is essential in speaking class as it provides students with the opportunity to **play the role** of different



personalities which help students to improve speaking skill". (Line 8-11)

**Y4S1:** "In the last six semesters, we have once had **role play**. **Role-play**, group work, pair work, a debate or discussion, all these methods provide a chance for the learner to practice speaking. **Role-play** particularly is a technique that provides the learner with a chance to practice daily life conversation, i.e. a teacher may **play the role** of a teacher, interpreter, an elder, shopkeeper, journalist, minister, or president and when we talk in the role of these personalities that definitely increase our vocabulary and make us confident". (Line 28-39)

**Y4S5:** "Up to now we have not done **role play** in the speaking class. **Role-play** is very important in speaking class as it gives a chance to students to practice the vocabulary of various roles which will definitely help them in the future". (Line 11-13)

The students' responses to the question; how often their teacher allowed them to listen to audio records, the majority (Y3S1, Y3S2, Y4S1, Y4S3, Y4S4, Y4S5) of the students replied that their teacher never provides them with the chance to listen to audio records. However, some (Y3S5, Y4S2) students said that their teacher sometimes allows them to listen to audio records in the speaking class. The majority of the students spoke in favour of listening to audio records in the speaking class. They said that listening to audio records is very important in the speaking class as it helps in the correction of pronunciation and makes them confident in their speaking. Similarly listening to audio records helps them to be familiarized with the accent of native speakers and they will be able to catch them easily. The following excerpts are some of the examples of learners' responses to the question regarding the teacher use of audio records in the speaking class and the students' stances towards it.

**Y3S1:** "Till now, we have not **listened to audio** records in the class. **Listening to audio** records is very important as it helps in the improvement of speaking skill and pronunciation. Similarly, it helps to be familiarised with the accent of native speakers, and we will be able to catch them easily". (Line 13-16)

**Y4S1:** "Our teacher has never allowed us to **listen to audio** records. **Listening to audio** records is very important in the class which helps in the correction of pronunciation and makes us confident on our speaking". (Line 40-45)

#### 4.2.2 The Teacher Use of Learning Strategies

Concerning the teacher use of teaching method for the speaking class; the majority (Y3S1, Y3S2, Y3S3, Y4S1, Y4S3, Y4S4, Y4S5) of the students said that teacher uses different approaches, but most of the time he uses the grammar-translation method in the speaking class and gives the students chapters. The teacher usually translates everything from the chapter. The teacher rarely gives the students a chance to practice the dialogues. Similarly, the teacher gives them different topics, and they prepare for those topics in order to work on them in the next class. The following excerpts are some of the examples of learners' responses to the question regarding the teacher use of the method in the speaking class and the students' stances towards it.

**Y3S2:** "Our teacher usually explains from the chapters and usually works on the expressions. This **method** is very good for speaking class". (Line 16-17)

**Y4S1:** "In speaking class the teacher use **grammar translation method** and gives us chapters and translate everything from the chapter. He sometimes gives us a chance to practice the dialogues. Similarly, he gives us different topics, and we make preparations for those topics to practice that in the coming class. This **method** is very suitable for reading class. The teacher just gives us the chapter and then translates that chapter for us which has topics and dialogues which he translates it for us". (Line 46-57)

## V. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Discussion

The primary objective of the study is to carefully examine the factors that affect the students' speaking skill of Afghan universities especially, at the University of Sayed Jamaluddin Afghani, Kunar. The study investigated the activities and strategies used by the teacher in the speaking class.

Two research questions were used as the basis for this study: 1) what are the activities used by the teacher in the speaking class? 2) what are the strategies used by the teacher in the speaking class? A questionnaire and interview were the primary tools in which data were collected. The data of questionnaire was categorised and analysed quantitatively using SPSS version 20 and the data collected through interviews was qualitatively analysed by giving the thematic description. The simple narrative description was used for the analysis. Based on the research questions the discussion of research finding is presented next.

#### 5.1.1. Research Question One

The first research question in this study is intended to explore the learning activities used by the teacher in the speaking class. The learning activities used by the teacher in the speaking class were identified from the students' responses to the questionnaire and interview protocol. The findings are discussed from the perspective of students' responses.

Table 4.1 in chapter 4, shows that the teacher rarely used speaking activities and strategies to improve the speaking skill of the students and that is probably one of the reasons why students are weak in their speaking skill. The results from the descriptive statistics, frequency and percentage, are presented and discussed next.

##### 5.1.1.1. Teacher Use of Speaking Activities

Studies carried by Harmer (1991), Susanti (2007) and Jianing, (2007) shows that the use of speaking activities like pair work, group work, role play, drama, storytelling, peer interview, presentation etc. help in the learning and improvement of speaking skill. This is because these activities provide the student with a chance to take the initiative of their learning. Research has proven that students who take the initiative of their learning learn better as compare to those who are waiting for something to come from their teachers and wait to be taught (Raja & Saeed, 2012).

Table 4.1 in chapter 4 shows teacher-related factors that affect students speaking skill. It shows that pair work and group work is not the regular part of the teachers' teaching. The teachers sometimes use pair work and group work in the speaking class which was also supported by the students' responses in the interviews. According to Harmer (1991), pair work and group work provide the students with the opportunity to practice in an encouraging and facilitate environment. Group work stimulates the learner's experience of various types of interaction and works in the production of a more relaxed and cooperative classroom atmosphere (Gower, 1987). Similarly, from Table 4.1, it was revealed that teachers rarely use group work (51%), picture description (68.9%), panel discussion (42.2%) role-play (36.7%), drama (36.7%), storytelling (30%), peer interview (47%) and group presentation (45.6) in the speaking class. These responses were supported by the interviews. i.e. "In the whole semester we work in pairs just three or four times" (Y3S1: line 1) and "Sometimes our teacher allows us to work in pairs." (Y4S4: line 1) According to Hismanoglu (2005), the use of drama in EFL class increases creativity, originality, sensitivity, fluency, flexibility, emotional stability cooperation and examination of moral attitudes, while developing communication skills. Drama activities provide students with a variety of contextualised and scaffold activities that gradually involve more participation and more oral language proficiency; they are also non-threatening and much fun (Rieg & Paquette, 2009). The use of drama activities has obvious benefits for language learning. Role play can improve learner's speaking skill in any situation and help the learner to interact (Susanti, 2007). According to Krebt (2017), role plays improve the oral performance of students and prepare them for a situation which improves their speaking abilities. According to Nadia (2013), making students present orally in front of the class is an important technique to improve their oral proficiency. According to Lazaraton (2001), the discussion is perhaps the activity which is mostly used in the speaking skills classes and explains that students are given a topic on which they discuss in pair or group. According to Susanti (2007), picture describing promotes the creativity and imagination of the learners as well as their public speaking skills.

From the literature, it is apparent that speaking activities provide the learners to practice the language and master the speaking skill. However, these activities are missing in the context of this study. English is not the first or second language in Afghanistan, but it is studied as a foreign language. Besides this, the use of English language is insufficient in the province where this research was carried out. This means that the students have minimal opportunities to practice the English language outside of their English-speaking classes. As the classes are the only platform for the students to practice their English language, it is the teacher's responsibility to include speaking activities in the speaking classes.

### 5.1.1.2 Teacher Use of Learning Strategies

Table 4.2 in chapter 4 reveals that the teacher very rarely allowed the correction of students' mistakes. The teacher never presented pronunciation points. According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), feedback plays an essential role in learning

and achievement. Feedback encourages students that they have done a certain task in the approved manner which directly boosts their motivation (Nunan 1989). According to Oliver, Yeo and Tucker (2012), the central part of a teacher's job is to give feedback on the activities students do to reach the outcomes of learning. Table 4.2 also revealed that the teacher hardly used learner-centred approach and hardly gives time for speaking exercises. This was also revealed in the interview responses. The respondents reflected that the teacher usually uses grammar-translation method in the speaking class "In speaking class the teacher use grammar translation method and gives us chapters and translate everything from the chapter" (Y4S1: line 46) and rarely use communicative approach. According to Samah and Zohra (2015), the best approach for speaking class is the communicative approach. Communicative approach largely focuses on the function, notion, dexterity and fluency. It involves language learning by communication, and that is why it is also called communicative approach. It is believed that by applying this method, students can communicate efficiently. Similarly, the teacher hardly used project-based activities and never used monologues in the speaking class.

Making strategies for classes always have positive effects especially for speaking class. Speaking class involves certain extra activities and requires the teacher to have some strategies and to plan for the class beforehand. However, due to the limited number of teachers (7) at the department of English language, Sayed Jamaluddin Afghani University, the workload of the teachers is very heavy. Each teacher has a full schedule that does not allow the teachers to plan and devise proper strategies for every class especially speaking class. Similarly, the teachers are not supposed to teach one subject permanently but are required to teach a new subject each semester based on the department rules and regulations, which is why the teachers are facing problems to devise plan and strategies for the new classes properly. Likewise, the teachers are unable to implement certain strategies and plans due to the lack of some basic facilities in the classes like a computer, projector, the Internet and so on.

## 5.2 Conclusions of Discussion on Findings

This study has attempted to explore the teacher-related factors that affect students' speaking skill. To conclude, what have been analysed, presented and discussed in this study are presented next.

The role of a teacher in the learning process of a language is of paramount importance. In order to make students competent speakers of English language, the teacher has to work harder to organise his/her classes. He/she needs to act differently in different situations. He/she must allow students to perform certain activities to facilitate and improve learning of the speaking skill. Based on the findings, regarding teacher-related factors that affect speaking skill of the students, there was some shortcoming on the part of the teachers. Their role was not as active as it should be. They hardly allowed students to work in pairs and groups. They did not quite provide students with the chance to practice role-playing, dialogue, picture description, debate, storytelling and peer interview in the classroom. Similarly, they did not provide students with the chance to listen to audio recording in order to improve their listening

comprehension. These practices affected the students' speaking skill. Likewise, the teacher did not allow students to practice the English language through individual or group presentations and hardly provides the students with helpful pronunciation points to help them improve their speaking skill. Most importantly the teacher hardly used a student-centered approach which is considered an effective approach for teaching especially speaking class. They usually used a grammar-translation method which is not considered an appropriate approach for the speaking class. In the same way, they never provided the students with the chance to practice English through projects, monologues and other activities that could improve the students' speaking skill. Hence, these were some of the factors that affect students' speaking skill on the part of the teacher.

The teachers are unable to use speaking activities and strategies as they have too many classes. There are seven lecturers at the department of English language, Sayed Jamaluddin Afghani University, which is not sufficient for the required number of classes they have in a week. Each teacher has a full schedule of classes, and they could not find free time to devise plans and strategies for the speaking class properly. Similarly, the frequent changes of subjects among the lecturers because of the department policies also make the teachers unable to devise a plan, strategies and proper activities for their classes. Likewise, the teachers' everyday use of grammar-translation method in the speaking class which is not considered useful in the speaking class is another big issue. The students are unable to go along with the teachers when using other methods like direct method which involves the use of the first language. The teachers are compelled to use grammar translation method, which ultimately affects the students' speaking skill.

### 5.3 Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of discussions on findings, the following recommendations are reached.

As an English language teacher, a teacher must know the kinds of speaking activities and strategies to use in developing students' speaking skill. The teachers should develop and design learning activities and strategies to help students in the learning of speaking skill. The teacher must provide students with opportunities to practice speaking activities and should provide students with strategies and favourable conditions that could improve their speaking skill. It is the teachers' responsibility to provide students with speaking activities like pair work, group work, role-play, dialogues, picture description, debating, storytelling, peer interviews and so on. They should provide students with a chance to listen to audio and video records, in order to improve their listening skill which will ultimately improve their speaking skill. Similarly, it is the teachers' responsibility to plan and design speaking lessons and should motivate and supervise students in learning speaking.

Likewise, a teacher must use an appropriate method of teaching for speaking class. It will be a better choice to use the learner-centred approach in the speaking class as it is considered the best approach for speaking class, which involve students most of the time in the class. The teachers should devise strategies, how to improve students' speaking skill. They should

provide students with pronunciation points in the speaking class to build their English fluency.

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