Challenges in Speaking English: Perceptions of Tertiary Level Students in Bangladesh

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Thesis Submitted as a Partial Requirement to Fulfill the Degree of Master of Arts in English Language Teaching (ELT)

Department of English

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To My family, specially to my mother,

Morsheda Begum

Declaration of Authorship

Name of Candidate: Sharmin Akter Mitul

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Title of Thesis: Challenges in Speaking English: Perceptions of Tertiary Level Students in Bangladesh

I, hereby, declare that this dissertation consists of all the original works conducted by me except the quotations and citations. The concepts or ideas taken from other sources have been cited properly. Moreover, this dissertation has not been submitted previously or concurrently in any other institution.

Candidate's Signature: Date:

Subscribed and solemnly declared before,

Witness's Signature: Date:

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Abstract

English is a compulsory subject in the national curriculum of Bangladesh and students have to study English for twelve years. Even after twelve years of learning English, most of the students lack proficiency in speaking English. Often it can be seen that tertiary level students struggle while speaking in English in classrooms. Therefore, the research intends to find out the challenges that the learners face in speaking English in the Bangladeshi tertiary level classrooms. This paper investigates the existing challenges in spoken English inside the classrooms.

With this purpose, the researcher has taken interviews of some university students. Students who were fresher in universities and took basic courses of English were selected for the interview. In total, twenty four students were selected basing on opportunity sampling from three different private universities of Bangladesh. Interview questions for the students were made following previous interview protocol of related studies. Interview questions were translated into Bangla and interviews were conducted in Bangla. After a thorough analysis in qualitative method, recommendations have been provided for the learners and teachers.

Upon analysis of the obtained data, the research findings indicate that insufficient vocabulary, lack of supportive environment, lack of self-confidence, nervousness, shyness, insufficient knowledge of sentence formation are some of the major challenges in speaking English encountered by tertiary level students in Bangladesh. The investigation concluded with a couple of recommendations for new measures, which ideally will refresh the teaching of speaking skill in private universities with far more prominent extension and achievement.

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Chapter: One

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Language is a device for communication and oral communication is important to exchange ideas with other people. Hence, the necessity of speaking skill is enormous for the learners of any language. A good speaker can effectively communicate with others and conveys his/her message clearly to the listeners. There is no doubt that in this communication oriented age, speaking is more important than ever (Farooqui, 2007). Good speaking ability is a must to meet the challenges of the new century as well as ensuring one's place in the competitive world specially in the job market. But in many ways, it is one of the marginalized skills and Bangladeshi students hardly have the scope to learn this at secondary and higher secondary levels in our country (Khan, 2007; Bhattacharjee, 2008). Speaking is in many ways an undervalued skill at secondary and higher secondary level in academic curriculum in Bangladesh.

English is a compulsory subject in the national curriculum of Bangladesh. However, a large number of students are not competent enough in English, especially in speaking. English is a foreign language in Bangladesh. In speaking English, learners still face many speaking difficulties no matter how much they know about the language. For most of the students, speaking is a challenging task to perform. Sometimes, it is possible to write or to listen or to read but when the students are supposed to speak, they feel the pressure. It is axiomatic that to most of the students taking an attempt to speak English is anxiety provoking. They have a tendency to think it as an impossible attempt to achieve the English speaking proficiency.

Moreover, most of the students think English as a 'Subject' to pass rather a language to speak which is one of the obvious reasons behind the inefficiency in this Oral skill (Umme 2014).

English is an international language for its wide use. Among different nations it serves as a lingua franca. It is spoken, learnt and used even in those countries where it is not a native language. English is playing a major role in many sectors including medicine, engineering, education, advanced studies, business, technology, banking, computing, tourism etc. To learn a second language, a physical, intellectual and emotional involvement is needed to successfully send and interpret linguistic messages.

Whether Bangladesh is an ESL (English as a Second Language) or EFL (English as a Foreign Language) country is still a controversial issue. According to Kachru (1986, p. 33) and Jenkins (2009, p. 16), Bangladesh has got the status of ESL (English as a Second Language). Salauddin, Khan and Rahman (2013) have stated that although officially English is a second language in Bangladesh; this does not make Bangladesh an ESL country, as there exists mainly a non-Anglophone environment outside the English classrooms (Salauddin, Khan and Rahman, 2013, p. 35-41).

English is highly valued in Bangladesh in terms of its demand and intensity of usage in official and educational arena. In Bangladesh, English is mainly taught and learnt academically in the classroom. So, classroom is the one and only place for most of the students to learn English. But how much do the students use or try to use English in the classroom? This is a very important question to those who are working to determine the challenges that encountered by the students in speaking English. It is necessary to find out,

what challenges Bangladeshi tertiary level students' are facing in speaking English in their classrooms? Author has tried to explore answers of this question in the study.

Some studies have been conducted on the challenges faced by the students in spoken English in Bangladesh. Such as, Farooqui (2007) has conducted a study on the problems and solutions in the spoken English of the urban students. He found that their lack of vocabulary, shyness, anxiety and unfamiliar topics create problems in their speaking English. On the other hand, Arju (2011) has said that "While commenting on the ESL learners' competence in speaking English, language instructors frequently complain that the learners are lagging behind because of having an inadequate stock of vocabulary" (p. 52). According to Chowdhury and Shaila (2011), peer feedback and environment created by fellow students has intense impact on the speaker.

Hamid (2011) has conducted a research on the overall English proficiency of rural Bangladeshi school learners. He has talked about the 'socioeconomic' factors that create a problem in English teaching and learning. His study focuses on all the four skills of English.

Among the four basic skills of language learning – listening, reading, speaking, writing – speaking is a productive skill. It appears to be an important skill in terms of judging a learner´s effective ability to use the language. A good level of English speaking proficiency is a precondition for getting a good job in our context. In language learning, spoken language production is frequently considered as one of the most difficult abilities (Brown and Yule, 1983). The widespread problem among learners of foreign languages is their considerably lower speaking performance. Some learners are not able to express their thoughts and

opinions satisfactorily in second language. As a result, they often make mistakes and speak slowly and less fluently (Brown and Yule, 1983).

Furthermore, speaking in the foreign language or second language in front of the peers is directly related to high anxiety. In Bangladeshi perspective, students are severely embarrassed and inhibited when opportunities arise for them to speak in their classes. Again, if learners find their peers are more proficient in speaking compared to them, they tend to become anxious, and it results in remaining silent and taking 'nothing to say' expression at the moment. Some students are very conscious about their limitations in language proficiency and they feel insecure for the fear of making mistakes. They prefer not to talk and don't want to be ridiculed or censured in front of the whole class.

Recently significant interests have developed in the mind of many students of Bangladesh in English language as a means of verbal communication. But unfortunately speaking skill doesn't reach its expected level. In our national context, English has already become the language of professional communication. Speaking is considered to be one of the four macro skills necessary for effective communication in any language according to most researchers, particularly when speakers are not using their mother tongue. As English is universally used as a means of communication, English speaking skills should be developed along with the other skills so that these integrated skills collectively enhance communicative competence. At present, spoken English is a must if one wants to meet necessities of the current world. Without good speaking skill, it is impossible to get a good job at present. Unfortunately, a large number of our students cannot speak in English successfully as a communicative tool though they learn English for twelve years or more than that.

In Bangladesh, tertiary-level students come to private universities from different levels of language competence. The most important thing is that most of the undergraduate level students in Bangladesh come from Bengali medium background where English is hardly used as the medium of instruction. So the students might be proficient in reading and writing skills but they face difficulty in speaking. Even after studying English for twelve years in school and college, most of the students still lack proficiency and face problems to communicate in English (Alam, 2007: Jahan, 2008: Farooqui, 2007).

The above discussed studies have also given the scenario that English is used only for specific purposes, especially limited and restricted within the academia in Bangladeshi context. The reasons for the findings can be explained as: Bangladesh being a predominantly monolingual country, *Bangla* can serve most of the purposes; English is learnt only for its utilitarian value. i.e. to get a good job, to build up a successful career, and to go abroad for higher studies or for immigration and many other facilities.

Therefore, after going through all the studies, the researcher has found the inspiration to conduct a research with the English speaking problems of university freshers of Bangladesh.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to explore the causes that make the process of oral communication in English difficult for the students in their classrooms. The difficulties of speaking English encountered by tertiary level students in Bangladeshi context will be discussed in this paper. Some research works have been conducted regarding these challenges

of speaking English in Bangladesh. But very few researchers have done their research on tertiary level students in Bangladesh.

1.3 Research Objective

This research intends to find out the existing challenges in speaking English encountered by the tertiary level students in their classrooms in Bangladesh.

1.4 Significance of the study

This study emphasizes on exploring the current major problems in students' spoken English private universities. As demonstrated by Ur (2003), speaking skill is considered as the identifier of knowing any language among all the four skills languages (p.243). Therefore, data from this research will provide guidance for teachers of spoken courses at tertiary level. The findings of the study will also enable other researchers to obtain information about conditions of classrooms at private universities in Bangladesh. English is highly valued in Bangladesh in terms of its demand and the intensity of the usage in official and educational sectors. A large number of fresher university students in our country have fear in spoken English. In Bangladesh, English is taught from primary school, yet university students said that it is still difficult to communicate in English in classroom and outside of classrooms. Most of the students study English from the examination point of view, so they face trouble in producing grammatically correct English sentences.

Besides, detailed information about how students encounter the difficulties in speaking English in the classroom will be presented in the study. The study will try to analyze the problems in speaking English encountered by tertiary level students in Bangladesh.

Therefore, the significance of the study lies in identifying the actual challenges that the Bangladeshi tertiary level students face in their classrooms in speaking English.

1.5 Thesis outline

This study examines the classroom related challenges that are responsible for the Bangladeshi tertiary level students' inhibition of speaking English in the classroom. The outline of the study is here in brief for the quick overview.

Chapter one is about the introduction of the study. Here, the background of the study has shown and also has contextualized the study in term of Bangladeshi classroom. This section includes the purpose and the significance of the study.

Chapter two is an insight of the literature reviews that are relevant to the challenges in speaking second language in both EFL and ESL contexts and as well as from the Bangladeshi context. At the end of the chapter, there is a summary based on the literature review.

Then, *chapter three* is about the information on the research design and research methodologies, including the research tool and instrument, analysis, ethics and limitation of the research.

The systematic and thematic results of the findings are given in *chapter four*.

The last but not the least *Chapter five* is the analysis of the results where a connection is maintained between the findings and the literature reviews.

Finally, the *chapter six* is the conclusion of the study culminating the result and the discussion of the study and providing the recommendation for the further improvement of the Bangladeshi students speaking English in the classroom.

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Chapter: Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

English language has been used as the lingua franca of the whole world for many decades. English is now the official language for two billion people in 60 countries. According to the British Council, speakers of English as a second language probably outnumber those who speak it as a first language. At present, around 750 million people are believed to use English as a foreign language (Kachru, 1996). In Bangladesh, the value of English is high in terms of its demand and the intensity of the practice in official and educational arena. In Bangladesh, English is mainly taught and learnt academically; unquestionably it takes place in the classroom.

The purpose of learning English is not same in all counties (EFL countries to ESL countries). But the challenges and difficulties faced by the learners are mostly similar and exist in these countries. Previous studies investigated the speaking difficulties faced by EFL learners. Some studies have focused on the challenges in speaking English in Bangladesh as well as in the whole world.

Samira-Al-Hosni pointed out that the use of English as a second language (ESL) or foreign language (EFL) in oral communication isone of the most highly complex activities necessary to be considered when teaching it. Because we live at a time where the ability to fluently speak English has become a must, especially who wants to advance in certain fields of human endeavor (Al Hosni, 2014).

Bygate said that "Speaking is in many ways an undervalued skill" (p.VII) in ESL and EFL countries.(Bygate, 1987). According to (Sato, 2003) Japanese learners of English are highly competent both in reading and writing but their competence in listening and speaking is not that much great. The common difficulties that the Japanese students face in speaking English are Grammar Translation Method(GTM), their shyness and quietness in class, illogical, meaningless and incoherent classroom practices, large size of the classroom, fear of being criticized and anxiety in classroom.

Similar picture is found in Hong Kong. Regardless to say, Hong Kong is a mono-cultural and monolingual country. Gan (2011) conducted a research on 20 final year students who were doing their 4 years long Bachelors of Education in English language. He found that the Hong Kongese students hardly get any environmental access to practice English speaking outside the educational context (pp. 54-55). Moreover, they have insufficient vocabulary. For example, a student stated that some words and phrases never come to her mind while speaking English, and consequently she cannot express what she wants to express exactly. Hence, vocabulary is a challenge which keeps the students' speaking intention behind the screen(Gan, 2012).

Zhang (2009) identified speaking remains the most difficult skill to master for the majority of English learners. The learners are not enough competent in communicating orally in English(Zhang, 2009).

According to Ur (1996), factors that bring the difficulty in speaking English are- Inhibition (Where students feel anxious of their mistakes, they feel shy and they are afraid of being criticized); Low participation (Some learners are dominant so other learners don't get chance to speak); Nothing to say (There are many learners who don't have any tendency to express themselves); and Use of Mother tongue (Learners have the tendency to use it because it is easier for them. They feel comfortable if they speak in their mother tongue).

Some learners also lack the motivation to speak English. They do not see a real need to learn or speak English.(Littlewood & William, 1981) argued that some teachers use L1 for class management. However, this can be another factor that set the challenges of speaking difficulties.

(Timina & Butler, 2011) at Shih Chien University in Taiwan found that Learners' unwillingness and anxiety to communicate, lack of motivation, root learning and uncomfortable topics resist them from speaking English.

Our neighboring country India regards English as the Second Language. But there are certain problems in teaching and learning English in India. Some common problems are- inadequacy of teaching equipment, faulty curriculum and examination system, lack of motivation, large and crowded classroom, fear of losing face and learners' anxiety, short duration of class (Hanumantharao, 2011).

Several studies have been done on difficulties in speaking English in Bangladesh. English learners of Bangladesh also encounter the corresponding challenges in speaking English.

(Chowdhury & Shaila, 2011) said, "At the tertiary level most of the Bangladeshi universities (especially the private universities) include at least one speaking course in the syllabus or at least some speaking activities are integrated with the other English language courses. This importance given to the speaking activities is essential and vital for the students because most of them in their secondary and higher secondary level gain some competence in reading and writing, but many of them face difficulty to cope with the listening and speaking skills." They also stated that the environment created by the peers impacts the speaker's speaking. When a student speaks, his classmates laugh and do not encourage speaking. Therefore the students become less confident and feel nervous and scared to speak in English.

(Arju, 2011) revealed that lack of sufficient vocabulary hinders speaking English in our country. Bangladesh has very few efficient and qualified English teachers who can train students in proper way. In fact, "Bangladesh is one of the few countries of the world where teachers can start teaching without any formal training (Siddique, 2004). Administrative setup, teacher-centered classrooms, large classes and cultural conflicts are the most common challenges prevailing among Bangladeshi students (Siddique, 2004). Due to the unfriendly and non-supportive environment, Bangladeshi students are losing their motivation in speaking English. As a result, the student who has a minimum interest in speaking, loose it.

Teaching English means facilitating the learners to achieve the expressing power of their inner thoughts by mastering stylistic elements of the language. But, in Bangladeshi classroom, the thing is different. Most of the teachers do not know or adapt the different style to teach language. For example, (Sinha, 2001)has conducted a study in the Bangladeshi

context and found that in Bangladeshi classrooms, teachers do not use any energetic way to teach English. Thus, students become less active and lose their interest in speaking English.

Nevertheless, after discussing all the pros and cons, the researcher would like to summarize the challenges in speaking English encountered by students:

- Limited stock of vocabulary

- Lack of self-confidence

- Nervousness

- Shyness

- Fear of negative feedback or attitude of peers and teacher

- Discouraging behavior of peers and teacher

- Interference of first language

From the reviews of literature, it can be summarized that the history of teaching and learning English in Bangladesh has gone through many difficulties and specially speaking English encounters the highest possible difficulties. The literature review provides the overall scenario of the related areas regarding spoken English and challenges of speaking English in Bangladesh.

The education process in Bangladesh is improving by the help of technology at present. Still a large number of students lack English speaking proficiency. Many research works have been conducted in our country but we can rarely find any research on tertiary level students in Bangladesh. Therefore, the author has got the encouragement and motivation to explore the

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challenges in speaking English and fill up the gap by carrying a study. The author hopes that the current study will bring effective results which will add consideration to improve the teaching-learning English speaking skill in Bangladesh. This study will focus on Bangladeshi EFL context.

Chapter: Three

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The aim of the research was to find out the classroom related challenges that were encountered by tertiary level students in speaking English in the classroom of Bangladesh. Students' interview was used as the research tool for this study. The researcher had visited three different private universities situated in Dhaka and Chittagong city to collect the data.

3.2 Research design

Qualitative research method had been used to collect research data. In the research methodology, one research tool was used and that is students' interview.

3.3 Participants

The participants were selected from three private universities of Dhaka and Chittagong. The private universities were selected randomly. The participants were student aged between 18 to 22 years. From each university, eight students were selected randomly. Among these eight, four students were chosen who have good Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) and four students were chosen from poor CGPA. However, the total numbers of these participants were 24. Among all the participants, fifteen were girls and nine were boys. The course instructors were humbly requested to select some students from their respective classes by following the required principles of data collection. The course instructors introduced the researcher with the students and researcher took interview communicating with them in

different times. All the participants were from their first year (1st semester/ 2nd semester) and

from different departments.

3.4 Instruments

The method used to collect data was students' In-depth interviews. Interview questions were followed as an instrument of collecting data. Though there were interview questions, those questions were not strictly followed as it was a semi-structured interview. The questions for the students have been made following previous questions of studies of related field. A mobile voice recorder application was used to record their interviews.

3.5 Setting

To collect information, researcher followed one to one interview. The overall interview setting was done formally. During information collection from one student, other students were not present. As a result, there was possibility of getting authentic information.

Interview had been taken from 24 students. The medium of taking interviews was Bangla to ask the questions or go with the conversation. The researcher conducted the interview with the students at their University campus. The duration of the interview was about 10 minutes on average. The total number of the focused questions for the interview was ten. But, researcher tried to maintain a conversational environment from where required information had been filtered later.

3.6 Data Collecting Procedure

At the beginning of data collection, permission was taken from the course instructors of each class. The participants were informed by the teacher about the study before interviewing them. They were asked to participate in interview without any hesitation. The course instructors instructed the participants to stay after their scheduled classes and gave interviews.

To make the participants comfortable and honest in interview, they were ensured that the personal information will not be disclosed and they did not have to provide their names or other personal information. Some students felt shy and some students felt uneasy finding the researcher as an unknown visitor, beside them. But, some of them were very motivated and cooperative. However, it was possible for the author to manage a friendly environment. Generally, students are not enough friendly with their teachers and they hardly open up with the teachers. This fear may hamper the responses. For removing this fear, at the beginning, the researcher assured them s/he would not play any role of a teacher. Rather, the author claimed himself/herself as an inquirer of some support and asked for help from them. These techniques really helped the researcher to find the participants easy going and cooperative. With a friendly introduction, researcher tried to point out the objective and purpose of the research clearly. Few students were in hesitation with some of the questions. But, the researcher precisely described and made them clear by asking the question twice or thrice.

3.7 Data Analyzing Procedure

The Qualitative questions were the open-ended questions where students had a room to opine their view against or for the questions. At the beginning, every answer from all the

participants for each questions were examined. Then, the information was organized. Though the results were presented in descriptive way, percentages of the result were also presented.

3.8 Ethics

Ethical issues had been maintained while and after collecting the research data. Participants had been given surety that the confidentiality of their names and data would be strictly maintained. Therefore, the participants allowed the author to use the information only for the research purpose. They also gave the permission to record their interviews.

3.9 Limitations of the study

There were some limitations in conducting the study. The interviews were conducted in both Dhaka and Chittagong. Moreover, the institutions had their upcoming semester final examination while everyone was busy with the exam preparation. However, the researcher had to experience challenges in maintaining the formalities to conduct the interviews. Furthermore, the authorities of the Universities were needed to be convinced that this survey is harmless to them. Moreover, students were confused thinking in their response. Researcher had faced difficulties to make them speak about their problems with me. Though the respondents gave permission to record their interviews, they were very concern about that matter. As a result, their concentration went to the recorder repeatedly.

Chapter: Four

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This chapter will present the findings of the analysis of collected data and the results of the study.

The purpose of the qualitative study was to find the challenges in speaking English encountered by Bangladeshi tertiary level students in their classrooms. Ten open ended questions were used for this section. It was a one-to-one interview session and the setting was not formal. The questions were:

1. How do you feel about reading English?

2. How do you feel at the time of speaking English?

3. Do you need to speak in English in your class?

4. Do you frequently try to speak in English?

5. Where do you try to speak in English? Home/ class?

6. Do you feel comfortable in speaking English? Or do you find it difficult?

7. Do you face any problems while speaking English? If yes, which is the most significant problem among all the problems according to you?

8. Have you ever tried to overcome these problems?

9. How much does your classroom environment help you to speak English?

10. What is your opinion about teachers' role in speaking English of students?

In the interview session, above mentioned questions were asked to every participant. In the later part, the answers are going to be discussed.

How do you feel about reading English?

Among the 24 participants, almost all the participants expressed their positive feeling about reading English. For example, 22 participants said that they like to read English. Two participants asserted that they neither feel good nor feel bad reading English.

How do you feel at the time of speaking English?

Overall, 70.83% participants (n=17) said that they feel nervous and shy while they speak in English. On the other hand, 25% (n=6) feel confident and good in speaking English. Only 4% participants (n=1) claimed that they feel neutral while they speak in English. For example, one participant said that, "Ami kono difference feel kori na, Bangla bolte ami jemon feel kori, English a kotha bolte same feeling kaj kore amar moddhe".
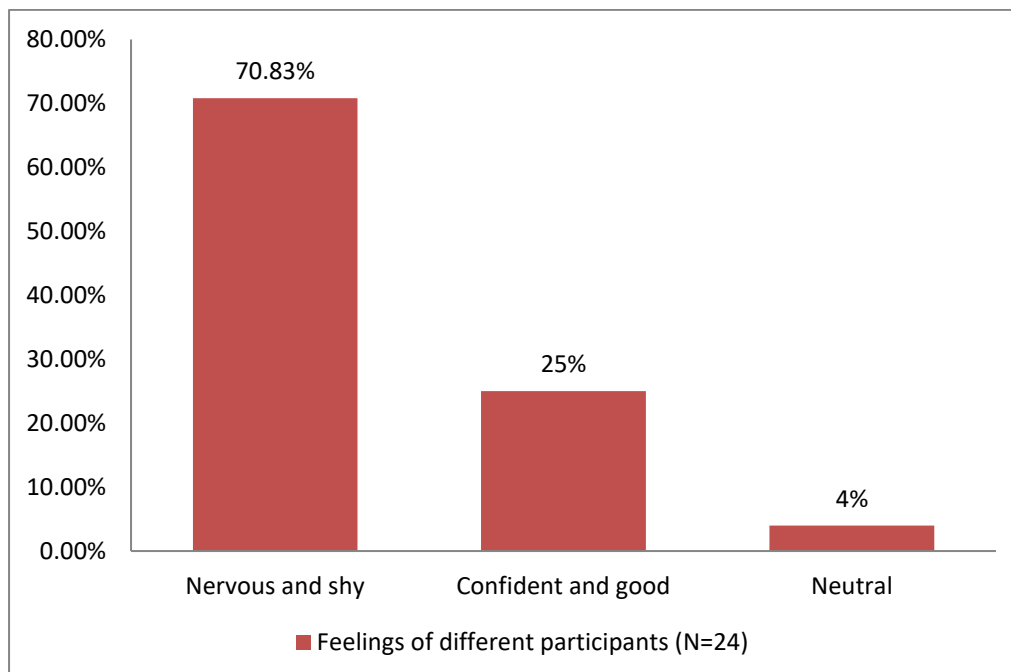
Fig-1: Percentages of different feelings of students at the time of speaking English

Do you need to speak in English in your class?

54.16% participants (n=13) claimed that they need to speak in English in their classroom. They said it's mandatory for them to speak in English when they are interacting in their class. Almost all the participants stated that they did not speak in English outside of their classroom. 16 students said that they usually try to speak English with their teachers and friends to practice English speaking. 13 students among the participants had said that they speak in English only 'in classes'. Eight students said that they do not need to interact in English with their teachers in their classrooms. Three students affirmed that they never tried to speak in English with anyone.
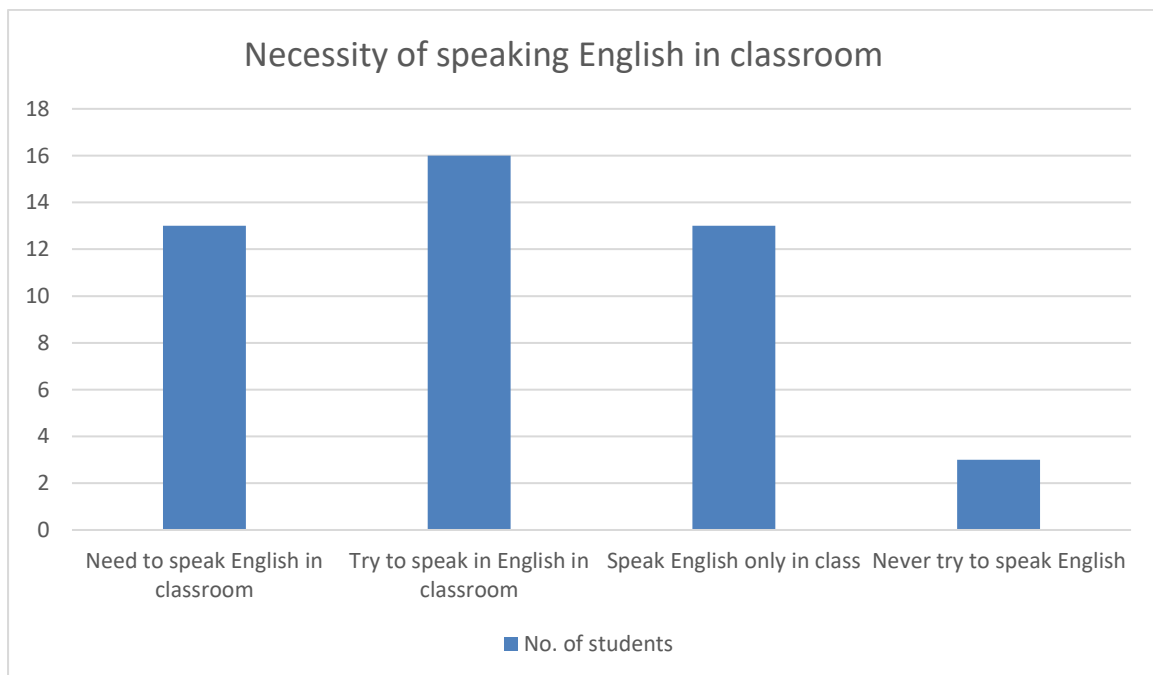

Fig-2: Necessity of speaking English in classroom

Do you frequently try to speak in English?

41.6% (n=10) participants mentioned that they usually try to speak in English and most of the time they try to have discussion in English in their class. On the other hand, 33.33% (n=8) participants claimed that they do not feel the necessity of speaking English both inside and outside of the classroom. As a result, they usually do not try to speak in English. 20.83% (n=5) participants asserted that they always try to speak in English and they find different ways to speak English because they love to speak in English.

Where do you try to speak in English? Home/Class?

All the participants told that they try to speak English in their class. 25% participants (n=6) try to speak in English in their home as well. They also added that sometimes they feel awkward to speak English in their home because their siblings laugh at them when they try to speak in English. 8.33% participants (n=2) asserted that they practice English speaking at their home with their elder and younger brother or sister. They further added that they made many mistakes but they feel confident at the same time. 66.66% students (n=16) ensured that they never tried to speak in English in their home. They also mentioned they feel shy to speak English in their home because no one usually speaks in English among their family members.

Do you feel comfortable in speaking English? Or do you find it difficult?

Among 24 participants, 5 participants (20.83%) said that they feel comfortable while speaking English in their classroom. They mentioned they consider English as an essential part of their daily life so that they try to speak in English as much as they can. It helps them to feel comfortable in speaking English. 45.83% students (n=11) claimed that they do not feel

good or comfortable in speaking English. They also added that they cannot express their thoughts, opinion, and feelings properly in English. Among them, three students said one common thing that they talk with people to interact and to express their feelings. If they cannot express it clearly then what is the point of speaking in English? They prefer their mother tongue to convey their opinion to their surroundings. They also added that the influence of mother tongue is so strong and overpowering that it interferes in their English speaking. 7 participants (29.16%) said that they find English speaking difficult and they feel worried about making mistakes. Further, they said they do not find proper words to explain their thought. As a result, they find it extremely difficult to speak in English. They further told that they feel shy too to speak in English.

Do you face any problems while speaking English? If yes, which is the most significant problem among all the problems according to you?

Almost all the participants said that they often face difficulties in speaking English. However, regarding the problems in speaking English, the participants did have a mixed reaction. 19 participants (79.16%) affirmed that they became very nervous when they tried to speak in English. 'Amar pressure bere jay', 'Amar buk dhorfor kore', 'Amar hath paa thanda hoye jay', 'Amar gola shukiye ashe', 'Amar gola diye sound ber hote chay na', 'Amar chokh ondhokar hoye ashe English a kotha bolar kotha vable' etc were some of their responses in this case.

Majority of the participants had shared that their limited knowledge of English forces them to make mistakes. Some common difficulties encountered by 24 participants were the lack of vocabulary, less exposure in real life, less access to practice English, lack of grammatical knowledge and lexical resource to make sentence. 100% participants agreed that they feel shy

about their pronunciation while speaking English. Most of the participants expressed that they lack fluency in their speaking. Many participants lack the necessary vocabulary to get their meaning across, and consequently, they cannot keep the interaction going.

One participant said that s/he tries to translate Bangla sentence to English sentence first at the time of speaking English. This process creates problem because most of the time the participant does not get enough time to think of the sentence. As a result, s/he fails to speak fluently. Moreover, 8 participants (33.33%) stated that they find accurate sentence making is the most significant problem in speaking English. They said they know how to make sentence but at the time of speaking English, they cannot produce English sentence correctly because of their nervousness and pressure. Again, almost all the students expressed their inability in pronouncing English words accurately. They have fear of being criticized by their peers and teacher for their faulty pronunciation. Hence, some of them restrain themselves from speaking English in front of their classes.

Have you ever tried to overcome these problems?

83.33% Participants (n=20) ensured that they tried to overcome their existing problems in speaking English. The participants were asked individually what they usually do to overcome these problems. Among all, 20 participants said that they practice speaking in English more in their leisure time. It makes them more fluent than before. It also helps them to become careful about their pronunciation. Two participants said they watch English drama series, movies more to learn correct pronunciation and they work on their fluency by practicing spoken English in front of mirror. It helps them to judge themselves. 3 participants claimed that they maintain diary and they keep note about their mistakes. Later, they focus on their mistakes and try to overcome it. In contrary, 4 participants said that they do not give much

effort to overcome their problems. All of them thought their problems will be solved by the course of time. They also think these existing problems are not big problems. Therefore, they are not concerned about this.
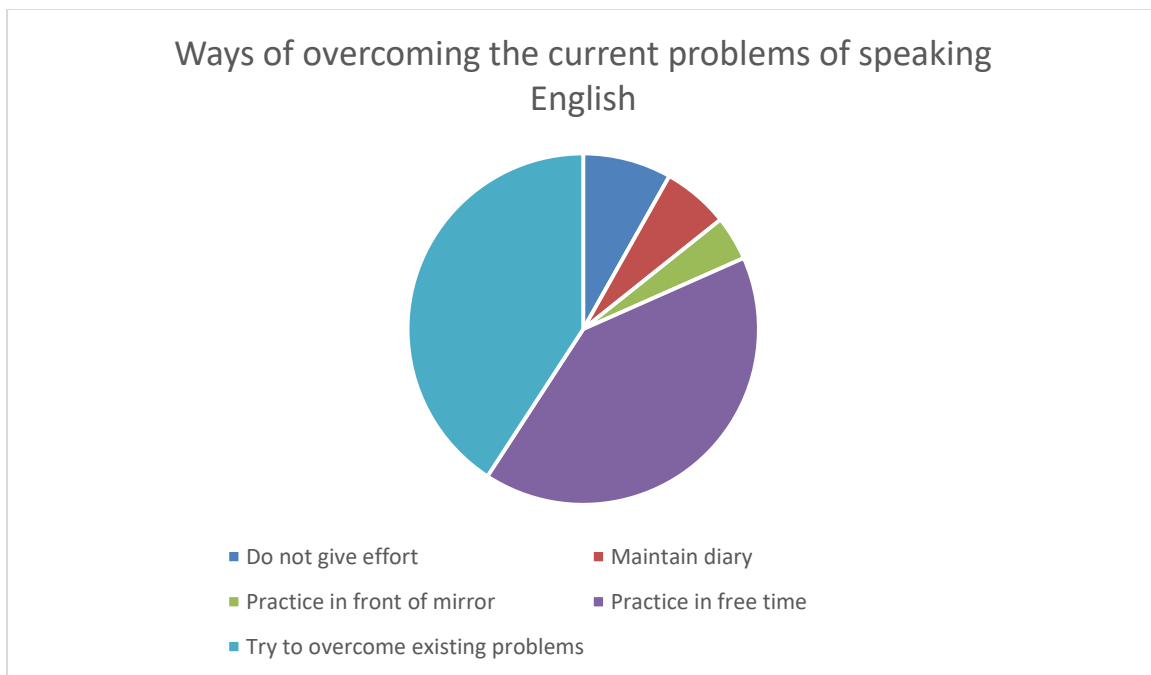

Fig-3: Different ways how student try to overcome their problems in speaking English

How much does your classroom environment help you to speak English?

62.5% students (n=15) said that they get positive classroom environment that inspired them to speak in English more. 33.33% students (n=8) considered them lucky to get friendly academic environment. They said their classmates and teacher corrected them whereas they made any mistake and therefore they got the inspiration from their peers to practice English speaking in class. Their teachers also inspired them to do group task and group discussion in English. 37.5% students (n=9) stated that there are few students in class and having small

number of students is a benefit for them. Because it helps them to notice the mistakes of each other and they easily can help each other to identify their mistakes in English speaking task. They could listen to each other clearly while they speak.
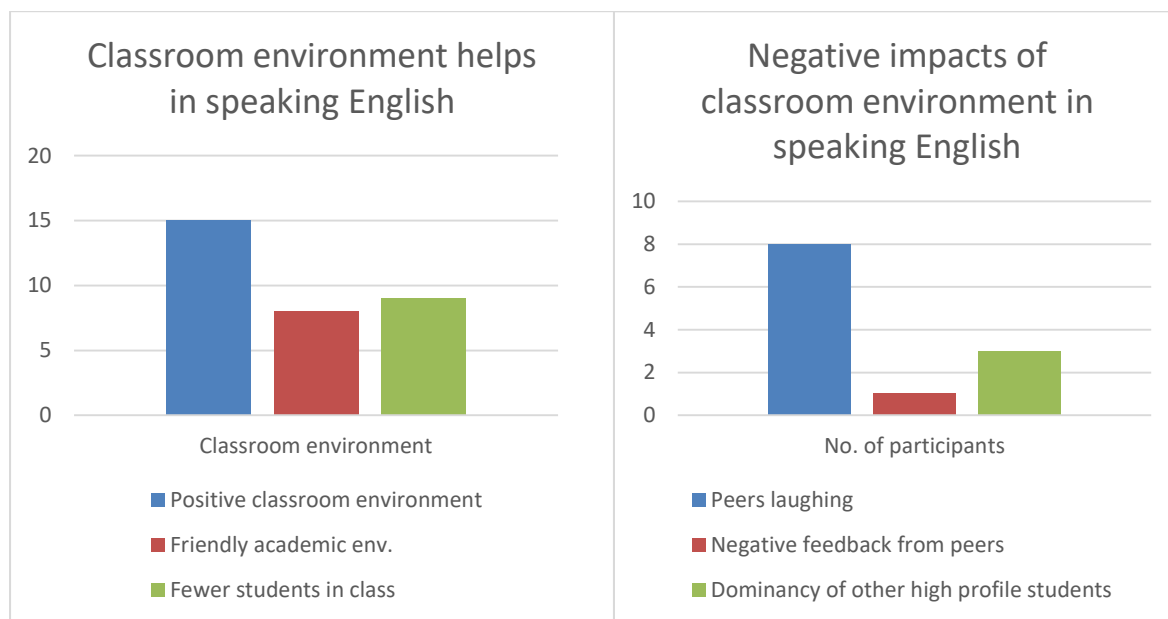

Fig-4: Classroom environments during speaking English

On the other hand, 37% students (n=8) felt insulting when their peers laugh at them and lose their interest in speaking English. 1 student told that once she has got negative feedback from her peers while speaking in English in classroom because she made many mistakes and her pronunciation was not up to the mark. Consequently, she lost her interest in speaking English and after that she never gave effort to speak in English. 12.5% participants (n=3) revealed that there are few dominating students in their class who have high CGPA. They always take attempt to speak in English and other students whose proficiency level is not high, rarely get chance to speak.

What is your opinion about teachers' role in students' speaking in English?

45.83% participants (n=11) stated that their teachers play an important role in their learning of spoken English. They further added that their teachers motivate them to speak in English and to practice it more. They said their teachers encourage them to speak fluently even if they make errors or mistakes in their speaking and teachers usually do not criticize them cruelly. 5 participants (20.83%) thought that teacher can play important role in students' English speaking. They said they got full support from their teachers. Teacher also encouraged them not to use mother tongue in the classroom and told them to read more and more to get high quantity of vocabulary.

33.33% students (n=8) said they rarely get support from their teachers because their teachers criticize them if they make any mistake while speaking English in class. Their teacher does not motivate them to speak English at all. The teacher also did not use English much in the classroom at the time of giving lecture. Consequently, students also did not get motivation to speak English. 6 students said that they do not have friendly relationship with their teacher which restrains them from speaking with the teacher. They are afraid of doing mistakes in front of teacher because they are fearful of losing face in the classroom.

Almost all the participants thought that teacher can motivate learners more to speak English. It can help them to increase their speaking skill. Teachers can give them group discussion based task and problem based learning in the classroom and they can practice English speaking more inside the class. Teacher can raise the element of self confidence in the

students. 41.67% (n=10) students have put the importance on regular 'classroom interaction' to improve their English speaking skill.

Chapter: Five

ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study is about the challenges in speaking English encountered by tertiary level students in Bangladeshi classroom. In this chapter, the findings of the study will be discussed and explained keeping coordination between the research questions and finding. I will also try to keep synchronization with the literature review part.

At the tertiary level, most of the Bangladeshi private universities include at least one speaking course in the syllabus or at least some speaking activities are integrated with the other English language courses. This importance given to the speaking activities is essential and vital for the students because most of them in their secondary and higher secondary level gain some competence in reading and writing, but many of them face difficulty to cope with the listening and speaking skills.

It is found from the interviews that most of the students are enough interested to speak English in their classes. But, they do not participate in different speaking activities only because of their shyness, nervousness. Researcher found that students who are nervous and shy, they did not express themselves in the interviews. Sometimes they even did not want to make any response.

In this study, it is seen that though the students are interested to speak in English, they cannot speak because of the limited vocabulary. They said most of the time they do not find proper word to express themselves. Not only for the Bangladeshi students but also learners throughout the ESL and EFL countries face the same problem. For example, Chinese English

speakers consider insufficient vocabulary as a 'challenge' in speaking English' Liu and Jachson (2008) and for the Hong Kongese English speaker it is the reason of 'incomplete expression' Gan (2012). Sayma Arju (2001) has said that Bangladeshi students are frequently blamed for not having enough vocabulary.

In a question about who the students speak English with, most of the students have said that they usually speak English with their peers and sometimes with their siblings. It appears that they do not have enough scope to speak English outside of their home or classroom. They hardly have exposure in real life. The author found some students were very shy and hesitated in participating in interviews. Some of the students expressed that they feel shy speaking English at home because they do not get the friendly environment to practice spoken English at home. Ahmed (2006) and Chowdhury and Shaila (2011) have also concluded their study by saying that shyness is one of the main hindrances behind Bangladeshi students' practicing spoken English. Exposure to speaking English situations is very limited within the boundaries of classroom. Students get a very limited access to speak English outside the classroom where they spend most of their time with their family, friends and the community. In an EFL context like Bangladesh, outside society does not always provide any practical situation for the learners to get engaged in and to practice the oral form of communication. As there is very limited needs for speaking English outside the classroom, learners do not treat English as a means of communication rather their interest mainly lies in achieving some goals. They become able to understand why they need to learn better English. Again this is to find better jobs, to study abroad or to build rapport with some elite people. Motivation is lacking throughout their academic life and the teachers never feel the urgency of motivating them in a positive manner and making them understand the importance of English speaking skill.

It is true that our tertiary level students are not enough fluent and accurate in speaking English. So, making mistakes is common to these students. However, it is not only common to the Bangladeshi students, but also common to most of the FEL and ESL students. For example, Japanese students (Tsui, 2001) and Taiwanese students (Svetlana, Timina and Butler's, 2011) and Indian students (Hanumntharao, 2011) face the same problem of making mistakes in their speaking. Whatever the reasons, the point is how the peers and teacher's response to this mistake. However, to overcome the fear and exam oriented mentality, the students must need to have more access in the English communication environment. It is one of the tools that can reduce the fear and shyness from the students. Chowdhury and Shaila's (2011) study stated that the Bangladeshi students do not have the access to practice spoken English outside of classrooms. In my study, almost all the participants stated that they did not speak in English outside of their classroom. 12% students have confirmed that they 'never' use English in class while on the other hand, 66.67% students have said that they 'try to speak English'. Surprisingly, 33.33% students said that they 'do not need to interact in English' with their teachers in their classrooms though they are supposed to communicate in English in the classes. This particular finding shows that students do not get enough motivation to speak English in their class because they can communicate with teacher and peers in their mother tongue easily. So, they do not take the challenge to speak in a foreign language in class.

Again, students are also afraid of producing wrong pronunciation in speaking English in class. It is possible to express one's intention, desire, demand, view, ideas without elegant pronunciation. But, at the same time, we cannot deny the fact that, 'very poor' or 'poor' pronunciation with strong dialectical influence does not sound good to the ear, and it

indicates the lack of knowledge of English of the speaker, or sometimes faulty pronunciation may even lead to miscommunication.

Again, there are some students who do not find their peers and teachers supportive. In my study, 37% students stated that they felt insulting when their peers laugh at them and eventually they lose their interest in speaking English. Sometimes they even lose their interest to speak in English because of the negative attitude of the peers. So, it is seen that students usually have a pressure of their peers' negative evaluation while they speak English. This anxiousness makes them nervous and tensed (Kumaravadivelu, 2009). It also affects their L2 production. These students must need to overcome the anxieties, tension and negative evaluation. In contrary, some students told about the positive attitude of their peers and teachers. They stated that this positive attitude motivate them to speak English more in the classroom.

To summarize, it is clear from the students' responses that they are facing some common challenges and there are some factors working behind their problems in speaking English in their classroom. Mixed reaction and challenges is found from students' interviews. Students are unable to speak in English because they lack the necessary vocabulary items and sentence structures. They also lack sentence formation skills, which result in using the mother tongue. Students also think that making mistakes in speaking in front of their classmates is very embarrassing, which results in preferring not to speak to avoid such situations.

However, after discussing all the studies, findings and after analyzing, researcher has figured the following list for a quick summary of the challenges that students' usually encounter in speaking English in their classrooms:

- Anxiety

- Insufficient vocabulary

- Difficulty of translating sentences from Bangla to English

- Nervousness and shyness

- Fear of losing face

- Fear of making mistakes

- Negative feedback from teachers and peers

- Preference of mother tongue

- Lack of sentence formation skill

- Less exposure in real life

- Less access to practice spoken English

- Problem in fluency and accuracy

- Problem in pronunciation

- Lack of motivation

- Lack of confidence

Chapter Six

CONCLUSION

This chapter of the study will shade light on implication, recommendation, scope for further studies and it will end with conclusion.

6.1 Introduction

Speaking is vital in communication. The best way to express one's thoughts is by simple words and phrases. It's more important to discuss interesting topics. And, of course, the conditions of communication should be comfortable. This study investigated the challenges that Bangladeshi tertiary level students face in speaking English in their classroom. The study wanted to see students' perception regarding the factors that hinder them in speaking English. Therefore, data were collected from 24 students of three different private universities of Bangladesh. The qualitative method has been used to analysis data.

6.2 Implications

The main concern of this study is to identify Bangladeshi tertiary level students' perception of challenges which they usually encounter in speaking English. However, teachers and students will easily have clear idea of the common challenges of our tertiary level students' English speaking after going through this study. From the present study, teachers can easily find out the reasons of Bangladeshi tertiary level students' low proficiency in English speaking skill. As a result, necessary and effective steps can be introduced properly to make them proficient in speaking English.

The study revealed some common challenges which obstruct students in producing flawless oral communication in foreign language. By reading this study, students also can understand their problems which they may not know definitely. Hence, it will help the students to identify their challenges and they will be able to work on it more carefully.

Teachers will understand the verities of challenges with which our tertiary level students are fighting everyday to overcome their lacking in speaking English. This study will help the teachers to understand students' problems in depth and they will be able to find effective way to facilitate students to overcome the challenges.

6.3 Recommendations

This part of the study will propose some of the possible recommendations that may pave an effective way to think and overcome the challenges of Bangladeshi tertiary level students' problems regarding speaking English.

i. Teachers can play the crucial role to develop speaking skills within the classroom. In the class room, his/her first task will be to make students open up their mouths. Once learners have gained minimal confidence, it is easier for them to move onto next stage.

ii. Providing well trained and understanding teachers in class will solve the problems by half. Friendly teacher-student relationship can increase students' participation in speaking tasks.

iii. Group work, pair work and individual presentation should be done more for the improvement of speaking English. Some individual activities, such as speaking on a

certain topic for a minute should be assigned to students in the beginning speaking stages.

iv. To remove the fear of English from the minds of young learners, teachers must give them constant positive reinforcement and help them overcome their shyness. If a learner finds the teacher is friendly and everything is favorable to them, s/he tends to take risks and as a result, speaking accelerates.

v. Most importantly, the class should be student centered, not teacher centered.

vi. Teachers should influence their students that English speaking is very important for their future job. Thus, they should practice their speaking during classes.

vii. Teachers also have to create a comfortable atmosphere where students feel at ease when they participate spoken English. No scolding but rather providing a friendly environment should be the main concern.

viii. Classroom interaction is also necessary and useful as an educational strategy to enhance speaking skills. Interaction in a classroom context will enhance speaking skills.

ix. Students should be given motivation, encouragement and counseling for removing their shyness and fear of being laughed at by their classmates and scolded by their teachers. Teachers should also be trained not to discourage the students and to control the other students in order to provide a friendly and stimulating environment in the classroom.

x. Developing confidence in students to ask questions to their teachers and encouraging students to speak more in English in spite of making mistakes can accelerate their English speaking.

xi. Students should be encouraged to listen to English materials, such as listening to music, watching movies, listening to the radio, watching television programs etc.

Moreover, practice and exposure to speaking activities in real-world situations should be brought to promote speaking confidence.

xii.   There should be equal contribution by all the students in the speaking process. The teacher should take care that the discussion is not dominated by some specific students or group. Teachers have to make sure that all students participate in the speaking practice in the classroom.

xiii.   Last, but not the least, an active English language club might be a enjoyable place to reduce students' tension, nervousness and fear. This may build a strong confidence among the students.

6.4 Scope for further studies

Only private universities have been selected for data collection of this study. Engagement of public universities might present a different scenario all together. Time constraint acted as an obstacle to conduct the study in a large scale. The study was conducted on a small group of students (24). Study was conducted only in Dhaka and Chittagong cities. The study could include more universities situated in other cities of Bangladesh in order to get more applicable generalization. So, further studies can be done considering more private universities all over Bangladesh. Besides, public universities can also be taken into consideration for further studies to get generic information. This study only focused on students' perception but in future the research can be done on teachers' perception too.

6.5 Conclusion

The study has tried to find out the common challenges for English speaking skill of tertiary level students. It has been found that students are reluctant to speak English for many reasons. This study revealed that the main speaking difficulties encountered by tertiary level

students of Bangladesh are linguistic difficulties, use of mother tongue, lack of confidence, insufficient vocabulary, lack of knowledge in sentence formation and so on.

A regular speaking activity in the classroom can build students' confidence and therefore help them to overcome the challenges. If it can be set, our students will no more be afraid of the spoken English. They will no more think it as 'speaking English is a ghost in the dark'. Interesting tasks can motivate and attract students to engage them in speaking English. Our students hardly find any motivation to work on their speaking skill. But once they will start enjoying speaking English, they will engage themselves in searching the essence of it. Nevertheless, our educationists and teachers should work together to provide appropriate atmosphere to practice spoken English. Above all, everybody should try to overcome it and find the best way. Otherwise, it will be impossible for the students to enhance the speaking skills and become fluent in any foreign language.

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Appendix-A

Interview questions for students

1. How do you feel about reading English?

2. How do you feel at the time of speaking English?

3. Do you need to speak in English in your class?

4. Do you frequently try to speak in English?

5. Where do you try to speak in English? Home/ class?

6. Do you feel comfortable in speaking English? Or do you find it difficult?

7. Do you face any problems while speaking English? If yes, which is the most significant problem among all the problems according to you?

8. Have you ever tried to overcome these problems?

9. How much does your classroom environment help you to speak English?

10. What is your opinion about teachers' role in students' speaking English of?

Appendix-B

Translation of interview questions in Bangla

১. ইংরেজি পড়তে তোমার কেমন লাগে?

২. ইংরেজিতে কথা বলতে তোমার কেমন লাগে?

৩. ক্লাসে তোমাদেরকে ইংরেজি ভাষায় কথা বলতে হয় কি?

৪. তুমি কি প্রায়ই ইংরেজিতে কথা বলার চেষ্টা করো?

৫. তুমি কোথায় ইংরেজিতে কথা বলার চেষ্টা করো? বাসায়/ক্লাসে?

৬. তুমি কি ইংরেজিতে কথা বলতে সাচ্ছন্দ্য বোধ করো?না কঠিন মনে হয়?

৭. ইংরেজিতে কথাবলার সময় তুমি কোন কোন সমস্যার সম্মুখীন হও? যদি সম্মুখীন হও, তাহলে সেগুলোর মধ্যে অন্যতম সমস্যা কোনটি বলে তুমি মনে করো?

৮. তুমি কি কখনো এই সমস্যা গুলো কাটিয়ে উঠার চেষ্টা করেছো?

৯. তোমার শ্রেণীকক্ষের পরিবেশ তোমার ইংরেজিতে কথা বলার ক্ষেত্রে কতটা প্রভাব ফেলে?

১০. শিক্ষার্থীদের ইংরেজিতে কথা বলা বা কথা বলতে পারার ক্ষেত্রে শিক্ষকগণের কি কি ভূমিকা আছে বলে তুমি মনে করো?