Problems of Practising the Speaking Skill: A Study of English Classrooms at the University of Dhaka

By

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work presented herein for the degree Master of Philosophy at the University of Dhaka, titled "Problems of practising the speaking skill: A study of English classrooms at the University of Dhaka", is an original work done by me. The study has not been published or submitted elsewhere for the requirements of a degree programme. Any literature or work done by others and cited within this thesis has been given due acknowledgement listed in the reference section.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis titled "Problems of practising the speaking skill: A study of English classrooms at the University of Dhaka", is the bona fide research work carried out by Sabrina Ahmed Chowdhury, Assistant Professor, Institute of Modern Languages, University of Dhaka & MPhil researcher holding registration no. 67(2011-2012) under my direct supervision. I, therefore, recommend it for examination and further necessary action to award her MPhil degree at the Department of English, University of Dhaka.

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ABSTRACT

The speaking skill is always considered among the teachers as a difficult skill to practise in the classroom. This study was conducted on tertiary level students at the University of Dhaka. Here, the English language course is a part of the BA Honours curriculum in most of the Faculties and Institutes. The course was introduced in 1998 to make the students more proficient in English and develop their skill for their academic life and future career. However, the teachers are confronted with a number of problems that hinder successful speaking practice in the classroom. This qualitative research is an attempt to find out the classroom situation. It accumulates both the students' and the teachers' points of view. The study also explores the classrooms where the teaching and learning is taking place. Data have been collected from four departments from four different Faculties and Institutes. The findings show that lack of logistic support, large classes, students' own anxiety, mixed proficiency level of students and lack of training of the teachers make it a real challenge for successfully practising this skill in the classroom. Finally, the study provides suggestions for the successful teaching-learning of this skill in the English language classes at the University of Dhaka.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Developing English speaking skill of the students is generally considered to be a very difficult task for the teacher in Bangladesh. Practising speaking with tertiary level students is even more difficult. The teachers are in a challenging position while teaching the English language course at the University of Dhaka. The focused English language course started in 1998. Within the span of twenty years (1998-2018), very little has been done to improve the teaching-learning situation at the University. In an ESL/EFL situation, students get very little chance to practise speaking in their day to day life. Again, large classes are quite common in the educational institutions of a densely populated country like Bangladesh. As a result of this large population, the educational institutions are constantly in pressure to accommodate more students. The schools, colleges and universities have more students in their classrooms than they opted to accommodate. This phenomenon along with other difficulties make the practice of speaking in English difficult than it actually is in the classrooms at the University of Dhaka.

Being a classroom based research, it tries to give us a complete view of the English language classrooms at the University of Dhaka. The proposed research tries to find out the difficulties faced by both the teachers and the students in the tertiary level. In the unique socio-cultural context of our country, there seems to be different types of problems and obstacles making practising speaking difficult to execute.

1.1 The Major Problems

There are mainly three types of problems that hinder practising speaking in the classrooms at the University of Dhaka. These problems are explained below:

1.1.1 **Problems of understanding and teaching the speaking skill**

One of the first and foremost problems of teaching speaking is that it is a difficult skill to define or categorize. It is the most diverse form of communication. Speaking is a skill that consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning (Bailey, 2005). Again Florez (as cited in Bailey, 2005, p.1) viewed this skill as an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information. He also states that it is often spontaneous, open-ended and evolving. Thus, while speaking, the three steps of - producing, receiving and processing information must happen at the same time for taking a meaningful turn in the conversation. In addition, a lot of shared information has to be taken into account by both the speakers for instant understanding and recognition. Speaking is such a fundamental human behavior that we fail to notice the myriad physical, mental, psychological, social and cultural factors that must all work together when we speak (Bailey, 2005). Thus, it is difficult for the teachers to understand this skill and follow a gradual way of progression for the students. That is why speaking is generally considered more difficult to teach or work with than the other three skills in the classroom.

In order to speak a foreign language, it is necessary to learn the grammar and vocabulary of that language, in our context, the English language. However, this does not seem enough in the case of speaking. To test whether learners can speak, it is necessary for the teacher to get the students to actually say something. It is not sufficient to know how to assemble sentences in the abstract. Bygate (1987) pointed out that in an interaction, we have to produce sentences and adapt them to the circumstances. This means making decisions rapidly, implementing them smoothly, and adjusting our conversation as unexpected problems appear in our path. To be able to speak a foreign language, we need both knowledge of the language and the skill to produce the sentences correctly. The fundamental difference between knowledge of a language and achieving speaking skill is that while both can be understood and memorized, speaking skill has to be imitated and practised.

The language teacher helps the students develop interaction skills in that language. Developing Interaction skills according to Wilkins (as cited in Bygate, 1987, p.6) means

"controlling one's own language production" and "having to make one's own choices". Interaction skills involve making decisions about communication, such as: what to say, how to say it, and whether to develop it in accordance with one's intentions, while maintaining the desired relations with others.

Interaction skills involve the ability to use language in order to satisfy some specific demands that can affect the nature of speech. Among these, the two most important conditions as stated by Bygate (1987) are discussed below:

- Processing conditions: It is related to the internal conditions of speech. We must accept the fact that speech takes place under the pressure of time. It generally makes difference whether a piece of communication is carefully prepared or whether it is composed on the spur of the moment.

- Reciprocity conditions: The reciprocity condition of speech refers to the relation between the speaker and listener in the process of speech (Widdowson as cited in Bygate, 1987, p.7). The term 'reciprocity' enables us to distinguish between those situations in which both the speaker and hearer are allowed to speak, and those situations where conventionally only the speaker has the right to speak. For example, in a reciprocal exchange, a speaker will often have to adjust his or her vocabulary and message to take the listener into account. The speaker also has to participate actively in the interlocutor's message- asking questions, reacting and so on. This is something which requires an ability to be flexible in communication, and a learner needs to be prepared for it (Bygate, 1987).

Thus, interaction skills cannot be taught without oral practice in the target language. The teacher needs to prepare a favorable condition in the classroom for this oral practice to be carried out successfully. Again, the teacher has to guide the students. However, it is upon the students themselves to follow the shown path and develop their interaction skills themselves.

Another problem of teaching is that any speaking activity done in a class generally has other objectives and not speaking practice only. The aim maybe to help the students gain some aspect of linguistic knowledge like a grammatical rule, or to develop production skills like intonation, or to raise awareness of some socio-linguistic point like responding

to a compliment appropriately. These objectives along with the goal of speaking proficiency may sometimes confuse the teacher in choosing an activity.

The main priority of the language teacher is developing communicative competence in the learner. Communicative competence according to Savignon (as cited in Baily, 2005, p. 3) is the ability of language learners to interact with other speakers, to make meaning, as distinct from their ability to perform on discrete-point tests of grammatical knowledge. Communicative competence includes sociolinguistic competence which means the ability to use language appropriately in various contexts. Sociolinguistic competence involves register, appropriate word choice, style shifting and politeness strategies. Another important element of communicative competence is strategic competence, which refers to the learner's ability to use language strategies to compensate for gaps in skills and knowledge. Lastly, there is another element known as discourse competence which includes cohesion and coherence. There is no single method which includes all these elements to help the teacher with and this becomes a real challenge for the teacher.

Lastly, a proficient speaker of a language is both fluent and accurate. Accuracy means selecting the correct words and expressions to convey the intended meaning. Fluency is the capacity to speak confidently and consistently with the norms of the native speech. Bailey (2005) pointed out that in beginning and intermediate levels, fluency and accuracy work against each other. Before grammar rules become automatic, applying the rules and searching one's mind can be a laborious process. It makes the learner's speech slow. Some learners speak quickly without hesitating to apply the rules they have learned which may decrease their accuracy. As this factor depends on the individual learner and his characteristics, teachers are sometimes at a loss to help the learner make a balance between these two.

The above discussion shows that learning to speak a second a language can be particularly difficult, because unlike reading of writing, speaking happens in 'real time' (Bygate, 1987). In other words, the interlocutor listens and waits to take his/her own turn to speak immediately. This means that a variety of demands are in place at once: monitoring and understanding the other speaker, thinking about one's own contribution, producing its effect and so on. In addition, verbal interaction typically involves

immediate feedback from the partner. Finally, the opportunities for planning and editing are limited. All these together make it really very difficult for the teacher to help the students develop their speaking skill in a classroom.

1.1.2 Problems of teaching-learning in ESL/EFL situation

Classroom teaching becomes even more challenging in a country with ESL/EFL situation. Whether English in Bangladesh is a foreign or a second language remains debatable (British Council, 1986; Yasmin, 2005; Kachru, 2005, as cited in Hamid, 2008-09, p. 61). In a monolingual country like ours, only the mother tongue, Bangla, is used in Government sectors. It is the private sector that uses English. It is sometimes difficult to motivate the students because of this reason. Hamid (2008-9) also observed that policies (regarding English language) were mostly transitory and short sighted. That is why the presence of English in the Bangladeshi curriculum consumes precious national resources but produces hardly any desirable outcomes. Again, students do not have any exposure to English outside their classroom. That is why the time given for language teaching may not be sufficient for the students to improve their proficiency. Thus, the ESL/EFL situation puts extra burden on the teacher.

1.1.3 Problems of teaching-learning speaking in large classes with limited resources

In addition to all the above, large classes pose an added problem. In a country, with limited resources, the scenario cannot be hoped to change overnight. Harmer (2007) reported that in different parts of the world, some teachers have classes of as many as a hundred students and sometimes even more. He points out that many commentators talk about large classes as a problem. He also acknowledged the problem saying that it is certainly true that they present challenges that smaller classes do not. As an example, he added that having students give mini-presentations in small groups is clearly less stressful for them than it is if they find themselves talking in front of fifty of their peers. Having eighty students in the classroom presents extreme logistical problems than it does when there are fourteen students in the room. He comments that no one chooses to have large groups. It makes the job of teaching even more challenging than it already is. Again, we lack logistic support like audio-visual equipment in our classes. There is also lack of class

materials. In addition, time restraint in practising the four skills at the same time hinders speaking practise in our classes.

This proposed study aims to find out the problems that act as a barrier for successful teaching and learning of speaking skill in English in the University of Dhaka. Teaching speaking in English language is difficult. It becomes more so when there is an ESL/EFL situation that exists in the country. The situation becomes extreme if the teacher has to work with a large class with limited logistic support. This is a research on actual classroom situation that currently exists in the University of Dhaka. It aims to find out a more successful route for teaching-learning of speaking in our English language classes at the university.

1.2 The Rationale of the study

Students compete from all over the country to get admitted into the University of Dhaka, which is the oldest and one of the most prestigious public universities of the country. This is a tough competition and those getting admission certainly have higher aptitude in comparison to the average students. However, during the admission examination, only MCQ type test is taken where the spoken skill in English is not measured. It is again noteworthy that the speaking skill is ignored in the testing system in our country in both the SSC and HSC levels. Thus, we have no way of measuring the speaking skill of a student before he/she enters the University. The need to make the students proficient in speaking English is hence a burning question in the university level. We need to prepare them for the job sector and we need to do that fast. That is why the English Language Course is so important in this level. Are we able to achieve our goal easily? Or are there problems that are demotivating for the teachers' and hindering the students' path? Hence, the focus now should be on the students, the teachers and their respective classrooms. This study is an attempt to find out the real situation.

The English Language Course that emerged in 1998, called Foundation Course was in response not only to check the deteriorating standards of English in general, but also to raise the level of English of University students to an acceptable standard, to improve students' communication skills, to allow students to access academic texts in English and to enable students to cope with the job market which increasingly requires English as a

condition for employment (Khan, 2000). This is a sort of 'language check' recently designed to improve the language skills of the public university students (Rahman, 1998). Khan (2000) again pointed out that the implementation of the FC 2 course represents an innovation in foreign language learning as there has been an attempt to change syllabus content, textbook materials, and classroom methodology in tune with current principles of communicative language teaching (CLT).

Among the four language skills practised in the course, speaking is an oral skill and there are certain difficulties in recording and analyzing it. It is not like writing where the researcher can start from a relatively well-defined set of texts which clearly fit into a category like newspaper language, popular fiction, advertising texts etc. (Hughes, 2002). So, working in this field is quite challenging. Probably, because of this reason, little research has been done in speaking skill in our country at the university level. The researches that are found mainly concern themselves with the Secondary and Higher Secondary levels. This research will thus be a unique one in the respective field.

The current literature also shows that no research has yet been done with a holistic view on the English language course offered by the University of Dhaka. If we want to find out the real situation, we have to take a look at it from different perspectives at the same time. We must try to understand the difficulties in practising speaking faced by the teacher, the attitude, aptitude and motivation of the students, the frustration of not getting the necessary logistic support and above all the classroom situation where the actual production of speech is taking place. We must also keep in mind that reducing the number of students in the class of a public university may not be done overnight.

This study is an effort to answer all these questions. The study will try to unify the knowledge gained in the different areas of speaking and try to give suggestions for a more successful route to acquire the skill of speaking by the students of the University of Dhaka.

1.3 Background

English is taught in our country from primary level. In spite of this, students consistently demonstrate low levels of proficiency in English when they reach university level

(Siddique, 2014). Since 1990, there have been two curriculum revisions and new textbook introductions (Chaudhury, 2013). However, in spite of the implementation of these policies, and the emphasis on English in the curriculum and in the society, standards of English are extremely poor (Rahman as cited in Chaudhury, 2013, p. 217).

The reason lies in the country's unique socio-cultural background. Bangladesh has been known as a monolingual country since its independence, Bangla being its only national and official language (Faquire, 2010). Being citizens of a monolingual country, students get little chance to practice English, especially speaking in English outside their respective classrooms. That is why building up speaking proficiency through classroom teaching should get the utmost importance in our teaching system if we want to make the students ready for their respective future jobs.

In Bangladesh, teaching of English and it's usage in different domains are related to the country's colonial past. It was made the compulsory medium of higher education in the Indian subcontinent (of which Bangladesh was a part) in 1854. After the end of British rule in 1947, there remained a multilingual situation. According to the 1951 census six major languages were spoken in Pakistan where Bangla was spoken by 54.6% and Urdu by 7.2%. Dissatisfaction in East Pakistan and its dependence on a remote central Government flared up in 1952, when Urdu was declared Pakistan's official language. Bangla, the main language of Pakistan, was finally admitted as the joint official language in 1954 (The Europa World Year Book, 1995). As there were two national-official languages, a third code had to be chosen for the speakers of either language to communicate. The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan of 1956 decided that English was to be used for official purposes for a span of twenty years i.e. 1976. Thus, it is the politics of language that created the situation which made English a very important compromising solution (Chowdhury, 2007).

The situation of multilingualism that had existed for centuries came to an end in 1971 with the emergence of Bangladesh as a new homogenous nation. After the independence, this country has been known as the home of the Bangla speakers (Faquire, 2010). Among the citizens, 98% of the population spoke Bangla (Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations, Asia and Australia, 1976). So, the constitution of the People's Republic of

Bangladesh declared Bangla as the state language. However, the Government and non-Government employees in former East Pakistan were used to carry out their respective duties in English. To replace English, proper language policy and steps had to be taken and that needed time (Musa, 1995). Finally in 1987, the 'Bangla Bhasha Prachalan Ain' was passed to ensure the use of Bangla in Government offices. Now-a-days, English is preferred in the private sector for trade and commerce. It is also used in different domains of graduate and post graduate studies. English is exclusively used in the Supreme Court of Bangladesh where it is in practice the court language (Chowdhury, 2003).

English acts as the unofficial second language in our country (Siddique & Sarwar, 2007). That is why being proficient in this language is of vital importance for the students. English is also our tool of communication to the outside world. It has always been preferred in the public sector. Again it was observed that the students of the University of Dhaka were having problems in finding suitable employment because of their lack of English skills (Khan, 2000). The FC 2 was introduced as a response to raise the standard of English and bring it at par with the levels of the private universities, where English language courses are emphasized. Its main objective was to enable the graduates of Dhaka University to work proficiently in English in all the sectors of the country, mainly the private sector where English is the medium of all official communication (Rahman, 1998).

At the very beginning, the English Foundation Course (FC 2) was introduced in various Departments of the Arts faculty of the University of Dhaka. The duration of the course is one academic year. It is now a compulsory component of the four year B.A. Honours programme in almost all the faculties and institutes.

Khan (2000) reported that approximately 1300 hundred students were enrolled in Foundation Course in different departments of the Arts faculty which was conducted by the teachers of the Department of English. The students were divided into 36 groups. Four full time teachers were appointed by the university to take the classes. In addition to the students of English Department, the students of fourteen other departments of the Arts Faculty took FC 2 classes. In her research conducted for the evaluation of the course

Khan (2000) reported the students' response about the class size; "Most students felt that the class size is not too large (currently the class size is 25 students per class) and this class size policy seems to be favourably received." (Khan, 2000, p.88)

This was the situation in the year 2000. The positive response of the course led to expansion among the other departments of the University. This expansion demanded decentralization. Currently, this English language course is known in different names such as English for Specific Purposes, Remedial English etc. Also, the teacher's are now-a-days appointed by the concerned department on a part-time basis. And only one teacher is appointed to take the English class in a single classroom with all the students enrolled in that department. In some departments, the number of students is currently about 80-100. The teachers understand the need of giving equal importance to all the four skills. However, due to the large number of students, lack of logistic support and time restraint it becomes extremely difficult at times to conduct speaking activities in English language classes.

As stated earlier, the FC 2 in the University of Dhaka is a one year course. As per academic policy, there are two 1 hour and 30 minutes classes. There seems to be ample time for the teacher to work with the students and help them develop their English speaking skill. However, there are some specific problems that hinder it.

This research aims to conduct a study on the classroom teaching environment of the University of Dhaka. It will show us the difficulties of teachers' in conducting speaking activities in English in their respective classrooms. It will focus on the teachers and try to find out how they are dealing with the problems.

1.4 **Scope**

The study is based on a single university. The Dhaka University is the oldest and the largest university in the country. In terms of resources, it is most probably in the topmost position in the country. At present, the university has thirteen faculties and eleven institutes. The study has selected several departments representing different faculties.

1.5 **Objective**

This research aims to reveal what is happening in the classrooms of the University of Dhaka and to what extent are the teachers able to work on the skill of speaking. The two main objectives are:

a.   What are the problems of practising the skill of speaking with the students in the classrooms of a public university?

b.   How can these problems be handled by the teacher in the classrooms at the University of Dhaka?

The study addresses the problems that are currently hindering the path of students to reach their goal of gaining proficiency in speaking English. It aims to give definite suggestions for the achievement of the goal. The study will explore both the students' and the teachers' points of view and try to accumulate their little successes in order to come up with some constructive solutions.

1.6 **Methodology**

The University of Dhaka is chosen for the purpose of this study. There were four randomly chosen Departments from different faculties and institutes where the research was conducted.

The nature of the research is primarily qualitative. The research was conducted on both teachers and students. A questionnaire survey on the students was conducted to find out about the classroom situation and their attitude and level of motivation. The teachers of the focused departments were interviewed to find out the problems of teaching from their perspective. Lastly, classroom observation was done to get an insight into the real teaching-learning situation. Four classes, one from each department, were observed for the purpose of this study.

1.7 **Organisation of the study**

The outline of the chapters is stated below:

Chapter I – Introduction

The chapter sets the motivation of the study. It discusses the historical background of the situation and also the area that the research intends to cover. The purpose and rationale of this research and how it is intended to be executed are discussed here. It also gives a brief overview of the linguistic environment of the study and its institutional setting. The limitations and organisation of the study are also dealt with in this chapter.

Chapter II – Literature review

This chapter presents the theoretical development of the study. Being proficient in the four skills, which includes speaking, is a main concern of CLT. Under this approach, the route of achieving speaking proficiency is through oral practice. This chapter introduces the ways of teaching that CLT requires. It will also deal with the research that has been done in the concerned area and try to unify them.

Chapter III - Methodology

This chapter will deal with the methodology that will be used to acquire necessary information for the research. It will work on the teacher, the students, and the actual production of speech. The data of the research will be collected in mainly three ways. A questionnaire survey will be conducted among the students, the teachers will be interviewed and lastly classroom observation will be done to find out the real situation.

Chapter IV – Findings

This chapter will provide a description of the information collected through the different elicitation techniques in the study. It will give us insight into the actual classroom situation where teaching and learning are taking place.

Chapter V – Analysis

The chapter will analyse the findings from different elicitation techniques. All the information will come together to give us a more comprehensive view of the existing teaching-learning situation in our English classes at the University of Dhaka.

Chapter VI – Conclusion and Recommendations

It aims to give us an insight on how to manage the existing situation and create a more compatible classroom environment. Recommendations will be given to minimize the difficulties and lead the way to a more successful teaching of the skill of speaking.

1.8 Conclusion

The chapter gives us an account of the existing linguistic situation of the country. It provides us with a description of the current teaching-learning atmosphere in our classrooms. The background of the study is also explained here. This chapter also deals with the rationale and objective of the study. In addition, the chapter also provides us with a brief overview of the methodology and organisation of the study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

In Second Language Acquisition (SLA), speaking is a difficult skill to acquire. For, acquisition of this skill entails a lot of verbal practice. Creating proper situation for verbal practise for learners is quite challenging for the teacher. Brown and Yule (1983) pointed out, "Spoken language production, learning to talk in the foreign language, is often considered to be one of the most difficult aspects of language learning for the teacher to help the student with." (p.25)

In speaking, a lot of different aspects depend on each other. In a conversation, each speaker needs to speak individually. Again the speaker needs someone to listen and to respond. We generally find choral practice of speaking which the student repeats after listening which is called drill or reading from a written text. Students also work in language lab courses without disturbing other students. However, Brown and Yule (1983) observed that, "In rare, privileged environments, you occasionally find small group 'conversation' classes where eight to ten people talk together in the foreign language." (p. 25)

Thus, creating a compatible environment for acquisition of speaking skill is a lot more difficult than it seems. With skills like reading or writing, the students can work individually. However, this is not possible with speaking. So, speaking needs co-operation among individual students and groups. On the other hand, having speaking activity in the classroom with a hundred students poses quite a different type of problem.

2.1   Theoretical Development

Speaking skill, as a subject for teaching, made a decisive impact on foreign language teaching after the Second World War (Brown & Yule 1983). In the 1970s and 1980s, language learning experienced a significant shift in focus. This was influenced by development in linguistics, curricula, and pedagogy as well as by sociolinguistic research in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the USA (Bailey, 2005). Again, the large number of immigrants settling in English speaking countries and their experiences made linguists and language teachers realize that developing linguistic competence was not enough for the student to be able to speak English well and get along in society.

Classroom teaching was influenced by theories of Social Constructivism which sees language leaning as a product of social interaction. Vygotsky's theory was widely read during the 1970's and since then has become a powerful force in developmental psychology (Slavin, 2006). It is also the basis of 'Social Interactionist Approach' made prominent by Bruner (1983). In addition, theories from discourse like dialogue based communication by Bakhtin (1981) gradually gained importance over translation, drills of sentences chosen from written language and focus on developing linguistic competence. The choice of input was also given importance by Krashen in his theories on Second Language Learning (1977, 1981, 1982 & 1985).

In the mid-1970s the notion of linguistic competence came to be viewed as a component of the broader idea of communicative competence. This is the ability of language learners to interact with other speakers, to make meaning, as distinct from their ability to perform on discrete point tests of grammatical knowledge (Savingnon as cited in Bailey, 2005, p. 3). Chomsky (1965) proposed a powerful hypothesis of competence as distinct from performance. Thus, being communicatively competent requires an understanding of socio-cultural contexts of language use. Hence, classroom teaching was influenced by all these theories which gradually shaped Communicative Approach to language learning. The main proponents of this approach are Hymes (1972), Halliday (1975), Brumfit and Johnson (1979), Savingnon (1983), Maley (1984), Richards and Rogers (1986), Brown (1994), Nagaraj (1996), Hedge (2000), Larsen-Freeman (2000) etc. A theory on the functions of language was put forward by Halliday (1975). Theories of reference and co-

operative principles were put forward by Yule (1996). Again context was seen as a primary consideration in language teaching by Cutting (2002). Relation between language and society was highlighted by Wardhaugh (1986). All these theories gradually shaped the Communicative Language Teaching. The course under consideration in this study is based on this approach.

2.1.1 Theory of Social Constructivism

Lev Vygotsky (1978) in his theory of social constructivism, argued that cognitive development is strongly linked to input from others. He believed that all learning, including language learning, is mediated by social interaction (Harmer, 2007). Thus, learning through social interaction can be achieved by a lot of speaking practice in our language classrooms.

Vygotsky's theories are based on First Language acquisition. Even then they influenced both First and Second language learning. Vygotsky's argument is based on two key ideas (Slavin, 2006). First, he proposed that intellectual development can be understood only in terms of the historical and cultural contexts children experience. Second, he believed that development depends on the sign systems (writing system, counting system etc.) that individuals grow up with and which help people think, communicate and solve problems. So, culture is an important element in language learning. A child develops through internalizing the signs and he/she is able to think and solve problems without the help of others. This is known as self-regulation.

Slavin (2006) believes that the most important contribution of Vygotsky's theory is an emphasis on the socio-cultural nature of learning. According to Vygotsky, learning takes place when children are working within their 'Zone of Proximal Development'. Tasks within that zone are those that a child cannot yet do but could do with the assistance of more competent peers or adults. Vygotsky also believed that higher mental functioning usually exists in conversation and collaboration among individuals before it exists within the individual. This part of his theory influenced SLA. This conversation and

collaboration is thus essential for successful learning in our language classes. It is important not only to gain proficiency in speaking but also in learning the language.

An important concept derived from Vygotsky's notion of social learning is known as 'scaffolding'. Learning is 'assisted performance', and this happens when someone with more knowledge i.e. a parent or a teacher, helps the learner to progress (Harmer, 2007). Scaffolding generally means providing a child with a great deal of support during the early stages of learning and then diminishing support and having the child take on increasing responsibility as soon as she is able. In SLA this support can be provided by both the teacher and a more competent peer. A key element of successful scaffolding is that the learners can only benefit from it if they are in the Zone of Proximal Development. It means they are just getting to a stage, above their own current level of knowledge, where they are ready to learn the new thing with the assistance from others. Scaffolding is especially useful for speaking. The other three skills can be practiced individually, but it is not possible with speaking. This is a key issue in the proposed research. The research tries to find out whether this assistance is provided to the individual students in a large class by their peers. It is obvious that it is not possible for the teacher to provide assistance to all the students in a class of a hundred students.

Harmer (2007) found this concept of Vygotsky to be quite similar to Krashen's (1977) idea of i+1. Krashen saw the successful acquisition by students of a second language as being bound up with the nature of the language input they received. It had to be comprehensible, even if it was slightly above their productive level. He called this comprehensible input i+1. That is, information the students already have plus the next level up.

Vygotsky's theories support the use of cooperative learning strategies in which children work together to help one another learn (Hurley & Chamberlain as cited in Slavin, 2006, p.172). Because peers are usually operating within each others' zones of proximal development, they provide models for each other of slightly more advanced thinking. These theories are the basis of pair work, group work and cooperative learning in Communicative Language Teaching. Hence, pair work and group work are essential in

language acquisition. The proposed research will try to find out how far these techniques of cooperative learning are taking place in our language classes.

There are two major implications of Vygotsky's theory of Education. The first one is the desirability of setting up cooperative learning arrangements among groups of students with differing levels of ability. A student can be tutored by more competent peers. This can be effective in promoting growth within the zone of proximal development. The problem is, in the traditional way of teaching in some parts of our country, the teacher is the authority in the classroom. The students are not allowed to speak or discuss with each other during the lessons. So, this is a new concept for both the teacher and the students and the students need time to get used to it.

The second implication of the theory is that Vygotskian approach to instruction emphasizes scaffolding. Here students take more and more responsibility for their own learning. In large classes, the teacher finds it difficult to give attention to students. It is yet more difficult to measure whether students are taking more and more responsibility of their learning.

Slavin (2006) suggested that the teachers can use information about both levels of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development to plan and organize classroom activities in the following ways:

a. Instruction can be planned to provide practice in the zone of proximal development for individual children or for groups of children.
b. Cooperative learning activities can be planned with groups of children of different levels who can help each other learn.
c. Scaffolding provides hints and prompts at different levels. Here the adult does not simplify the task. However, the role of the learner is simplified through the graduated intervention of the teacher.

Knowing both levels of Vygotsky's zone is useful for the teacher. Even with adult learners in SLA the teacher needs to carefully choose the speaking activity according to the levels of the learners.

Vygotsky's theory was later adopted and made prominent in the Western world by Bruner (1983). More recently researchers have developed the idea which now came to be known as 'Social Interactionist Approach'.

The proposed research will see what problems are there that are creating obstacles in arranging cooperative learning activities that are based on Vygotsky's theories. And also, what difficulties are there in learning to speak in a foreign language through 'social interaction' as proposed by Vygotsky.

2.1.2   Dialogic learning

Another theory that influenced CLT is dialogic learning by Bakhtin (1981). A speaking task is based on verbal interaction or dialogue among the students. It is founded on the theories of dialogic learning. The term refers to the learning that takes place through dialogue.

Bakhtin (1981) stated that there is a need to create meanings in a dialogic way with other people. His idea of dialogism shows a relation among language, interaction and social transformation. The works of a number of contemporary linguists are also based on dialogic learning. Koschmann (1999) stresses the advantages of adopting dialogicality as the basis of education. Hargrave and Senechal (2000) show that children in dialogic learning conditions gains vocabulary more than those who learn in a less dialogic reading environment. In CLT the pair-work and group-work are based on the beliefs of the advantages of dialogic learning.

These theories in fact gradually shaped language teaching to the Communicative approach, which is now generally referred to as CLT or Communicative Language Teaching.

2.1.3 Communicative Language Teaching

As stated earlier, the Foundation Course is based on the beliefs of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The communicative approach in language teaching starts from a theory of language as communication. The goal of CLT is to develop students' communicative competence.

The communicative approach is said to be the product of educators and linguists who had grown dissatisfied with the audio-lingual and grammar-translation methods of foreign language instruction. They felt that students were not learning realistic language. They did not know how to communicate using appropriate social language, gestures, or expressions. As a result, students were at a loss to communicate in the actual cultural setting of the language studied.

Communicative Language teaching came in vogue in Europe during the 1970's. Authentic language use and classroom exchanges where students engaged in real communication with one another gradually became popular. Its aim is twofold. Firstly, CLT aims to make communicative competence the goal of language teaching. Secondly, it aims to develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication. In addition to formal linguistic knowledge, learners are considered to need both rules of use to produce language appropriate to particular situations, and strategies for effective communication (Oxford Companion to the English Language, 1985).

Some of the characteristics of this communicative view of language are as follows:

- Language is a system for the expression of meaning.

- The primary function of language is for interaction and communication.

- The structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses.

- The primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse (Richards & Rogers, 1986, p. 71).

So, the main use of language is for communication. And learning a language means achieving communicative competence in the target language.

2.1.3.1 **Relation between competence and performance**

Communicative competence entails knowing not only the language code or the form of language, but also what to say to whom and how to say it appropriately in any given

situation. Communicative competence includes knowledge of what to say, when, how, and where to say it.

Chomsky proposed an important hypothesis on competence. According to him, the competence of a person who knows a language ideally well is described by the grammar of that language (Chomsky, 1965). Again he elaborates the concept as, the person who has acquired knowledge of a language has internalized a system of rules that relate sound to meaning in a particular way (Chomsky, 1968).

The term is now frequently used in linguistic theories to refer to speakers' knowledge of the language. This implies the system of rules which they have mastered so that they are able to produce and understand an infinite number of sentences. The term also refers to a person's internalized grammar of a language. This means a person's ability to create and understand new sentences, including the knowledge of what are and what are not sentences of a particular language.

Hymes (1972) provided us with a theory of communicative competence which is a definition of what a speaker needs to know in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community. In his view, a person who acquires communicative competence acquires both knowledge and ability for language use with respect to:

   a. Whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible;

   b. Whether (and to what degree) something is feasible in virtue of the means of implementation available;

   c. Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated;

   d. Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually performed, and what its doing entails.   (Richards & Rogers, 1986, p.159)

The last point is the focus of the current study. It actually tries to find out what the actual performance of speaking by learners in the classroom entails.

Bailey (2005) observes that the important models of communicative competence include some form of sociolinguistic competence, or the ability to use language appropriately in various contexts. Sociolinguistic competence include register, appropriate word choice,

style shifting and politeness strategies. A learner must also acquire strategic competence which is the learner's ability to use language strategies to compensate for gaps in skills and knowledge. Lastly, the learner needs to learn what is and what is not culturally appropriate. In language teaching, there is a need for culturally relevant instruction. The term refers to the curriculum and instructional practices that acknowledge the beliefs, norms and values of learners in relation to content and concepts being taught (Richards & Schmidt, 2016).

2.1.3.2 Different views on performance

A distinction is made between competence and performance. Performance can simply be stated as the actual use of the language by individuals. Thus, a person's knowledge of the language is competence and how a person uses his knowledge of the language in producing and understanding sentences is known as performance. The difference between the two can be seen in the production of long and complex sentences. People may have the competence to produce an infinite long sentence. When they actually attempt to use this knowledge (competence) to produce the sentence (performance), they restrict the sentence (Richards & Rogers, 1986).

It has also been observed by them that in using language, people make errors or false utterances. This may be due to performance factors such as fatigue, lack of attention, excitement, nervousness etc. Their actual use of language on a particular occasion may not reflect their competence. The error they make are described as examples of performance.

2.1.4   Theory on the functions of language

Halliday (1975) has elaborated a powerful theory of the functions of language. The theory complements Hymes's view of communicative competence for many writers on CLT like Brumfit and Johnson (1979), Savingnon (1983) etc. He described seven basic functions that language performs for children learning their first language:

- The instrumental function: using language to get things;

- The regulatory function: using language to control the behavior of others;

- The interactional function: using language to create interaction with others;

- The personal function: using language to express personal feelings and meanings;

- The heuristic function: using language to learn and discover;

- The imaginative function: using language to create a world of the imagination;

- The representational function: using language to communicate information.

<div align="right">(Richards & Rogers, 1986)</div>

Learning a language was similarly viewed by proponents of Communicative Language Teaching as acquiring the linguistic means to perform different kinds of functions.

2.1.5 Techniques used in CLT

Richards and Rogers (1986) suggested three principles to keep in mind in a communicative classroom. They are:

- Communication principle: activities that involve real communication promote learning. For example; students can role play asking or offering help in railway stations.

- Task principle: Activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful task promote learning.   Making out class rules can be mentioned as an example.

- Meaningfulness principle: Language that is meaningful to learner and supports the learning process.

CLT tries to overcome the problem faced by language learners taught in the traditional methods. The first is that students cannot transfer what they learn in the classroom to the outside world. Again, learners need to be exposed to natural language in a variety of situations. That is why Larsen-Freeman (2000) reports that adherents of CLT advocate the use of language materials authentic to native speakers of the target language. Richards and Rogers (1986) again pointed out that a variety of games, role plays, simulations, and

task-based communication activities have been prepared to support Communicative Language Teaching Classes.

In CLT different types of communication gap tasks are used as pointed out by Nagaraj (1996). An information gap occurs in a situation where one person knows something but the other person does not. Information gap tasks are introduced in the classroom using the following techniques: Language games, mind engaging games, role play, retrieving text order, group work and pair work. Buys, Sill and Beck (1995) pointed out that group discussion is characterized by collective action, mutual consideration, cooperative behaviour, and compromise. It attempts to involve all persons concerned.

Brown (1994) observed that much more spontaneity is present in communicative classrooms than the classrooms which followed different methods. Students are encouraged to deal with unrehearsed situations under the guidance, but not control, of the teacher.

He also comments that this characteristic of CLT makes it difficult for a non-native teacher to teach speaking. Dialogues, drills, rehearsed exercises, and discussions of grammatical rules are much simpler to handle. So, CLT puts extra pressure on the teacher as the facilitator of learning.

Most theorists like Malay (1984) points out the positive sides of acquiring language through group work and pair work, the techniques used in CLT. According to him the group is now recognized to be more than its separate components. It also offers a security system for learning. Learners also feel relaxed which enhances learning. Again the role of play is highlighted which makes the lesson more attractive and saves the lessons from the monotony of lectures. Lastly, realization has come over that learning is the responsibility of the learner themselves and the teacher's job is to help them find their own way to achieve that goal.

Each classroom has its own dynamics. The present study tries to find out what problems are hindering the practice of these communicative tasks, especially speaking tasks in our English classrooms at the University of Dhaka.

2.1.6   **CLT in Bangladesh**

CLT entered our educational institutions during the 1990's. A project named ELTIP (English Language Teaching Improvement Project) was jointly taken up by the British Department for International Development (DFID) and the Government of Bangladesh. It had a twofold aim. Firstly, it aimed to produce CLT-based English textbooks for grades 9-10 and 11-12 in secondary and higher secondary levels respectively. Secondly, its view was to train school teachers and empower them to teach communicative English (Hamid & Baldauf, 2008).

Only the first phase of ELTIP (1997-2002) was jointly funded by DFID and the Government of Bangladesh. However the next two phases till 2009 have been financed from internal resources (Hamid & Baldauf, 2008). They also reported that under the project, some teachers of different schools received 13 day long training on teaching the CLT based textbooks.

A few years later, however, we get a different picture from Siddique (2004). In her detailed overview of the state of CLT in Bangladesh, she pointed out that the implementation of CLT was facing severe challenges. Her findings list the following challenges and obstacles:

- In our country the scope for pre-service and in-service training are limited. Some teachers lack communicative skills themselves. Because of this lack of academic competence, they often fail to comprehend and implement the ways of teaching English in a communicative way.
- Some of the teachers have to do a part time job in addition because the teachers are underpaid. The situation is often de-motivating for the teacher. Again, lack of logistic support also de-motivates the teachers.
- Listening and speaking as skills are not tested in the examination. Even though the teacher wants to focus on all the four skills, they are constantly in pressure from the authority and the guardians to concentrate on only reading, writing and grammar.

- Over population in our country results in large and crowded classes. Students also sit in fixed benches or chair and desks arranged in long rows. This makes communicative activities difficult to implement.
- Both teachers and students find it difficult to accept learner centered classes instead of teacher centered classes. The authority also finds it difficult to accept the teacher deviating from traditional role and becoming a facilitator of learning.

This is the general situation of classrooms in secondary and higher secondary level in our country. That is why the students do not get opportunity to work on all the four skills equally before they enter the university. The situation is not easy to change overnight. There are deep rooted problems which are extremely difficult to overcome. Rahman and Karim (2015) concluded that one of the greatest hindrances of the CLT approach is that the Bangladeshi culture and values are different from the native speakers of English. What we can do, under the circumstances is to make listening and speaking compulsory in the classroom by including them in the board examination (Shurovi, 2014). As a backwash effect, the students, the teachers and even the authority will give importance to this skill.

2.2   **Problems of Conducting Research in Speaking**

Speaking is related to self image; an image that is projected to the world. Acquiring the skill of speaking in a foreign language is thus a matter of great importance to the speaker. Acquisition of this skill in another language means to adapt to the culture, social interaction and politeness norms of that language. Hughes (2002) explains that a speaker must change and expand identity as he or she learns the cultural, social and even political factors, which go into language choice needed to speak appropriately with a new 'voice'.That is why conducting research in the field to Second Language Acquisition is of great importance.

Conducting research in the field of speaking skill is considered as the most difficult task in comparison with the other skills. The difficulty is mainly felt because of the transient nature of this skill. Speech reaches the world directly from the vocal tract. It has to be transferred on to another more permanent medium before it can be analysed. In addition a number of social factors also influence speaking. Again, speaking is an interactive,

interpersonal process which does not lend itself easily to the requirements of test designers (Hughes, 2002). It should thus be noted that in comparison with the other three skills speaking is the most difficult to analyse, to teach and to test, let alone conducting research in this skill.

Second language is generally learned in the classroom. Research in speaking as done in class is a broad area of research in ELT. The major topics are: pronunciation (Moholt, 1988; Murphy, 2003), learners' accuracy and fluency (Hammerly, 1991), activities done in class (Allright, 1980), assessment (Hughes, 1989; Bachman, 1990; Douglas, 2000), use of technology (Chan, 2003), student's first language use in class (Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003), Learner autonomy (Holt, 2018), learning styles (Bailey, 2005: Christison, 2003: Willing, 1987), responding to oral errors (Bailey, 2005), multi-level speaking classes (Bailey, 2005), speaking activity in large classes (LoCastro, 2001) etc.

Speaking is a unique skill and that is why the problems of conducting research in speaking are also varied. The first problem is that of collecting data for research.

2.2.1   Difficulty in gathering data for research

The rules underlying speech has been difficult to find out. In the early 1980's, Goodwin (as cited in Hughes, 2002) observed that "…contemporary linguists did not use actual speech as a source of data for the analysis of linguistic structures"(p.28). They argued that phrasal breaks such as restarts gave evidence of such defective performance that the data were useless for the study of speech. They focused on language change and phonology.

Again, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's, speech data which challenged the prevailing theory were likely to be set aside. Robert de Beaugrande (as cited in Hughes, 2002, p. 33) argued for the need to look at speech data firmly in their own right. He asserted that linguists prefer to use models of language derived from writing because this helps them in the process of tidying up the data and making it more manageable. However, in this process and through the representation of speech data in the written form, valuable aspects of the data are lost.

The attitude towards speech changed gradually as Noam Chomsky (1968) stressed on the usefulness of natural speech in linguistic analysis. He argued that a record of natural speech will show numerous false starts, deviations from rules, changes of plan in mid-course etc are very common occurrences. The problem for both the linguist and the child learning a language is to determine from the data of performance the underlying system of rules that has been mastered by the speaker-hearer. Also, there is difficulty in finding out the rules that they put to actual performance.

There are mainly three ways of collecting data for research (Bygate, 1987). These are;

(i)   tape recording

(ii)   questionnaires and

(iii)   Interviews

The collected data in speech are difficult to analyse. Written words have the advantage of presenting itself in front of the researcher through the materiality of its visual medium. The researcher into speech must look beyond the discourse to the context to ensure they are comparing like with like.

2.2.2   **Basic aspects**

The three basic aspects of speech make discourse difficult to interpret and analyse.

Firstly, speech is interactive. There are interruptions, corrections, overlaps and most importantly speaker co-operation as two or more people seek to speak and understand each other.

Secondly, as speech happens under real time processing constraints, speakers use simpler vocabulary, higher frequency of co-ordinated clauses and filler expressions.

Thirdly, a strong perceptible link exists between the speaker and the discourse. It is reflected in the use of high frequency of personal pronouns especially first and second, and verbs such as 'think', 'feel', 'believe' and so on.

2.2.3   **Technological problem in the research of speech**

In the first part of the twentieth century, speech as data for linguistic analysis was difficult to capture. Even after using the tape recorder, gathering large samples of data

and analysing them were laborious processes. Now-a-days the research has become easier with the help of personal computers.

2.2.4 Teaching of abstract language paradigms

Hughes (2002) points out that much of a person's identity and communicative force is carried by the vocal pattern which we associate with them. She again states that many of the affective aspects reach the world through the slightest change in voice quality. However, these abstract language paradigms are not taken into account or given importance in language courses.

2.2.5 Difficulty in investigating data for research

In speaking, the notion of a free-standing genre or clearly delimited sample to be investigated does not come to hand. In writing there are well defined set of texts which clearly fit into a category like newspaper language, popular fiction etc. The researcher into speech will generally find no such categories to hand. Furthermore the researcher into speech must usually look beyond the discourse to the context in order to delimit the data under investigation and to ensure they are comparing like with like (Hughes, 2002).

2.2.6 Overlaps with other areas

The above discussion shows that the study of speaking overlaps with a considerable number of other areas and activities. There are mainly three areas of research in speaking. They are:

1. Organisation and Behaviour: Psycho and sociolinguistics, Pragmatics, Discourse and Conversational Analysis.
2. Structure: Syntax and Grammar, Morphology, Lexical/Vocabulary studies, phonology
3. Sound: Phonetics, Phonemes, Prosody/Intonation studies.

2.2.7 Global problems working with speech data

Hughes (2002) points out the global problems for the researcher into speech data:

1. Very few theories of speech are there.

2. Very few researchers have worked on speech in its own right within applied linguistics.

3. Within applied linguistic theory, 'speech' has often been conflated with language and this can cause difficulties in trying to pin down the exact scope of a research project into the spoken form of language.

However, the context of research in speech is expanding rapidly now-a-days. The skill was neglected in the past because of the various problems in conducting research in this field. During the last few decades, the use of technology has made research in speaking skill easier and more fruitful than before.

2.3 Previous Study

Problems of speaking in the classroom were addressed by various linguists throughout the world. They highlighted the problems in their respective contexts. However, some problems are shared by different countries. For example, speaking activities in large classes are found and have been reported by linguists from many parts of the world (Harmer, 2007; Nunan, 2005; Bailey, 2005; Luoma, 2004; LoCastro, 2001; Florez, 1999; Dobson, 1992; Chowdhury, 2013). Research was also found in multi-level speaking classes (Harmer, 2007; Bailey, 2005). Another topic of research was students' first language use in the English speaking class (Bailey, 2005). Again, reticence and dominance in speaking activities were also analysed (Bailey, 2005). Learning styles (Bailey, 2005; Christison, 2003; Willing, 1987), responding to oral errors (Bailey, 2005) are some other topics of research. Research was also done in assessing speaking (Adhikari, 2010; Luoma, 2004). However, all of these topics cannot be covered in a single research. The relevant ones for the current study will be discussed.

There are quite a number of studies which were undertaken in the field of speaking by teachers and education specialists of our country. Some of them which are relevant to the current research are discussed below. However, research on tertiary level is quite rare. Among them Khan (2000) was the first to evaluate the focused English Language course of the present research. The name of the course has been changed and different faculties and even different department has different names for the same English language course. Later on, method and practice in the EAP classroom was observed by Chaudhury (2008-

9). Again, Chaudhury (2013) conducted needs analysis of the course. The use of group work and pair work in speaking activities were also discussed (Siddique, 2014; Ara & Akter, 2013; Basu, 2011). Research was also done here and abroad in anxiety (Hopkyns & Nicoll, 2018: Casamassima & Insua, 2015; Rahman & Mahmud, 2009-10), and motivation of the students (Flores, 2018; Sarwar, 2013), pronunciation problems (Khaghaninejad & Fahandejsaadi, 2018; Rahman, 2016; Rahman, 1995), morphological, syntactic and semantic problems (Maniruzzaman, 2007), Vocabulary (Sharma, 2018; Zelianko, 2017; Mahboob, 2015), students' perspective on learning (Siddique, 2014; Kamal, 2005), Learner autonomy (Holt, 2018; Mackay, 2018; Ozturk, 2018), teacher student relationship (Bashir, 2013; Yasmin, 2009), Use of technology and computer in language teaching (Rahman & Mamun, 2015), and document analysis of syllabus and materials (Akhter, 2017). Those studies done in our country and abroad which are relevant to the current research are discussed below.

2.3.1   Evaluation of Foundation Course

Khan (2000) evaluated the FC 2 just after the first batch of students completed the course. According to her findings, the students' perception of the skills revealed that students recognized the importance of speaking as a skill. Furthermore, they would have liked to have more time to develop their speaking skills. It was reported that communicative activities involving pair work and role play were not practiced as much as expected in a course of this nature. Teacher's commented that there was learner participation. However, classroom observation suggested that these may have been restricted to questions and answers. The current study will also try to find out whether the situation has changed. The students seemed to be disappointed that hardly any work on listening and speaking was done in class. They believed that their speaking skill did not improve much as a result of neglect of this skill.

This article is very useful for the current study because it gives us an evaluative report of what the actual course really was when it started. As stated earlier, the number of students was 20-25 in a class. However, the number of students has increased in the classrooms. The current study will find out what problems are created by the increased

number of students. The study will also try to find out the extent to which the speaking skill is practised in the classroom.

2.3.2 Method and practice in the EAP classrooms

Chaudhury (2008-9) reported her observation (22 hours) of the same English Language course known as EAP (English for Academic Purposes) of nine departments from four faculties of the University of Dhaka. She observed that question and answers, lecturing and group discussions are the most frequently used teaching styles. However she also reported that writing activities were most frequent followed by passive listening. According to the presentation of the data collected by her observation checklist, speaking was present in some departments while absent in others. In most of the departments, students spoke in both English and Bangla. Group discussion and pair work were present in some departments and absent in some others. This article gives us an insight into the English classrooms that this research actually proposes to study. However, this article considers the four skills at the same time. This leaves very little scope for discussing the findings on speaking. In most of the cases the data presented on speaking were not discussed or analysed to a considerable extent. The proposed research will conduct an in depth study with triangulation of data which is absent in the article by Chowdhury.

2.3.3 Needs analysis

A needs analysis of Bangladeshi tertiary students was conducted by Chaudhury (2013). Based on the same English language course which is the focus of the current study, it gives us a view of the students' perception of the difficulty in the four skills. It also gives us the teachers' perception. The frequency of use of the four language skills were measured. In some faculties, only 20% -28% students 'often' spoke in class. Again, in some other faculties it was found that 50% students 'never' or 'rarely' speak in class. However, the students considered speaking and writing as most important. This book is useful for the study which gives us a view of the prevailing situation in our classrooms.

The present study will find out the obstacles in practising English and will try to find a way of mitigating them.

The other problems of speaking which may or may not be present in this course are discussed in the next section:

2.3.4 Large classes

Bailey (2005) observed that one of the most challenging situations is teaching speaking in large classes. She also states that it is not unusual in many parts of the world to have 40 or 50 students in one room, and to teach several large groups a day.

A number of researches in this area have been conducted on the typical classroom situations in South Asia. David Nunan has worked on different aspects of classroom environment and speaking skill. Nunan (as cited in Bailey, 2005, p. 174) states that classes of 30 to 130 occur in many parts of the world. Shamim (1996), as reported by Bailey (2005), observed that classes of 45 to more than 100 students are generally found in Pakistan. A similar report is received from Sarwar (2001) about the same country.

It was observed by LoCastro (2001, as reported by Bailey 2005) that, "Language education in developing countries is typically carried out in classrooms with 150-300 learners and sometimes more." (p. 174)

Teachers' views of the problems involved in teaching large classes were studied by LoCastro. Some of these problems found by his small scale study are directly related to teaching the speaking skill. Compared to small classes, teachers with large classes may experience some extra difficulties. These are (LoCastro as cited in Bailey 2005, p. 174):

- More difficulties in carrying out speaking, reading and writing tasks
- Difficulties in monitoring work and giving feedback
- Problems with individualizing work
- Difficulties in setting up communicative tasks
- Tendency to avoid activities that are demanding to implement
- Pair work and group work often cumbersome to execute

- High noise level, which affects neighboring classes

- Difficulties in attending to all students during class time

- More acute discipline problem

- Crowd phenomenon: students not listening to teacher and other students

These issues present challenges in speaking classes with large number of students. These difficulties are often demotivating for the teacher.

In addition, Harmer (2007) points out that large classes present challenges that smaller classes do not. For example, he mentions the problems like:

- teachers find it difficult to give students personal attention
- it is difficult to organize students interaction with each other
- teachers' encounter difficulty in choosing the things that can be done to make organization smooth and effective.

Dobson (1992) points out that when it comes to conducting conversation sessions sometimes the group is so large that guided conversation practice seems almost impossible. She also points out that the only way to conduct a worthwhile session under these circumstances is to break the large group up into a number of small groups of six or eight people each, assigning to each group an outstanding student to serve as conversation leader. Even if it is done it is still difficult to monitor each group. The present study will try to find out if any or some of these problems discussed above are present in our focused language classes.

The problems of doing speaking activities in large classes were investigated by Chowdhury (2013). In this study I have focused on the same English language course. There were three departments from the University of Dhaka; one each from the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Social Sciences and an Institute. Here, I have discovered that there are problems with the infrastructure of the classroom like lack of classroom facilities, noisy environment and failing to comprehend the teacher's instruction on the part of the student. With group work and pair work activities, there were problems like lack of suitable environment, lack of confidence, mixed proficiency level, lack of motivation of the group members etc. The problems outside the classroom with autonomous learning

were, difficulty in finding speaking partners, anxiety in outside situation and peer pressure. Asking questions to the teacher in English in other parallel courses was also pointed out as a problem for many students. The teachers pointed out problems like lack of logistic support, time limitation and domination. The present research will try to find out whether the situation has changed in any way within these five years.

2.3.5 Multi-level speaking classes

Bailey (2005) has pointed out some specific reasons why there are multi-level speaking classes in language courses. He observed that some language programs do not use placement tests while other programs may use placement tests that don't evaluate the student's speaking ability. Some learners may score well in grammar, vocabulary and reading tests while their speaking skills may be less developed. Other students having stronger speaking skills may not be equally good in grammar or writing. So they may not score well in grammar or writing based placement texts. As discussed earlier, in the admission test at the University of Dhaka, speaking is not tested at all. Thus in a language class with a large number of students, it is very common that students will have mixed proficiency level in speaking. In mixed-ability classes, as observed by Bailey (2005) the less proficient learners may feel intimidated by their more advanced classmates. On the contrary, the more proficient learners may feel that the other students slow them down. Again, Hamer (2007) reported that many teachers see mixed-ability classes as 'especially problematic'. The situation makes lesson planning and the execution of plans in lessons very difficult. In her research conducted on the students of English Department at the University of Dhaka, Sarwar (2013) found that there are problems in the class like mixed proficiency level and large number of students which makes it difficult for the teacher to make tasks relevant and challenging to all students and at the same time give individual attention.

The proposed research will try to find out whether and to what degree these difficulties are faced by the students and teachers in our language classes and also to how the teachers are dealing with these problems.

2.3.6 Cooperative learning (group work and pair work)

Siddique (2014) investigated the degree of communicative competence of University level students. His research area covered all the four skills. Findings show that more than half of the students responded that they have never experienced group work, pair work, presentation, role play and classroom discussion as their classroom activity. The others very rarely or sometimes have such experiences in their language classroom. Of the total 50 respondents, more than 60% respondents never practice speaking skill in the language classroom. The classroom focus is still on the use of grammatical rules. The teachers also pointed out that students often do not respond to activities which promote interaction and social communication. Siddique (2014) concludes that after receiving twelve years of formal education, our learners' communicative competence is found to be very low. However, being a lecturer of a private University, it may be assumed that his research was conducted in a private University. For, he does not specify whether the respondents were teachers and students of English language courses in public or private Universities.

The importance of cooperative learning in CLT was stressed by Ara and Akter (2013). They have also given valuable suggestions on designing and evaluating group work and pair work. However, the level of students (Secondary, Higher Secondary or Tertiary) were not specified and the article is based on theoretical level and does not give us insight into the actual situation in the language classes. Even then this article is useful to the current study. Whether speaking is practised through co-operative language learning by group work and pair work will be observed and evaluated in the current study.

Again, Basu (2011) stated that Task Based Language Teaching necessitates group-work and pair-work in the classroom. According to him, these activities are possible only in small classrooms where the teacher can organize and monitor task performance. However, he concludes that in our country, where most classrooms are large and overcrowded, it is clearly not possible. The article incorporates his point of view. However, it does not mention any specific classroom situation or getting first hand information from students or teachers who are involved in the act of learning.

2.3.7 **Anxiety**

Student's speech fright was examined by Hopkyns and Nicoll (2018). They have reported from Abu Dhabi that with university students, in certain contexts, lack of motivation and cultural constraints makes fluency building activities in the classroom a struggle for the teacher. They have used digital applications for real and surreal role playing. This article gives us a good finding that role-playing can be used as an effective way of countering the anxiety of speaking in a group. However, using digital apps in the classroom individually for all students is a farfetched idea in Bangladeshi context.

Students can be motivated to speak, and their anxiety can be dealt with by teaching them to structure their speech argued Casamassima and Insua (2015). Sometimes, just letting the students to speak in groups and pairs are not enough to train them to continue conversations successfully. The article discussed some simple strategies which consist of a few steps, are easy to teach and learn, and are easily supported. In language classes, it is very common to find answers from the students in one word or a single sentence. These techniques help the students to deal with their anxiety of what to say and how to express themselves fully. These also help them to share more information and continue conversation successfully. This article is helpful for the present study. It will try to find out whether techniques for continuing conversations are used in our focused classes.

Rahman and Mahmud (2009-10) conducted research on six selected schools in Dhaka city. About 34% students were afraid that their classmates would laugh at them when they speak in English. Again, about 44% students get nervous when the English teacher asks questions in English. The writers comment that these create obstruction in English Language learning in Secondary level. How far this is true in tertiary level will be explored in the current study.

2.3.8 **Motivation**

Flores (2018) experimented with blended learning to motivate his students. Working with adult learners in tertiary level in Mexico, he bestowed more responsibility of learning on the students than which is traditionally done. Most of the grammatical features were

given to the students as homework before the class. This gave him more opportunity to discuss with the students about their individual problems instead of giving lectures. He reported that this strategy left more time for discussion and working on speaking. This is a very useful article for the study. The present research will try to find out if there is problem in motivating the tertiary level students in our context.

The problem of motivating the students to learn English in the university level was discussed and analysed by Sarwar (2013). According to her, socio-cultural and socio-economic influences are certainly key issues influencing L2 motivation for students in Bangladesh. Conducting a research on the students of English language courses in the Department of English at the University of Dhaka, she pointed out that there are mainly three types of motivational problems that hinder learning English. First of all, the students are often self-conscious about speaking in English because they feel that making mistakes will immediately be interpreted as a class statement (belonging to lower class), making them objects of mockery and ridicule. Secondly, the past experiences of the students in English classes have caused a lasting damage to the students' own perceptions of ability. This leads to language anxiety which ultimately leads to decline in the level of motivation. Thirdly, large number of students with mixed ability makes teaching difficult and also less motivating for the students. There may be similarities between the course run by the English Department and the language course of the research. However, to what extent are the two courses similar is yet to be explored.

2.3.9 Pronunciation

Pronunciation problem by advanced Iranian learners at tertiary level was discussed by Khaghaninejad and Fahandejsaadi (2018). They claimed that the sound system and syllabic structure of the L1 have some impacts on the pronunciation of the target language sentences. With the application of a contrastive analysis, ESL/EFL teachers can find out on which particular phonological characteristics the students may have problem during learning. They showed a contrastive analysis between the sound system of Farsi and English. They found that due to the difference between the Farsi and English phonological systems, the advanced students had difficulty with the absent phoneme and

consonant clusters. Moreover, it was revealed that the pronunciation of these features by Iranian students were not totally perceivable by the native English speakers. They claimed that contrastive analysis may provide insights into the differences between the L1 an L2 of the students. They concluded that this insight will help the teachers to become more aware of the impact of L1 and the problems that the students will have to deal with in learning English. This is a very important concept for language teaching. The present study will try to find out the ways that the teachers use to help the students with.

Rahman (1995) pointed out the difficulties in pronunciation of English by Bangladeshi students. The article assumes a holistic view of all English language learners in different levels throughout the country.The Bangla Phonetic Alphabet (BPA) was used by Rahman (2016) to help English language learners correct their pronunciation. He also pointed out the sounds that are absent in Bangla and showed an easy way to learn them with the help of audio/video clips. He has tried to make the diphthongs easier for Bangladeshi learners of English. According to him, there are only seven new sounds that the Bangla speakers will have to learn. This is a self study guide book which will help the learners correct their pronunciation. At the same time it will help the teachers by assisting the students to acquire the correct pronunciation.

2.3.10 **Morphological, syntactical and semantic problems**

Maniruzzaman (2007) has looked at the problem of speaking on phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic levels. The study presents a holistic view of the problems for the students at different levels. This study is outside the boundary of the present research.

2.3.11 **Problems with vocabulary**

Attempts to enlarge the vocabulary of students were reported by Sharma (2018). She stated the positive sides of using the techniques and strategies that the teacher can do herself to help the learners. Some of them are, reading aloud, increasing teacher-student interaction, introducing and repeating new words, praising and building confidence etc.

In this article, we find that, these techniques were used with primary and secondary level students in India. This article will not be helpful because it does not tell us whether these techniques are useful with adult learners.

Zelianko (2017) encouraged student autonomy in vocabulary learning. Her students made lists of new vocabulary learned at the end of the class. They themselves chose to learn new vocabulary themselves and made word cards. The students had to justify their choice in groups and brainstorm situations where they might have to use the new vocabulary. She had a positive feedback from her students in Belarus. She concludes that encouraging students to take on the responsibility for selecting and learning vocabulary boosts motivation and fosters autonomy. The article is important for the study. It discusses three points like vocabulary learning, motivation and autonomy at the same time.

A case study was on the students of the Department of English, University of Dhaka, was conducted by Mahboob (2015). She stated that poor knowledge of vocabulary is one of the main reasons for poor performance of our students. This is because most of the students come from rural areas. She also reports that these students come from a positivistic educational culture which believes that knowledge (even language skills) is an object which can be transferred from teachers to the students through lectures. That is why the students did not attain the skills before they come to University. She suggests that one of the most significant ways to make the learning of vocabulary more effective is to make the teaching and learning process more interesting and thus effective. And, a language teacher's main task is to help students develop a rich and useful stock of vocabulary. This article reports on the cause and effects of students' lack of vocabulary in writing courses. However, it does not report on its effect in speaking.

2.3.12 Students' perspective on learning

Siddique (2014) pointed out that changing students' attitude from "English as an academic subject' towards "English as a language" is essential to develop communicative competence. However, this is outside the focus of the article. Also, Kamal (2005) worked on the student's perspective in learning English. However, this article is not on tertiary level and will not be helpful for the present research.

2.3.13 Learner autonomy

In his article on learner autonomy, Holt (2018) argues that autonomous learning can bring a wider range of language to the classroom. The positive side of this approach is that learners often don't realize the vast number of opportunities out there for them to practice their L2 autonomously. He argues that it does not mean increase in workload. Learning in this way can be as effortless as changing the music one listens to or switching the language of your smartphone. It just needs a little change in ones day-to-day activities in order to surround oneself with his/her L2. He talks about raising awareness and creating a personalized action plan to maximize practice in all the four skills. In this way, learners will be much more optimistic about their ability to commit as they will be working harder rather than more. The article shows us that it is quite easy to motivate the students to learn autonomously. It is something that the present study will try to find out.

In order to help our learners benefit from increased target language exposure, Mackay (2018) feels that we should foster their curiosity and learner autonomy. Her ideas for promoting target language engagement outside class in tertiary level includes keeping language logs by students, making promises to increase contact ours, finding out and photograph examples of English in their neighborhood and using English in social media. However, the article does not state the outcome of these autonomous tasks, or whether they were done on any specific group of students.

Students at tertiary level tend to concentrate on their short term goal of passing the examination. They forget their long term goal - the importance of learning English for their future career reported Ozturk (2018) from Turkey. Keeping the main objective in mind, Ozturk assigned them mini projects. These aimed to make the students practice the four skills autonomously. One of them, which concentrated on speaking, was to interview students from other departments about their future career and then reporting back to the class. The study will try to find out if this type of autonomous learning is done in our classes too.

2.3.14 Teacher student relationship

Siddique (2014) has pointed out that there is an absence of positive rapport between language learners and teachers. The articles present a holistic view of the problems. In his

study of the students of English Department, Bashir (2013) found that in language courses, teachers praised them for their good performances. He commented that this positive motivation contributed to the learner's self-image and self confidence. However, he also noticed that some teachers criticized the students in the classroom for making mistakes. He concluded that this action may cause anxiety and language shock to students. Yasmin (2009) on the other hand reported on the teacher-student relationship and the attitude of the students. Her research unveils the fact that the teacher-student relation is not very cordial or friendly in our country.

These papers present either a holistic view or a very narrow view of the problems. These are however outside the focus of the current study.

2.3.15 Teacher Cognition

The theme came up during analysis of the findings in the study (see 5.5.4). Teacher cognition research according to Borg (2009) is concerned with understanding what teachers think, as an important area of second language research. It is based on the assumption that teachers are active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex, practically-oriented personalized, and context sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts and beliefs (Borg, 2003). These thoughts and beliefs derives from a variety of sources which forms the basis of their internal resources for planning and conducting their teaching (Ellis, 2006). Researchers now believe that we need to learn more about what teachers know, how they come to know it and how they draw on their knowledge. Borg (2003) explains that this is the knowledge of self, of subject matter, of instruction and of context. Again, teachers working in similar context may implement a set of shared principles through diverse practices. These diversity in practice may be reflected in choosing different types of tasks which may be more or less effective in practising a skill. The present study shows a considerable difference in teacher cognition in choosing different task for practising speaking (see 5.5.4).

2.3.16 Use of technology and computer

In their study at tertiary level, Rahman and Mamun (2015) stated that many of the teachers in our country may not be well aware of the effectiveness of using audio-visual aids. They argued that the recent emergence of Computer Assisted Language Teaching

(CALL) has spread the use of technologies in language teaching. ELT practitioners and teachers are incorporating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in language teaching in diverse ways due to the availability of computers and multimedia projectors. Teachers can use power point as a visual material, videos as audio-visual aids, pictures in EFL classroom, songs in designing activities etc. In the five language classes that they have observed, it was found that some audio materials were used such as phonemic chart, songs, conversations etc. The visual aids used in the classes were pictures, video clips, movie clips, documentary etc. It was found that most of these audio-visual materials were used in speaking and listening classes. Again, it was found to be effective in speaking activities teaching argumentative speech. According to the researchers' report, the language teachers found that using audio-visual aids made classes more interactive than lecture based classes, lowered anxiety level of students, made the classes attractive to students, helped in teaching pronunciation and vocabulary and above all generated ideas for discussions as speaking activities. This article is a useful one. In the context of present study it will be observed whether audio-visual aids are used in speaking activities.

2.3.17 Qualitative document analysis of syllabus and materials

The study traced the evolution of teaching spoken English in the Department of English, University of Dhaka through a qualitative document analysis. Akhter (2017) conducted an analysis of syllabus and materials that is used in the department for nearly two decades. English department has modified its syllabus from time to time. The materials were constructed by the teachers themselves keeping in mind the specific needs of their students. In the early years, speaking did not get much importance. Later on, this skill gradually made its way into the materials. However, Akhter argues that, it is still given less importance than writing or reading. Here, we find analyses of the materials as they are, rather than when materials are used in class. Thus, we lack the insight into the classrooms of English Department. Also, this syllabus and textbook is not currently in use in the focused course.

2.3.18 Assessment system

Adhikari (2010) found problem with the assessment system of the English language courses in Nepal. He observed that the existing English Language assessment system of universities seems to have negative impact on teaching speaking. In the Bachelor's level in English Education, only two courses are devoted to developing communicative skills. However in the assessment system, eighty percent of the students' English speaking skill is assessed through written examination which includes discrete item test (multiple choice questions) and short and long answer questions. He concluded that the assessment system encourages students to engage more in rote learning of the exponents than acquiring them through interaction. Adhikari's research includes all the three levels i.e. school, college and university. However, he discusses only in the theoretical level. So, his research does not give us an insight in the classrooms of the universities in Nepal which is one of the main focal points of the current research.

In her book, Luoma (2004) gave a detailed step-by- step description on how to design and use oral tests. She stressed on the need of writing construct specifications for assessments of speaking. She also discussed three main frameworks for defining the construct: linguistically oriented, communication-oriented and situation-based. Linguistically oriented tests typically assess vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. Again, in a communication-oriented test, with narratives for example, the task should require setting the scene, identifying the characters, and referring to them consistently, identifying the main events, and telling them in a coherent sequence. Lastly, situation based tests belongs to the task based approach to defining the test construct. Luoma (2004) believes that task design is important because it makes the construct assessed in the test more tangible. It is also important for the examinees because tasks provide the context for the talk and guidelines about what they must do with language.

The present research will try to find out whether speaking is assessed in the examination and if so, what types of tests are administered.

2.4 ELT in Different Contexts

In language teaching, some of the problems of speaking discussed above are found in different countries, in different degrees throughout the world. However, there are a number of differences in socio-economic context.

In Mexico, LoCastro (2001) observed the challenges in speaking classes with large number of students. These difficulties are often demotivating for the teacher. Mexico is a neighbouring country of The United States of America, a large English speaking country. Their socio-cultural context is different from Bangladesh. The current study may try to find out whether these or some of these difficulties are also common in the unique socio-cultural context of Bangladesh.

Although India is our neighbouring country, the situation is multilingual there (Chowdhury, 2007). It is quite different from Bangladesh. It was T.B. Macaulay's (1800-59) controversial Minute of 2 February 1835 that institutionalized bilingualism,the use of English in Indian education and socio-cultural settings (Kachru, 1990). India gained independence in 1947. The constitution gave English the status of an 'associate' official language (Kachru, 1990). The mother tongues of the people of India differ vastly from each other. That is why English acts as a lingua franca for communication among the different indigenous groups. In India's intricate sociolinguistic context of an estimated 1652 languages and dialects, English is a vital pan-Indian link language (Kachru, 1990). Here, it is clear that the sociocultural and linguistic situation between the two neighbouring countries are quite different as the vast majority of the people of our country are monolingual and speakers of Bangla language (Chowdhury, 2007). So, in Bangladesh, there is no sense of English being a lingua franca of ethnic neutrality, as there is in India (Banu, 2000). That is why the linguistic research done in India will not be at par with the research done in Bangladesh.

In Nepal, Adhikari (2010) reported on large classes of forty to fifty students in schools. However he did not specify whether there are large classes in universities. The classroom settings, which prevents easy mobility also discourages students' involvement in language games and problem solving activities. Such a classroom setting is suitable for teacher-centered instruction and not task based language learning. He also found that

teachers were practising explanation and discouraging the students to explore the text through group or pair interaction. However, the density of population is much higher in Bangladesh. Again, the socio-cultural context of the two countries, are vastly different.

English is considered as a foreign language in Thailand, reports Khamkhien (2010). The medium of instruction in classroom is mostly Thai. As a result, it is extremely difficult for Thai learners to master the English language in terms of listening and speaking. Countries like Japan and Korea, who have ample resources, have progressed a lot in solving the problems in speaking in their language courses. They have even constructed 'specialised villages'. There pupils live in English-only environments in specially constructed theme-park-like environments to practice English throughout the day (Harmer, 2007). However, being a country of limited resources, in Bangladesh, we cannot possibly render this logistic support.

It is because of the unique socio-economic context of our country, we cannot adopt the measures taken to solve the problems of speaking in English from any of the countries discussed above.

2.5   Conclusion

The literature review shows that no research has yet been done in our country with a holistic view. Most of them are not focused on the tertiary level and deals with two or three levels at the same time i.e. primary, secondary, higher secondary and tertiary level. Only a few have been done with adult learners in university level. What we need is an insight into the classrooms of our university and find out how learning is actually taking place. If we want to find out the real situation, we have to take a look at it from different perspectives at the same time. We must try to understand the difficulties experienced by the teacher, the attitude, aptitude and motivation of the students, the frustration of not getting the necessary logistic support and above all the classroom situation where the actual production of speech is taking place. We must consider the fact that reducing the number of students in the class of a public university or getting proper logistic support may not be done overnight. This study will try to unify the knowledge gained in the different areas of speaking and try to give suggestions for a more successful route for acquiring the skill of speaking by the students of the University of Dhaka.

Chapter III

Methodology

The English Language Course that started in the University of Dhaka in 1998 is still there in most of the faculties in 2018. Within the span of twenty years, we find that a few years after the commencement of this course, the responsibility of conducting the course was taken up by individual departments. In case of the syllabus, there has not been any collective effort to revise and up-grade according to the students' need. A lot of things have changed within the last twenty years like the number of students has increased in most of the departments, the teachers are given appointment on a part time basis by the concerned department, the required logistic support is provided by the same department and so on. In what way all these changes are affecting the teaching of speaking skill and the present state of our classrooms is the primary focus of this study.

The study tried to find out the current situation of teaching English speaking skill by the teachers. It focused on the problems of practising the skill in the class such as, classroom environment, logistic support, motivation of both the teacher and the students etc. This research aims to reveal what is happening in the English language classrooms at the University of Dhaka. It also tried to find out the extent that the teachers are able to work on the skill of speaking. The main objectives were to find out the answers to the following questions:

a. What are the problems of using the skill of speaking in the English classrooms of a public university?

b. How can these problems be handled by the teachers of the University of Dhaka?

Teaching and learning of English speaking skill has always been neglected in class. It is not even evaluated. As a result, speaking was always given less importance than the other skills, especially reading and writing. From the review of literature, it is clear that there has never been an attempt to focus on the acquisition of speaking skill in the English

language course in the University of Dhaka by the researchers. The issue of speaking is mostly addressed holistically with all the English courses in primary, secondary and higher secondary levels at the same time. At other times, it is addressed collectively with all the four skills, where writing gets the main focus. Again, we lack recent research in this skill by the researchers of our country. So, this research is thus a different and unique one in this field.

3.1   Research Methodology

In order to find out whether these problems stated above currently exist in our classrooms, a study was conducted in the University of Dhaka. This is a classroom based qualitative research in nature and approach. Nunan (1992) has pointed out, as language classrooms are specially constituted to bring about learning, it is not unreasonable to collect data about what goes on there as a means of adding to our knowledge of language learning and use. The literature review shows that there were not many researches carried out in this area. Thus, the qualitative approach seemed to be the appropriate choice because of its exploratory nature (Dörnyei, 2016). Nunan (1992) pointed out that in contrast to quantitative research; we gain real, rich and deep data from qualitative studies. It also gives us an opportunity for naturalistic and uncontrolled observation without the intervention of an experiment or an artificially contrived treatment (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989; Nunan, 1992; Dörnyei, 2016). In this study we enter a complex classroom situation. One of the strengths of qualitative research is that it is appropriate for making sense of highly complex situations (Dörnyei, 2016). This type of research is also open and fluid so that it can respond in a flexible way to new details or openings that may emerge during the process of investigation (Dörnyei, 2016). Lastly, the motivation of the study came from the researchers' firsthand experience of teaching the English course in two different departments in the University of Dhaka. That is why qualitative research was chosen, because in this type of research, the outcome is ultimately the product of the researchers' subjective interpretation of the data (Dörnyei, 2016). Braun and Clarke (2013) support qualitative research by saying that qualities such as subjectivity do not produce bias that undermines the research, but are essential to good qualitative research practice.

One of the key points of this research is its use of triangulation in data collection procedure. The concept of triangulation was introduced in the 1970s (Denzin, 1978; Brewer & Hunter, 1989; Creswell, 1994; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998 as cited in Dörnyei, 2016, pp. 43-44). The main strength of methodological triangulation is that it can help to reduce the inherent weakness of individual methods by offsetting them by the strength of another, thereby maximizing both the internal and external validity of research. Triangulation was used by Denzin (as cited in Dörnyei, 2016, p. 43) to refer to the generation of multiple perspectives on a phenomenon by using a variety of data sources, investigators, theories or research methods with the purpose of corroborating an overall interpretation. Erzberger and Kelle (as cited in Dörnyei, 2016, p. 43) proposed triangulation as a strategy to ensure research validity. They explained that if a finding survives a series of tests with different methods, it can be regarded as more valid than a hypothesis tested only with the help of a single method. Triangulation also offers additional benefits for the understanding of the phenomenon in question.

3.2 Data Collection

In this study, among all the faculties and Institutes of the University of Dhaka, four randomly chosen departments from four different faculties and institutes were taken under consideration. Nunan (1992) pointed out that in those situations in which it is not feasible to collect data from the entire population, the researcher must resort to sampling. The sampling procedure which was chosen among all the procedures is known as cluster. The sampling strategy that was taken up yielded probability samples.

There was a triangulation in the collection of data. At first a questionnaire survey was conducted among the students to find out the problems. Secondly, teachers were interviewed in light of the findings. It enabled the researcher to gather details and insights that were not accessible through the questionnaire survey alone. Lastly, classes were observed to validate the information found from both the teachers and the students. The classroom situation was also analysed. Seliger and Shohamy (1989) pointed out that by using multiple procedures in a single study, it is possible to obtain data from a variety of

sources simultaneously. Again, through the use of different perspectives or a holistic one a study can gather as much information as possible.

3.2.1 Target population

The target population of the research was the first year students of four departments of different faculties and Institute. They were 159 participants who took part in the questionnaire survey (see 4.1). The four departments and Institutes were Department of Microbiology, Department of Arabic, Department of World Religion and Culture, and Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies. A homogeneous sampling procedure was selected for this study. We know that, this procedure allows us to conduct an in-depth analysis to identify common patterns in a group with similar characteristics (Dörnyei, 2016).

In addition the teachers who teach these courses were also included in the research. They were five in number. It was found that there are two sections in the department of Arabic, each containing more than eighty students. The teacher student ratio in our country is exceptionally high. Here, we have a single teacher for 80-100 students. This study focuses on individual departments. That is the reason why, increasing the number of teachers would mean increasing the students participants, which would make the analysis of the data extremely difficult.

3.2.2 Questionnaire survey of the students

A survey was conducted with the same questionnaire among the students of all four departments. There were 159 students who took part in the survey. There were 96 male students and 63 female students. The survey on the students was conducted to find out about the classroom situation and their attitude and level of motivation. These provided the primary data to work on. Nunan (1992) pointed out that one of the strengths of questionnaires is that it enables the researcher to collect data in field settings. Questionnaire survey was chosen because it can be given to large groups, less expensive to administer, and participants tend to share information of a sensitive nature because anonymity is assured. Again, the data are comparatively more uniform and accurate

because the questions are the same and it is administered at the same time (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). In addition, questionnaires are extremely versatile and capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in a form that is readily processible (Dörnyei, 2016).

The questions were both close ended and open ended. Seliger and Shohamy (1989) pointed out that it is possible to use different types of questions, both open ended and closed, in the same questionnaire. Again, Dörnyei (2016) observed that most questionnaires do contain certain partially open-ended items. Though responses to close questions are easier to collate and analyse the researcher often obtains more useful information from open questions. It is also another advantage that responses to open questions will more accurately reflect what the respondents wants to say (Nunan, 1992). The close ended questions were 'multiple choice items' (Dörnyei, 2016, p. 106). These were used to find out if a phenomenon existed in the classroom. Some of them were yes/no answers to find out what techniques were used in the class to practice speaking. The open ended questions were used to find out the students' perspective about why in their opinion a certain phenomenon existed. The open ended questions were both 'clarification questions' and 'short answer questions' (Dörnyei, 2016, p. 107). Open ended questions involved qualitative answers like description of the problems that the students encounter. The qualitative questions were divided in specific groups for the convenience of analysis. It means that the questionnaire included a number of scales. In questionnaires, each scale is capable of eliciting data on a certain aspect of the behavior which needs to be measured. Again, each scale generally includes a number of questions (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). Some items or questions were mixed up which is generally done to create variety and to prevent respondents from simply repeating previous answers (Dörnyei, 2016).

3.2.3 Interview of the teachers

The teachers of the aforementioned courses of the four departments were interviewed. There were five teachers as one department had two sections with 80 students each. Seliger and Shohamy (1989) pointed out that interviews are personalized and therefore

permit a level of in-depth information-gathering, free response, and above all flexibility that cannot be obtained by other procedures.

The findings from the survey were the basis on which the interviews were conducted on the teachers. The medium of the interview was English. As all of the teachers were experienced in teaching English, it made the task of transcribing easier because the data did not have to be translated before transcription. In this study, semi-structured interview was chosen because of its comparative advantages. Dörnyei (2016) pointed out that in applied linguistic research; most interviews conducted belong to the semi-structured interview type. He also added that it offers a compromise between the two extremes; structured and unstructured ones. In this type of interview, there are specific core questions determined in advance from which the interviewer branches off to explore in-depth information, probing according to the way the interview proceeds. Again, the researcher allows elaboration within limits. Because of its flexibility, this type has become popular with many researchers, particularly those working within an interpretive research tradition (Nunan, 1992). Above all, the researcher's first-hand experience was one of the reasons behind choosing this type of interview. Dörnyei (2016) has explained that his type of interview is suitable for cases when the researcher has a good enough overview of the phenomena or domain in question. He/she is able to develop broad questions about the topic in advance but does not want to use ready-made response categories that would limit the depth and breadth of the respondents' story. Thus, in this research, the teachers were also given opportunities to add comments and explain their experiences.

3.2.4   Classroom observation

Four classes were observed to find out about the teaching in progress. Observations have always been considered a major data collection tool in qualitative research (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). Again, Nunan (1992) has pointed out that very little research on language teaching is carried out in an actual classroom setting. The main reason behind using this tool is for examining a phenomenon or a behavior while it is going on. The main advantage of using observations for collecting data is that it allows the study of a

phenomenon at close range with many of the contextual variables present, a feature which is very important in studying language behaviors.

This research is an effort to get first hand information about what is actually taking place in the English classrooms of the University of Dhaka. A checklist was developed by the researcher for the purpose of this study keeping in mind the main objectives and the various scales used in the questionnaire survey. The role of the teachers and their respective students were observed and was given due consideration.

3.3   Findings

The study, as stated earlier aimed at triangulation of data. As the research used different elicitation techniques like questionnaire survey of students, interview of the teachers and classroom observation, the data that were gathered had to be coded and analysed using different types of procedures.

In the questionnaire survey, there were mainly qualitative questions gathering qualitative research data. This qualitative data was then categorized using different procedures. While some were described, certain other types of qualitative data went through the process of data transformation. The technique of quantifying data was chosen for recurrent themes which turned qualitative data into quantitative one (Miles & Huberman, as cited in Dörnyei, 2016, p. 269). It is generally used by qualitative researchers who produce numerical tabulations of certain aspects of their data (Dörnyei, 2016). Nunan (1992) also observed the use of this technique in SLA research and reported that qualitative research also uses numbers in interpretation. The data were presented at first as raw frequencies. They were then converted to percentages. Brown and Rogers (2002) implores the researchers to report both of them because percentages are easier for many people to understand while other people may find raw frequencies clearer.

Different qualitative themes were presented in their frequency scores which shows how many times the themes are mentioned in the sample. To do so, an inductive procedure was taken up, which is a process of deriving a set of categories for dealing with text segments from the text itself (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). This is appropriate for the

current study because this procedure is used for studies which are descriptive and exploratory in nature.

3.4   Analysis

Data analysis is a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as final compilation (Dörnyei, 2016). The vast amount of qualitative data that were gathered went through the process of Thematic Analysis. Thematic Analysis is a method for identifying and analyzing patterns in qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This type of analysis is known for its accessibility, flexibility and can be applied within a vast range of qualitative research. This method gives us a step by step way of analyzing the data. At first, the data were familiarized by the researcher. Secondly, the data were coded. In the third phase, themes were searched and identified. Fourthly, the themes were put together and reviewed. In the fifth phase, the themes were defined and named. Lastly, the themes were written up which involves weaving together the analytic narrative, data extracts and contextualizing it in relation to existing literature.

In addition, latent level analysis as opposed to manifest level analysis was given emphasis in this study, which is the interpretive analysis of the underlying deeper meaning of the data (Dörnyei, 2016). I have analysed the findings from the questionnaire survey of the students, the findings from interview of the teachers and observation of classrooms. Here, the analysis of all the types of data collected from the three different procedures came together to give us a more comprehensive view of the actual teaching-learning situation of the speaking skill.

3.5   Conclusion

This chapter has been an overview of how the data were collected. All the data collection strategies were pointed out and their respective merits were explained. The next chapter contains a systematic description of the findings and chapter five contains an analysis of the data gathered for the purpose of this study.

Chapter IV

Findings

Under the qualitative procedure as discussed in the previous chapter, the research gathered a vast amount of data. For this reason, the data that were gathered had to be coded and analysed using different types of data analysis methods. The research used different elicitation techniques like questionnaire survey of students, interview of the teachers and classroom observation. Some of the data were then quantified. Different recurrent qualitative themes were presented in their frequency scores to show how many times the themes are mentioned in the sample. The data were presented at first as raw frequencies. They were then converted to percentages. The percentages were used here to bring about the scenario.

4.1   Categorization of the Data Gathered from Questionnaire Survey of the Students

The questionnaire survey was conducted on 159 students. There were both male and female participants.

The questionnaire survey included questions on different themes. These themes emerged from the literature review on the problems of speaking. The questionnaire was designed to find out whether and to what extent these problems were present in the focused classrooms. The themes were:

- Logistic support
- Time allotment
- Classroom activities
- Class performance of students
- Teacher role
- Suggestion from students

The summary of findings from the topics stated above from student respondents are shown in the column chart below (see figure 4.1). The suggestions from students are presented in a separate column chart (see 4.1.6). These figures are followed by detailed description of the above mentioned topics.
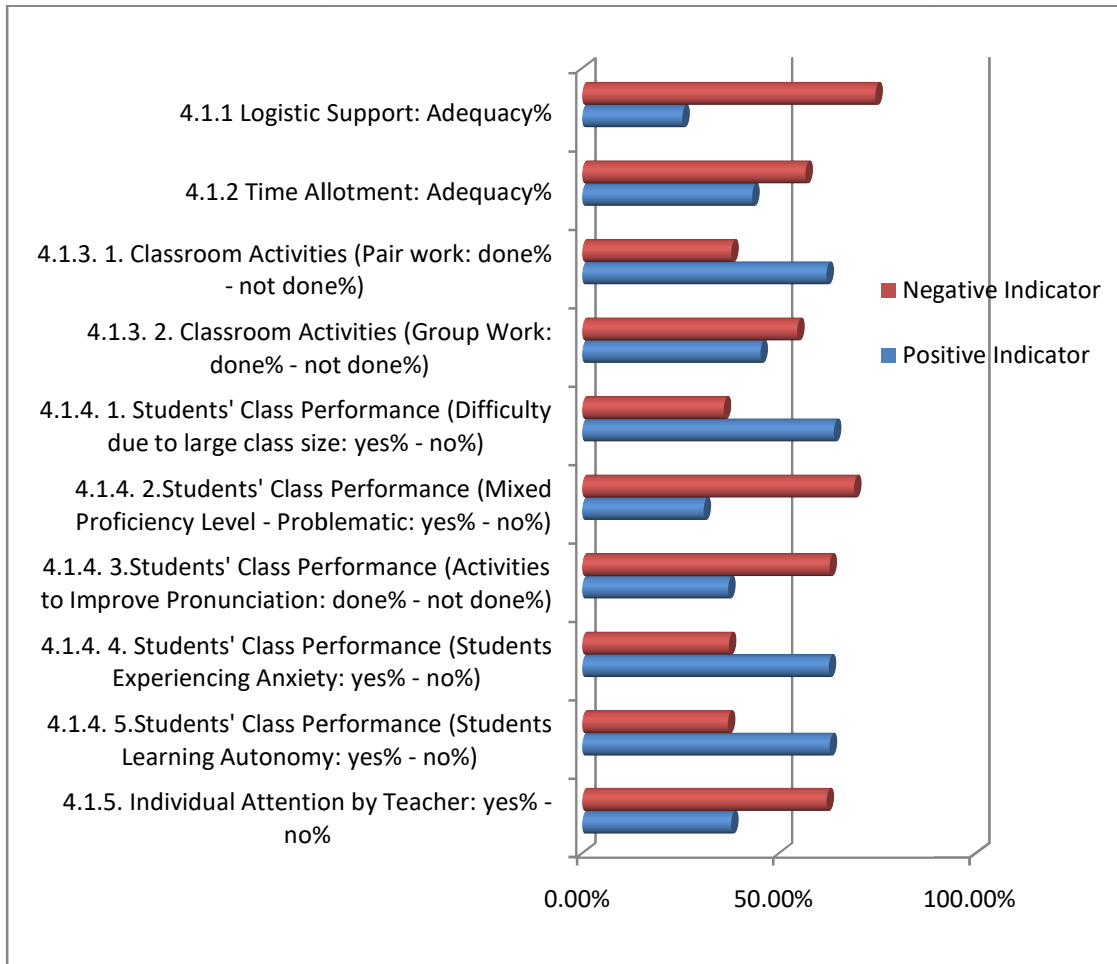
Figure 4.1: Summary of findings on the different themes of the questionnaire survey

4.1.1 Logistic support

There were four questions on this theme. The first question asked whether the classroom facilities are adequate for practising speaking. Here 40 students responded in the affirmative. On the other hand, 63 students responded in the negative while 54 answered that it was to some extent. The percentages are, 25.47%, 40.13% and 34.39%

respectively. That means only 25.47% of the students thought that the classroom facilities were adequate whereas 74.53% thought that it was not so.

The next three questions were on the supply of materials for having speaking activities. 92 participants or 60.53% learners did not receive materials for speaking activities. On the other hand, only 60 or 39.47% students received them. Among those who received materials, only 43.81% thought that the materials were adequate for having speaking activities throughout the course. While 56.19% students answered in the negative. For example, a respondent stated,

> "Because the class of English is limited with only text book
> and teacher. There has no environment for practising
> speaking English." (participant 140)

When asked to clarify, why they thought that the materials were not adequate, the participants gave descriptive answers like the above statement which were then quantified. Dörnyei (2016) points out that all the qualitative coding techniques are aimed at reducing or simplifying the data while highlighting special features of certain data segments in order to link them to broader topics or concepts. The frequency scores of the qualitative responses are presented in the table below:

	Lack of facilities	Authority not concerned	Lack of motivation of teacher	Miscellaneous
Response (participants)	30	6	5	3
Percentage	68.89%	13.33%	11.11%	6.67%

Table 4.1: Participants' response on why the material supplied are not adequate

We can see from the table above that 30 or 68.89% of the participants responded that there was absence of proper facilities. Some stated that materials were scarce and old. One of the students pointed out,

> "We need more practises. The materials for speaking are
>
> not adequate. We need more." (participant 32)

Others complained that there were no modern equipments. Six participants or 13.33 % reported that the authority was not concerned about the situation. Again, 5 participants or 11.11% complained that there was lack of motivation on the part of the teacher.

4.1.2   Time allotment

When asked to specify the time allotted to speaking, the response varied from department to department. The common tendency was within 10% to 25% of the class time. However, in one department, a large number of students specified that it was less than 10%.

When their opinion was asked if they think that the time allotted for speaking is adequate, among the 155 participants, only 67 students or 43.23% replied that the time was adequate. On the other hand, 88 participants or 56.77% replied that it was not (see the column chart in 4.1). When asked to explain, one of the respondents commented,

> "Because of the large number of students in the class
>
> everyone do not gets the chance to practise speaking within
>
> the given class time." (participant 52)

4.1.3   Classroom activities

Classroom activities like pair work and group work was highlighted in the questionnaire survey of the students. The survey initially tried to find out whether these activities are done in class. Later on it tried to assess the problems that the students faced during these activities in those classes where these activities were done.

4.1.3.1 Pair work

Questions were asked to find out whether pair work activity was done in class. There were 153 responses. Among them, 43 participants responded that they experienced pair work activity in class and in addition 48 participants said that it was only sometimes. However, 58 participants responded that they have never experienced pair work

activities. Thus, 95 respondents or 62.09% of the participants took part in pair work activities while 37.9% did not.

Students who experienced pair work activities were asked whether they experienced any problem. Among them, 44.17% of the students responded that they did. Those students were then asked to explain their problems. The responses were then quantified. The frequency scores are presented in the table below:

	Lack of proficiency	Lack of time	Lack of motivation of partner or difference in opinion	Lack of motivation of teacher	Classroom environment unsuitable	Miscellaneous
Response	24	4	8	2	4	4
Percentage	52.17%	8.69%	17.39%	4.34%	8.69%	8.69%

Table 4.2: Problems of pair work activities

One of the main problems that the students face during pair work activities is lack of proficiency. This was reported by 24 respondents. That means, 52.17% of the students who took part in pair work activities felt their lack of proficiency in speaking. Among them, 7 or 15.22% students also expressed that they felt shy because of their lack of proficiency.

> "I cannot make correct sentences and have mistaken the
> grammar rule." (participant 19)

Some of them, 4 respondents, about 8.69% complained that they could not do the activity properly because of the lack of time. As many as 8 respondents or 17.39% complained of lack of motivation or difference in opinion of their partner during the activities. Some, 2 respondents or 4.34% observed lack of motivation to do these activities on the part of the teacher. The others complained about classroom environment 8.69% and miscellaneous 6.52%.

4.1.3.2 **Group work**

Questions were asked to find out whether group work as a speaking activity was done in class. There were 150 responses.

Among them, 34 participants responded that they experienced group work activity in class and in addition 34 participants said that it was only sometimes. However, 82 participants responded that they have never experienced group work activities. Thus, 68 respondents or 45.33% of the participants took part in group work activities while 54.67% did not.

Students who experienced group work activities were asked whether they experienced any problem. Among them, 47.17% of the students responded that they did. Those students were then asked to explain their problems. The responses were then quantified to find out the recurrent themes. The frequency scores are presented in the table below:

	Lack of proficiency	Shy/ afraid	Difference of opinion/ domination	Lack of space/ facilities	Large class	Lack of time	Lack of motivation of group mates	Miscell aneous
Responses	17	8	3	6	2	2	3	3
Percentage	38.63 %	18.18 %	6.8%	13.64 %	4.5%	4.5%	6.8%	6.8%

Table 4.3: Problems of group work activities

The above table shows that problems faced by the students are many. The first and foremost is the lack of proficiency which was pointed out by 17 participants or 38.63% of them. The second problem is also the stress or anxiety related to lack of proficiency. Here 8 students or 18.18% specified that they are afraid of making mistakes. Thus we can see that 56.82% of the respondents admitted that they suffer from lack of proficiency in speaking during group work. One of the respondents states the problem;

> "Nervousness and mediocre vocabularies lessen up the smoothness of the conversation." (participant 66)

Then, another 3 respondents or 6.8% students felt that some students dominate or they have difficulty communicating. Others complained of the large number of students which constitutes 4.5%. Lack of time and lack of motivation of group mates were pointed out by 2 and 3 respondents which are 4.5% and 6.8% respectively.

4.1.4   Class performance of students

The students were asked specific questions to find out the problems encountered by them during speaking activities. The findings are discussed below:

4.1.4.1 Large class

Among the five groups, there were four groups with a large number of students. That is why participants were asked if the large number of students in their class created difficulty in doing speaking activities. There was positive response from 65 students.

However, 36 students specified their problems. The frequency scores are presented in the table below:

	Noise	Shy / nervous	Differing opinion	Lack of motivation of partners	Tired ness	No individual attention	Congested sitting arrangement	Disciplinary problem
Responses	8	11	2	6	2	3	2	2
Percentage	22.22%	30.5%	5.5%	16.66%	5.5%	8.33%	5.5%	5.5%

Table 4.4: Problems experienced by students in large classes

Firstly, there were 8 respondents who pointed out the problem of noise. This constitutes 22.22% of the students. One of the respondents put it,

> "Yes, the large number of student in my class create difficulty by noising. Because our classes are held after 3 pm. By completing other classes we become tired, so it was

impossible to give concentration in English class."

(participant 19)

So, it is very difficult for the teacher to take the class. Secondly, 11 students or 30.5% of the students felt nervous and shy. Thirdly, 2 respondents or 5.5% felt that difference in opinion of their partner/ partners created problems. Fourthly, 6 respondents constituting 16.66% stated that they experienced lack of motivation from their partner. Fifthly, 2 respondents or 5.5% complained that tiredness was a barrier. Sixthly, 3 respondents or 8.33% observed the lack of individual attention of the teacher in a large class. Seventhly, 2 respondents or 5.5% expressed that congested sitting arrangement was a problem. Lastly, another 2 respondents or 5.5% explained that there were problem with discipline with a large number of students.

4.1.4.2   Mixed proficiency level

In order to find out if students had any problem regarding mixed proficiency level among them, both quantitative and qualitative questions were asked. There were 136 responses. The responses were then quantified to find out the recurrent themes. The frequency scores are presented in the table below:

	Yes	No
Responses	42	94
Percentage	30.88%	69.12%

Table 4.5: Students experiencing problems due to mixed ability in the classroom

Among them, 42 students or 30.88% responded that they have experienced problems while 94 respondents or 69.12% responded in the negative. However, in addition, 2 students responded that they only had 'public speaking' and no interactive speaking activity among them.

The respondents who suffered from problems due to mixed-proficiency level were asked to specify the problems. Most of them replied that they felt shy or intimidated by the more proficient students of their class. One of the participants observed;

"Because not all the students are fluent in English. So for them it is kind of difficult to understand (the task) what to do." (participant 26)

In addition, students complained of dominating students in the class. During speaking practice, the dominating students talk too much giving the less proficient students little chance to speak. One of the respondents puts it,

"Some students are proficient and they talk too much whereas others are inefficient who fail to talk." (participant 105)

4.1.4.3 Pronunciation

There were questions regarding the pronunciation of students. They were asked if any specific activities were done in class to improve their pronunciation. There were 132 responses. The responses were then quantified to find out the recurrent themes. The frequency scores are presented in the table below;

	Yes	No
Responses	49	83
Percentage	37.12%	62.88%

Table 4.6: Students' report on pronunciation activity in class

Here, only 49 participants or 37.12% replied in the affirmative. On the contrary, 83 respondents or 62.88% replied that no substantial activities were done in this respect. The respondents who answered in the affirmative were then asked to specify the activities that were done to improve their pronunciation. A large number of students replied they are corrected during prepared speech which they deliver in front of the class. Other activities are, reading in front of the class, pair work, teacher correction, pronunciation competition etc. One of the respondents stated,

"Reading in front of the class paves the way for us to rectify our pronunciation." (participant 115)

Only a few of the fortunate students said that they watched pronunciation online, or listened to taper-scripts provided by the teacher.

4.1.4.4 Anxiety

The students were asked if they were afraid of making mistakes to find out whether anxiety existed among the students. There were 134 responses. The frequency scores are presented in the table below:

	Yes	No
Responses	84	50
Percentage	62.69%	37.31%

Table 4.7: Students' report on existence of anxiety in class

There were 84 students who responded that they experienced some sort of anxiety while speaking in English. Only, 37.31% responded that they were not afraid of speaking in English. Among those who suffered from anxiety, 15.22 % of the students reported that they felt shy during pair work activities (see 4.1.3.1). Other participants explained that they were nervous of making mistakes and were afraid of being laughed at by more proficient students in their class. A participant explained,

> "Like most Bangladeshi, I also afraid of making mistake
> while speaking in English because, 'What will people
> say?'"(participant 13)

Some also feared of 'going blank' in the middle of a sentence during prepared speech which they have to deliver in front of other students.

4.1.4.5 Learner autonomy

The study also aimed to find out if learner autonomy existed among the students of English language classes. There were 143 responses from the students. Let us look at the table below:

	Yes	No
Responses	90	53
Percentage	62.93%	37.06%

Table 4.8: Learners' response on speaking practise outside class

As many as 90 participants responded that they worked on their speaking skill in English in their own time, outside the classroom. About 53 of them, on the other hand, said that they did not. Those who did were then asked to specify how they worked on this skill. There were qualitative answers from 92 students which were then quantified. The frequency scores are presented in the table below:

	Friends/ roommates in hall	Family and relatives	Apps like face book, messenger etc.	Talking to oneself	Miscellaneous
Response	50	12	13	8	9
Percentage	54.35%	13.04%	14.13%	8.70%	9.78%

Table 4.9: Ways of speaking outside class

About 50 respondents or 54.35% stated that they sometimes spoke in English with their friends and their roommates in the residential hall for students. One of the respondent states,

"With friends sometimes." (participant 52)

On the other hand, 12 respondents or 13.04% sometimes spoke with their family members. A learner responded,

"Sometimes with my Grandfather and we are talking about some current issues." (participant 56)

Again, 13 students of 14.13% stated that they spoke with their friends and relatives staying abroad with the help of face book, messenger, viber etc. One of the respondents stated,

"Yes. Sometime I practice speaking outside the classroom with some of my foreigner friend in phone." (participant 87)

Some others like 8 students or 8.7% talked to themselves. One fact about the data that attracted attention was the recurrent use of the word 'sometimes' in their responses.

4.1.5 Teacher role

The study, from a different point of view, tried to find out students' conception of the Individual attention provided by the teacher. Here, 132 students responded to the questions. Let us look at the frequency scores in the table below:

	Yes	No
Responses	50	82
Percentage	37.88%	62.12%

Table 4.10: Individual attention to students

We can see that 82 students or 62.12% did not receive individual attention from the teacher. Only 50 respondents or 37.88% replied that the teacher was able to give individual attention to them.

When asked to specify the problem, students pointed out a number of problems. These were then quantified. The frequency scores are represented in the table below:

	Large number of students	Difficult to know if the students have understood	Time restraint	Problem of concentration / tiredness
Responses	23	5	7	3
Percentage	60.52%	13.16%	18.42%	7.89%

Table 4.11: Problems that hinder individual attention

The above chart shows that according to the students' perspective, the teacher faces a number of problems which hinder individual attention to students. The first and foremost

problem is the large number of students in each class which is perceived by 23 or 60.52% of the students.

This is followed by 5 or 13.16% who perceived the teachers' inability to understand whether his or her lecture is understood by the students. Again, there is the problem of time restraint which is reported by 7 of 18.42% of the students. As one of the respondent puts it,

> "Yes, because the time is very little for the teacher to take
>
> care of all." (participant 36)

Lastly, 3 or 7.89% students explained that lack of concentration and tiredness of the teacher makes him or her unable to give individual attention to students in his or her class.

4.1.6 Suggestions from students

To improve the teaching–learning situation, a number of suggestions came from the students. There were about 56 substantial responses. These were then quantified into frequency scores as in the table below:

	More opportunity for speaking	Teaching and Learning vocabulary	Creating proper environment with technological support	Teaching pronunciation	New techniques to be used
Response	34	4	9	6	3
Percentage	60.71%	7.14%	16.07%	10.71%	5.36%

Table 4.12: Frequency scores on the suggestions from students

The above table shows that among the respondents, 34 or 60.71% suggested that there should be more opportunity for the students to speak in English. One of the learner states his opinion,

> "There should be more interactions so we can improve our
>
> skills." (participant 25)

Another 4 or 7.14% stated that the teacher should provide opportunities for learning vocabulary. Again, 9 or 16.07% stressed on creating proper environment and providing technological support. This is followed by teaching pronunciation in English classes which is suggested by 6 or 10.71% of the respondents. Lastly, 3or 5.36% of the respondents advised that new techniques should be introduced in speaking. The summary of findings (suggestions) are provided in the column chart below;
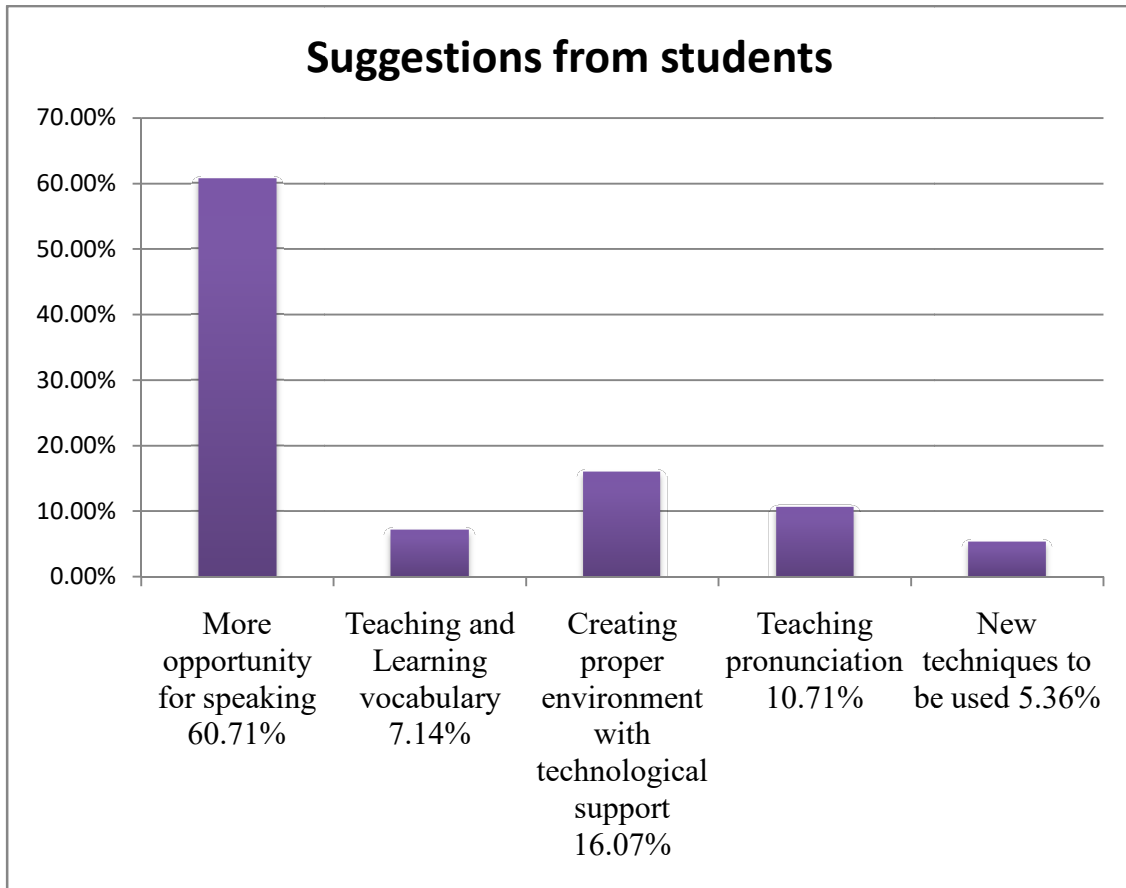

Figure 4.2: Summary of findings from different suggestions of students

It is worth mentioning here that students' recognize the importance of being proficient in speaking for their future jobs. One of the respondents stated,

"Speaking practice is important for our future workplace."

(Participant 83)

4.2 Categorization of the Data Gathered from Interview of the teachers

Teachers' perspective was also explored in the study through interviews of the concerned teachers. They were five in number, because, one department had two teachers for teaching two sections of students. There were four male and one female teachers altogether who were interviewed (see Appexdix 2 : Teacher questionnaire). Their responses are stated below:

4.2.1 Logistic support

Most of the teachers, four among five voiced their dissatisfaction with the logistic support provided by their respective departments. Some said that there were multimedia but it did not work. There was not even an audio CD player. One of the teachers was satisfied and said that the room was comparatively soundproof as it was in a lecture theatre, away from the main building where the general classes are held. He was also satisfied with the sound system which included a speaker and a microphone.

Most of the teachers also complained that they could not make photocopies of materials, for example, role cards or small texts for information gap activities. The department thought that it would be wastage of valuable resources. One of the teachers even complained of not having extra markers for whiteboard and said that they were allotted only one marker per semester.

The teachers who had to teach large classes complained of lack of space and sitting arrangement in the classroom. It was difficult for the teacher to move around the class and monitor student output.

4.2.2 Time allotment

The teachers were asked to specify what percentage of the class time is given to speaking. The answer varied from person to person. Some said they gave 25% for speaking, others said it is 20% whereas some others stated that it was less than 20%. However, speaking activities are not done in all the classes. Speaking is concentrated on in the first few classes. The students come to dais and give speech. In later classes, some focus on

reading while the others focus on writing. That is the reason why, it is difficult for the teacher to give an approximate percentage.

4.2.3 Classroom activities

The type of speaking activities that are done in class was the next topic. Here, the answer varied to some extent. Some teachers responded that they involved the students in pair work and group work activities like introducing themselves, introducing their friend, discussion on different topics provided by the teacher, debate, social discussion, etc. Another response was, teacher introduced a topic in front of the class and the students commented. Again, another response was, students came to the dais and spoke for one minute on a prepared topic. A teacher with a large class commented,

> "Couldn't make groups, just, we could have two students working
> together, something like that, on a desk. We couldn't have groups."
> (teacher 2)

One thing worth mentioning here is that some teachers mentioned they had speaking activities in the introductory classes and later moved on to the other skills. One of the teachers said that speaking activities stopped with the introductory classes (teacher 5). However, another teacher said that speaking is there even when he is teaching different skills. For example, before writing, students speak in the brainstorming phase (teacher 1). However, speaking activities are not done separately. The second noticeable thing is that in some classes, students give speeches standing in front of the class. This is generally called public speech by the students. These are the ways, according to those teachers, speaking skill is practiced in class.

The problems that the students encounter as reported by the teachers are many. Some classrooms lack logistic support. For example, there is no microphone, no audio cassette player, no multimedia etc. The teachers state that most of the classes are too large to implement teaching techniques like group work. The reading and writing syllabus is huge and time is limited. Students suffer from anxiety. Above all, as speaking is not evaluated in the examination, which results in lack of motivation. As one of the teachers stated,

"I guess speaking gets less focus and less preference in the course." (teacher 3)

4.2.4 Class performance of students

The teachers were asked different types of questions according to different perspectives on teaching. These are discussed below:

4.2.4.1 Large class

Among the five teachers, four of them considered their classes as large classes. The number of students ranged from 55 to 80 in the class. The teachers have pointed out a number of problems in teaching large classes. The first and foremost problem is the time constraint on the teacher. It was explained that if students are allowed to speak for 1 minute, the class time is over. Even if you divide them to speak on different days there is no certainty that a student will be present in class in his allotted speaking time. It is difficult to have group work as there are too many groups to monitor. Again there is not enough space to create groups in some of the classes. A teacher commented,

> "Neither do I have enough space and if there are sixty students, how many groups will you do? … if you do six groups or ten goups, it becomes actually a chaos, chaotic class." (teacher 1)

In addition, in a large class it is difficult to implement certain techniques like debate. Moreover, it is difficult to get feedback, to monitor the activities and to ascertain whether they are developing. It was also pointed out that there are difficulty in taking care of the students' pronunciation, intonation, fluency and accuracy. Last of all, it is a challenge to motivate all the students at the same time to take part in speaking activities. One of the teachers pointed out,

> "I guess the number of students is the main problem." (teacher 2)

4.2.4.2 Mixed proficiency level

All the teachers answered that their class consists of mixed proficiency level of students. They also confirmed that only the proficient students want to speak.

> "I mean, most of the time the most competent people talk much
> and it is difficult to stop them sometimes." (teacher 4)

On the other hand the less proficient students do not want to speak. It was again reported that during social discussion some of the more proficient students try to dominate.

The teachers have pointed out a number of ways to minimize the problem of dominating students. First of all, the teacher puts a proficient and a less proficient student together to work on a presentation. They are asked to give equal contribution. During discussion, when teacher asks questions and students answer, the teacher always tries to give floor to the students who talk less. That is how he balances the dominating students. Again, the teacher tries not to give more than one chance to the dominating students. Sometimes the more proficient students are asked to remain silent. Sometimes, they are given the task of explaining what the teacher has taught to the weaker students. During group work, the more proficient students are given responsibility to take care of the group and help the weaker students to perform well or they lose marks as a group.

It should be remembered that in a class, not all the proficient students are dominating. Again all of them need to work on speaking skill. The teacher feels that the more proficient students are deprived when he focuses on the less proficient ones,

> "…they are deprived when we focus on the lowest level of
> students." (teacher 5)

4.2.4.3 Pronunciation

There were different types of strategies, followed by different teachers, regarding the teaching of pronunciation. One of them is teaching IPA symbols so that the students can understand the pronunciation of a word from the dictionary. Another is, the teacher sometimes takes his laptop computer to the class and gives them an idea of the place and manner of articulation. He gives pronunciation practice by sowing them video. He also explains the difference between Bangla and English pronunciation. In addition, we find teacher using listening tape scripts from a global textbook. He also has pronunciation drills in his class as it is not a large class and he is provided with audio visual support.

Again, one is the correction of pronunciation errors by the teacher. Lastly, the teacher asks the students to download dictionary with pronunciation in their mobile. He then gives them a few words and asks them to find out the pronunciation. However, one teacher does not do any activity to help with the pronunciation because he feels that the students are not interested.

4.2.4.4 Anxiety

A large number of students feel shy and nervous when it comes to speaking. The teachers reported that there is a certain amount of anxiety among the students. One of the teachers from ELT background stated,

> "You cannot possibly help them in a short time because the anxiety they are suffering at this moment, I think, the source of this is starting from their school, then secondary and higher. By the time they come here, twelve years are gone and the anxiety is permanent for them. " (teacher 3).

One way of lessening the level of anxiety is first to discuss in pairs, then in groups and then speak in front of the class or answer the teacher's question. Students can be inspired to talk about the things that really concern them. In addition, one of the teachers (teacher 4) added that the students are explained that for learners it is natural to make mistakes. There is nothing to laugh at as all second language learners makes mistakes initially. And the students should not feel nervous about making mistakes. Teachers also mentioned that they create comfortable relation with the students. They do not point out the mistakes initially but gives constructive feedback later on. However, one of the teachers pointed out that personal counseling might help sometimes, but in a classroom there are so many students, it becomes really difficult. Again it was pointed out,

> "Speaking is always there. I always try to make them speak because you know, without speaking, if the students do not speak, they will never be able to use English. They will never be able to remove their shyness. So that's why I always focus on this. They have to speak in my class." (teacher 1)

4.2.4.5 **Learner autonomy**

Motivating students to practice speaking outside classroom is a difficult task. One of the teachers pointed out that use of mobile dictionary was helpful in teaching vocabulary and pronunciation. Another teacher proposed that the students should have a language club. However, the teacher being an adjunct faculty could not give time. Again, other full time faculty members of that department were unwilling to give time to the club.

4.2.4.6 **Vocabulary**

In the survey of the students, it was pointed out that they had problems with vocabulary. They specified that they faced problems in communication because of their lack of vocabulary. The participants suggested that they would like to learn new vocabulary and practise these new words regularly. The teachers were asked questions to find out the extent of the situation. Teachers reported that as the students have learned English for twelve years communication is not an obstacle. However, their vocabulary is very limited. Maybe they sometimes repeat the same words because they do not know the synonym. The students are suggested to use short sentences and use simple vocabulary.

Another problem is that some students learn words and meaning from the dictionary but they do not learn the context where these words can be used. The students do no read many books. That is why they do not pick up new words. Because of the above reasons, the teachers find it difficult to make the students acquire new vocabulary.

4.2.5 **Teacher role**

The problems faced by the teachers are many. Some of them are discussed below;

4.2.5.1 **Providing individual attention**

Among the five classrooms four of them were large classes. In small classes the teacher mentioned that it is not much of a problem to provide individual attention. However, the teachers of large classes found it as a great challenge. They explained that their classes are large so it is really tough to pay attention to each one of the students. Another problem is that class time is limited and they have to cover the syllabus. One of the

teachers pointed out that he provided individual attention by asking twenty students in each class to mention give an account of their problems. In the next class he asked the next twenty and so on. It also becomes difficult because most of the teachers are adjunct faculty and they are not provided any space before or after class to sit and talk to the students in need of attention.

4.2.5.2 **Motivation**

The teachers find it difficult to keep up the motivation of the students throughout the course. The students feel that they need proficiency in speaking after graduation. As it is not an immediate need, they lose their motivation easily. As one of the teaches pointed out,

> "If you don't test a particular skill, neither students will be motivated, nor you would be motivated because you cannot see how they … are performing." (Teacher 2)

4.2.5.3 **Testing and evaluation**

The next question was on testing. It was found out that speaking is not evaluated in the examination. The teachers responded that all the marks for final and midterm examination are allotted to reading and writing. The teachers have to follow the curriculum. Though listening are speaking are specified in the syllabus, no number is allotted for testing listening and speaking. Some teachers assess speaking skill of the students informally and give them some feedback.

Most of the teachers agreed that as speaking is not evaluated in the final examination of this language course, both the teachers and the students generally gave this skill less importance than the other skills. However, a teacher with ELT background confirmed that he tests speaking skill with class test/assignment marks. He claimed that he always tells the students at the beginning of the course that speaking will be evaluated. He uses teaching techniques like pair work and group work in his class. As a result, he found that his students are motivated to speak.

4.2.6 Suggestion from the teachers

There are a number of suggestions that came up from the teachers;

- Speaking test should be included.
- Class size should be reduced to twenty to twenty five students.
- Logistic support should be improved that will include soundproof rooms.
- All the skills should be integrated and they should be taught in integrated manner without giving too much focus on any single skill.
- Class timing should be changed to a more suitable one, and not kept in the afternoon when students are tired.
- Students should be taught with a more natural approach. In a conversation, people always add more information with what is asked, which makes the conversation going. These strategies of conversation should be pointed out to the students.
- There is a misconception of the senior teachers of the concerned department that students will be able to speak automatically if they learn grammar. This will have to change.

4.3 Categorization of the Data Gathered from Class Observation

Class observation is the only way through which we get first-hand knowledge of what is actually happening in the focused English language courses. Four classes from four different departments and institutes, as stated earlier, were observed (see Appendix 3: Class observation checklist). The class duration was one and a half hours. There were two classes per week. Some of the classes had 35 to 40 students whereas some classes had about 80 to 90 students.

4.3.1 Logistic support

All the classrooms were furnished with light, fan and air conditioner. So, the classroom environment was appropriate to facilitate learners' learning. Due to the large number of students, there were microphones to help the teacher with the lectures. However, the microphone was attached to the podium in the elevated dais. In one of the newly furnished classrooms, it was found that the room was made bigger by adding the balcony.

So, there were a number of columns which hindered the view of the teacher for some of the students. Again, none of the classes had multimedia projectors. The sitting arrangement was overcrowded. Students sat in benches, sometimes two in a small bench and sometimes five in a larger bench made for four students. In some classes, the students sat elbow to elbow. Books and materials were bought by the students. None were supplied by the department. Again, materials, which are specially designed for speaking, were not found.

4.3.2 Time allotment

It was found that due to classroom shortage, English classes were taken for one hour and thirty minutes, instead of two hours. Again ten minutes were used up to take attendance of the students. 5% to 10% of the class time was allotted to speaking. While a student read from a text, the teacher asked questions. It was also observed that there was ample wait time when teacher asked questions to the students. However, the wait time increased when the teacher asked a question to a specific student, most often to a less proficient student. This means that a considerable amount of class time was spent when the teacher asked questions to less proficient students.

4.3.3 Classroom activities

Speaking activities consist of teacher asking question about the text that is read aloud by one of the students. The questions are asked generally to all the students in the class. Only the more interested and proficient students answered. The teacher asked one or two questions to the less proficient students. The students were asked to tell a summary of the text after each paragraph was read. Some students volunteered. The students were asked to take notes on the different points of the text and they were then allowed to interact. As the text was already given as homework and have been read and explained by the teacher, most of the students felt no need to discuss the main points of the text. Again, it was observed that most of the shy and less proficient students kept silent throughout the class. In the second class, only some of the students asked clarification questions while they were asked to write a composition. No notable student interaction (pair work or group work) was observed in any of the classes.

4.3.4   Class performance of students

Most of the classes were too overcrowded for the students to keep seated during the whole class time, let alone speak or write comfortably. When the teachers asked question, he/she gave only one chance to an individual student. This is how the teacher tried to deal with the dominating students in the class.

The teacher explained new vocabulary from the text. When students were asked to answer the teacher's question, some clearly lacked vocabulary. However, it was difficult to ascertain whether the students were having problems only due to lack of vocabulary, or anxiety to speak in front of the class. It was observed that the students suffered from anxiety to speak and only a few students volunteered to answer questions to the teacher.

4.3.5   Teacher role

The teachers tried a great deal to provide individual attention. However, it is really difficult in a large class. The teachers walked between the rows. Even then, it is not easy to answer each question of the students.

The teacher was unable to use microphone throughout the class as the microphone was attached to the dais. The teachers did not use any audio-visual support as there seemed to be none at hand.

The teacher taught new vocabulary from the text that came up while a student read from a text. The teacher pointed out noun, verb or adjective etc. of the new word. The meaning and use were explained. In another class, the teacher explained new and novel words when he went from student to student and checked their writing in progress.

In one of the classes the teacher helped the students by correcting their pronunciation while they read from the text. Sometimes, the teacher asked them to listen to the pronunciation of a specific word from their dictionary that had previously been downloaded in their mobiles. The students seemed interested to correct their pronunciation and the class seemed livelier because of this use of technology. Again, this technology helped student autonomy.

4.4   Conclusion

One of the good sides of triangulation in data collection is that it gathers data on one phenomenon from different perspectives. The findings from three different points of view will come together and will be analysed in the next chapter.

Chapter V
Analysis

The previous chapter reported the findings gathered from the students, teachers and class observation. In this chapter all the information is analysed. To give meaning to these three types of information, latent level analysis was given emphasis in this study, which is the interpretive analysis of the underlying deeper meaning of the data. In this section, the analysis of all the different types of data analysed together gives us a more comprehensive view of what is going on in the classrooms. Each section starts with the analysis of findings from the questionnaire survey of the students. It is followed by analysis of the findings from interview of the teachers and observation of classrooms.

5.1   Logistic Support

From the questionnaire survey of the students (see 4.1.1) we find that almost 60% of the students expressed that the logistic support was not adequate. This view was supported by most of the teachers. During observation of the classes, it was found that light, fan etc. were there. However, no multimedia facilities were found anywhere. As the microphone is attached to the elevated dais in large classes, it is not a teacher friendly situation. Furthermore, there was no audio cassette player available to support listening-speaking activities. One of the teachers (teacher 3) reported that he wrote topics on the board to introduce topics for discussion. However, another teacher (teacher 5) reported that he gets only one white board marker per semester.

> "If you need a marker you are not getting it." (teacher 5)

As adjunct faculties the teachers are not invited to the faculty meeting. Thus, the English language teachers lack opportunity to voice their needs. This is one of the reasons why students found their teachers demotivated. They also complained of lack of facilities and lack of concern from the authority.

Most of the students were not satisfied with the supply of materials for speaking activities. More than 60% of the students never got any material for speaking activities. Among those who got some kind of materials, more than half of the students complained that these were inadequate. The teachers confirmed the view. They reported that the department was not willing to spend its resources. Again, during class observation we find that, no speaking material was found by the researcher which was given to the students. Lack of space in sitting arrangement, especially in large classes, and absence of movable desks were also reported by the teachers and observed by the researcher.

So, we can conclude that as far as speaking practice is concerned, this is not a compatible situation.

5.2   Time Allotment

Both the students and the teachers stated that 25% of the class time, which should be allotted to each skill, was not given in the case of speaking. More than half of the students thought that the time was inadequate for practising speaking. Again, teachers found it difficult to be certain about the time, because speaking as activities are not done in all the classes. That means the students are not getting the chance to speak in every class. Another, noticeable thing is that the response of students varies in each department. That means all the classes are not giving equal importance to speaking. So, lack of equality in this skill by the teachers and lack of regular practice are two major problems.

5.3   Classroom Activities

The research tried to find out to what extent different activities are done in class. Mainly, two types of activities were focused, i.e. pair work and group work. Other speaking activities were taken into account during the three different types of data collection procedures.

5.3.1   Pair work

Student Interaction was found to be quite rare in the English language classes. Almost 38% students never experienced pair work activities. In an earlier research, Siddique (2014) also observed the lack of pair work activities in English language courses at

tertiary level (see 2.3.6). Even among the lucky 62% who experienced pair work activities, a large number of students did not take part in this activity regularly (see 4.2.3). In introductory classes, students are put in pairs to introduce themselves and they also discuss with a given topic. Later on, the teachers generally move to other skills. When asked to describe the techniques that are used by the teachers, the varied answers from them ascertain the fact that pair work activities are not done regularly (except teacher 3). Again, no pair work or group work activities were observed in class (see 4.3.3). If the students do not get the opportunity to speak regularly, if they do not practice, they will not be able to improve their proficiency level.

Problems that hinder pair work activities are many. More than half of the students faced problems during pair work activities due to their lack of proficiency. There are also problems like time constraint, lack of interest of partner, lack of suitable environment and so on. Because of all these obstacles the teachers do not find the motivation to do pair work activities regularly.

5.3.2 Group work

It was found that more than half of the students never took part in group work activities (see 4.1.3.2). Most of the teachers found it difficult to arrange this activity. A teacher (teacher 2) could not implement this activity because of lack of space in a large class. Again another teacher (teacher 1) was afraid of the noise and chaotic situation it might create during speaking group work. Basu (2011) also observed the incompatibility of these techniques in our large classes (see 2.3.6). Class observation also confirms that fixed sitting arrangements in rows hinder group work activities. As a result, teachers find it difficult to have group work activities and some do not even have the motivation to try it (see 4.2.3). Thus, lack of logistic support, large number of students, lack of training of the teacher and the misconception that a noisy class goes out of control and hinders group work activities.

Students expressed the problems of having group work activities in class. They pointed out that they and their group mates lack English language proficiency. They suffer from anxiety, domination, lack of space and time etc. These problems hinder group work

activities in class. The topics anxiety, domination and motivation will be discussed separately later on (see 5.4.4; 5.4.2 & 5.5.2).

5.3.3 Prepared speech

The students pointed out that they prepared speech and delivered it before the class. Some of the teachers (teacher 2 and 5) also confirmed that they did this as speaking practice in the introductory classes. However this stopped as they moved to other skills. One problem with this activity is that it is really time consuming. When one student is speaking, it is only listening for the other students. A student thus gets only one or two minutes of speaking in two or three classes. The other and main problem is that the students deliver a speech from memory. In this way the whole idea of language as a means of communication is lost. Secondly, there is no reciprocity condition (see 1.1.1). Also, we find an absence of dialogic learning in this activity (see 2.1.2).

5.3.4 Teacher-student interaction

Teacher-student interaction comprised of teachers asking questions and students responding. Sometimes the students were found to ask clarification questions. In this way, some teachers who lack training in ELT believe that the class is spending sufficient time pratising speaking. During class observation it was found that some teachers spent a considerable time asking questions to students. Most of these questions were not asked to specific students making it easy for the more proficient students to answer. Even though one student gets only one chance to speak (as claimed by teacher 1) this does not ensure that all the students will be motivated to speak. When the question was asked to a specific student, the wait time between the teacher's question and the student's answer increased killing valuable class time (4.3.2). So, it can be concluded that this activity will not work to a considerable extent in improving the proficiency of the students.

5.3.5 Overall view

There seemed to be a lack of consensus among the teachers about having speaking practice. Some classes have group work and pair work while the other classes do not. Some classes have prepared speech and teacher-student interaction more than others

which does not help the students to a considerable extent. Most importantly, teacher cognition on speaking varies to a large extent which will be discussed later on in this chapter (see 5.5.4).

5.4 Class Performance of Students

The students and the teachers pointed out a number of problems in speaking activities. Different effective factors that influence the performance of students are discussed here.

5.4.1 Large class

This is an additional difficulty in teaching for the teachers of large classes. However, in the context of our country, it is a reality that most of the teachers have to face. The students have pointed out a number of problems faced by them. Some students complained of high noise level and congested sitting arrangement and tiredness. Lack of resource is our main problem and high density of population is the main cause behind the logistic problems. Tiredness is related to congested sitting arrangement for the students and the hot and humid weather of our country. Teachers have also complained about the lack of space which hinders group work (see 4.2.3). Class observation also confirmed the fact that most of the classes are overcrowded and the sitting arrangement is quite congested.

Students also pointed out the problem relating to difference in opinion. With teacher's guidance, this is not a problem but something that can generate discussion. However, in a large class, it is difficult for the teacher to guide each group.

Lack of motivation of their partner and anxiety or nervousness was pointed out by some participants. Lastly, some others talked about lack of individual attention of the teacher and disciplinary problems. These topics are discussed in detail later on in this chapter (see 5.5.1).

Teachers complained of time constraint saying that in a week there are only two classes and taking attendance kills precious ten minutes. Again, with reading and writing it takes up a lot of time to finish a single task. In my previous research on large classes of the

same English language course (see 2.3.4)), there was a similar finding on the time constraint,

> "Time limitation constraints the teacher for whom it becomes almost impossible to ask questions and get feedback within the allotted time." (Chowdhury 2013, p. 50)

Teachers also found it difficult to make groups for speaking activities. There was also difficulty in implementing teaching techniques, getting feedback, monitoring progress etc. Other types of difficulty include taking care of pronunciation, intonation, and keeping a balance between fluency and accuracy. Lastly, some teachers found it difficult to motivate all the students at the same time. All these problems make it difficult for the teacher to keep up motivation in teaching speaking.

However, in this difficult situation a teacher was confident and motivated. He pointed out,

> "In terms of speaking, imagine you have 50 students. Even if you allow them to speak for one minute, the class time is already over. Even if you divide them into groups and then divide them into different dates, different days, it is really difficult. Large classroom will be always problem for speaking… (pair work) that's the only way we can actually maximize participation. Divide them into different groups, so it's automatically group work and pair work." (teacher 3)

This teacher had 55 students. The situation became more difficult in a class size of 75-80 students.

5.4.2 Mixed proficiency level

About 30% students reported that they suffered from problems related to mixed proficiency level of students. The students explained that they felt shy and intimidated by

the more proficient students in their class. So, there is anxiety among the students about their performance before the more proficient students. It was also seen during observation that the shy and the less proficient students kept silent throughout the class. The anxiety of the students will be discussed later on in this chapter (see 5.4.4).

Teachers also reported of dominating students in their classes. During group work, these students tried to dominate the discussion. As one teacher retrospected,

> "There were some students who wanted to monopolize, that
>
> was the problem." (teacher 2)

During teacher-student interaction, it was observed that some students tried to answer all the teacher's questions themselves. This was also observed in my previous research on large classes (see 2.3.4). Bailey (2005) stated that during class participation, these students speak a great deal because of personality traits, cultural issues, proficiency or any combination of these factors (see 2.3.5)

These multi-level classes pose problems in deciding the level of the materials that is to be used in the class. The teachers commented that it is difficult to choose materials ascertaining the level of the students. The teachers are in a dilemma. One of the teachers (teacher 4) felt that they were neglecting the more proficient students when they focused on the less proficient ones.

The interviews of the teachers reveal that they have their own way of dealing with the problems relating to dominating students. These students are not given more than one chance to speak during class. The less proficient students are always asked questions and are given floor to speak during teacher-student interaction.

One of the teachers (teacher 1) puts a more proficient student with a less proficient one to work on presentation. He tells the more proficient students to help the weaker ones so that they can have equal contribution during presentation. Again, during group work, the more proficient student is given the responsibility to help the weaker students in the group. These two are examples of scaffolding according to Vygotsky's theory (see 2.1.1). However, there is only one instance of it that was found in the study.

5.4.3   Pronunciation

Activities done in class to improve students' pronunciation were reported by only 37% of the students (see 4.1.4.3). According to the students these are, correction done by teacher when students deliver prepared speech, or when they read from text, or when they take part in pair work. Actually we can see that none of them have taken part in pronunciation focused activities to correct their pronunciation. Only a few students stated that they listened to audio tape scripts provided by the teacher.

Among the five teachers, four of them reported that they had activities to improve pronunciation. The teacher who had a regular group of 33 students reported that he taught IPA symbols and he took his laptop and showed them videos on pronunciation. The teacher who had a large class of 55 students used audio tape scripts from a global textbook. He also ran pronunciation drills. Rest of the teachers with larger groups of about 70-80 students, who did not have audio visual support, faced problems in teaching pronunciation. Two of them stated that they corrected students' pronunciation when they found mispronunciation. However, one teacher (teacher 1) asked his students to download dictionary with pronunciation in their mobiles and asked them to listen to the correct pronunciation. He also occasionally gave them some words to find out the correct pronunciation. Class observation also confirms that students listen to the pronunciation of a new word and are benefitted by it. Khaghaninejad and Fahandejsaadi (2018) also stressed the need of international intelligibility of the students (see 2.3.9).

The findings state that all the classes are not giving equal effort to correct and improve the pronunciation of the students. In the interview we find one teacher (teacher 5) saying that students are not interested. When asked to clarify the statement it was found that the teacher did not have audio-visual support and was unable to use activities focusing pronunciation. Again, when learners were asked to express what improvements in the course they would like to see, about 11% of the participants specified that they wanted teaching of pronunciation as a part of the course (see 4.1.6). This implies that because of the lack in logistic support and large class the teachers find it difficult to keep up their motivation for teaching pronunciation in the course. The difficulties were also pointed

out by the teachers in my previous research (Chowdhury, 2013). Here also, we find different degree of effort by different teachers (see 2.3.4).

5.4.4 **Anxiety**

More than half (almost 63%) participants are reported to have been suffering from shyness and nervousness. There are also instances of anxiety found when they discussed the problems of group work and also problems in large classes. The participants specified that they felt shy and nervous and were afraid of making mistakes. They were also afraid of being laughed at by more proficient students. Lastly, they were nervous about forgetting words or going blank while delivering prepared speech in front of the class. So, we can gather that all these students are in fact suffering from anxiety when they have to take part in a speaking activity. Hopkyns and nicoll (2018) also observed anxiety among tertiary level students at Abu Dhabi (see 2.3.7).

The interview of teachers and class observation reveals that there is anxiety among the students about speaking. Each teacher dealt with his/her problem in a different way. These consisted of, explaining to students that errors are natural and nothing to laugh about, choosing topic for discussion which concerns them, going step by step like pair work, group work and then prepared speech, having friendly relation with students and not pointing out mistakes immediately etc. All these have to be done collectively to obtain results. In truth, not all the teachers follow the same process. It was already pointed out that prepared speech may not help the students sufficiently as this is not communicative. Again, standing in front of 80 people is enough to make a person nervous, let alone speak. So, delivering prepared speech in the introductory classes as a speaking activity chosen by some of the teachers is one of the main sources of anxiety among the students of these classes (see 5.3.3). It was also found that a number of teachers who do not have ELT background use this activity more than half of their time allotted to speaking practice.

One of the teachers (teacher 3) stated that these students cannot be helped in a short time. This anxiety is deep rooted. It has started in school and continued through college. In our

classes, the teacher has observed that the anxiety level of one student may also increase the anxiety level of others. He concluded,

> "Personal counseling might help sometimes, but in a classroom there are so many students, it becomes really difficult." (teacher 3)

5.4.5 Learner autonomy

Learner autonomy is a good way to ensure that the students practice a skill and do not forget the topics they have learnt in class. Here, 63% learners stated that they sometimes practice speaking in English apart from class time (see 4.1.4.5). Most of these students stated that they practice with their friends or roommates in their residential halls. This is easier for these students to find friends with the same needs. The others talk to their family and relatives or talks to themselves. Those who have friends or relatives abroad, uses computer assisted applications like face book, messenger, viber etc. However, what is noticeable here is the recurrent use of the word sometimes by the students. This implies that they do not practice on a regular basis. One of the teachers reported that the use of mobile dictionary helped his students in learning autonomously. It increased their motivation and raised the number of students who learn autonomously. The teachers have substantial ideas to help students. But due to lack of interest of the concerned department and lack of time of the concerned teacher, most of these ideas do not get fulfilled.

5.4.6 Vocabulary

The students highlighted the need to learn vocabulary and practising new words. They feel that in order to speak fluently, they need to increase their vocabulary by learning new words regularly. One of them pointed out,

> "Most of the student, so much weak in English vocabulary, so
> my opinion is first of all we should learn English vocabulary."
> (student 7)

The teachers explained that the learners have learnt a considerable amount of vocabulary in their school and college. So, lack of vocabulary should not hinder communication.

However, most of them are very weak in English and their vocabulary is limited. The other problem is that students learn new words from dictionary but they do not learn the context. That is why they cannot use words appropriately. Class observation also confirms these facts. One of the teachers pointed out that in this age of face book and video games, most of the students do not have a habit of reading books. As they do not read books, they do not pick up new vocabulary autonomously. Mahboob (2015) in his study on tertiary level, pointed out that weakness in vocabulary is one of main reasons for poor performance of our students (see 2.3.11).

My observation also reveals that students were having problems remembering words. This may be caused by both lack of vocabulary and lack of speaking practice. It is even difficult to remember simple day to day words due to lack of regular speaking practise. One of the teachers (teacher 1) was found to explain meaning and its forms in different parts of speech of the new words from the reading text. The teachers also pointed out that students should read more and learn vocabulary. The dictionary will help the students to learn its different forms and the context of its use. The teachers advised the students to use simple vocabulary and small sentences to express themselves. A teacher expressed,

> "It is a great skill if someone can really say something very
>
> deep in a simple language." (teacher 2)

5.5   Teacher Role

To increase the level of proficiency of the students in the tertiary level is a great responsibility of the teacher. The findings show a number of factors which are discussed below:

5.5.1   Providing individual attention

Participants have pointed out that it is difficult for the teacher to provide individual attention. Frequency scores show that about 62% pointed out that they did not receive individual attention (see 4.1.5). This percentage should increase if only the students of large classes are taken into account, because, interviews of the teachers show that the teacher with a regular class is satisfied about providing individual attention. In large

classes about 8% of the learners complained that the teachers were not able to provide attention to their needs (see 4.2.4.1). The teachers expressed that the sheer number of students make it difficult for them to provide attention to all of them.

When asked specifically why their teacher was unable to provide individual attention more than half of the students mentioned the reason to be the large number of students in their class. These are followed by time restraint, difficulty of the teacher to know if the students have understood and also problem of concentration and/or tiredness of the teacher and students which hinder the teacher from providing attention to each and every student in class. Observation of large classes reveals that even though the teacher walked between the rows of students, it was difficult for him to listen to the students and answer and explain each individual problem.

One of the teachers came up with a solution. He asked twenty students in every class and listened to their problems. He soon found that as there were about eighty students, this is actually time consuming. At the same time he found it difficult to keep track of the students he had talked to in the previous classes. So, providing individual attention to students is not easy to solve for the teachers of large classes.

5.5.2 Motivation

While discussing the problems of pair work, about 17% of the respondents complained that they could not do the activity properly because of the lack of motivation of their partner. About 7% complained the same during group work. Teachers also found it difficult to motivate all the students especially those who taught to large classes. Sarwar (2013) also had a similar finding in her study of the students of the department of English (see 2.3.8). On the other hand, we find 63% of the students speaking in their own time which means that more than half the students are motivated. As one of the student suggests,

> "Do mistakes but don't give up speaking English. Try more
> and more." (participant 16)

Again, 61% of the learners suggested that more opportunities should be created for speaking activities. These examples show that teachers should try to fight the obstacles and they should not lose their motivation.

Most of the teachers explained that as adjunct faculties they are not provided space to sit after the class and help the students. Some of them also confessed that having full time job in other places, they do not have time to help the students after the class. And the departments do not show any concern about these. Thus, we can see that because of all these problems, the teachers do not find the motivation to provide extra help for the weak students. Moreover, sometimes faculties of the concerned department ask the teachers to concentrate more on writing which puts pressure on the teacher and kills motivation for speaking. One of the teachers (teacher 1) pointed out that some of the teachers follow a framework for teaching and are reluctant to try and test new types of activities to improve speaking practice. To what extent this statement is true could be a topic for further research.

Another problem is that prepared speech makes students suffer from anxiety and kills motivation of the students. On the contrary students liked pair work and some of the participants shared that they have found that the teachers are not motivated to do this activity (see 4.1.3.1).

Lastly, as speaking is not tested in the examination, both the students and the teachers find it difficult to keep up motivation to practice throughout the course. As (teacher 1) pointed out, the students are not motivated because they do not see it as an immediate goal, but as some skill which they will need after four years when they enter the job sector. To motivate the students, we need to make it an immediate goal. We need to test speaking in the examination.

5.5.3   Testing and evaluation

Speaking is not getting the importance that it should as one of the four skills in language learning because this skill is not tested in the examination. Though listening and speaking are mentioned in the curriculum, there are no marks for testing these skills. Some

teachers informally assess student's proficiency in speaking and give them feedback. This actually is really difficult in classes where there are a large number of students.

One of the teachers explained that none of the English language courses offered are only speaking course. Speaking is just part of it. And in the University of Dhaka, there is no provision for evaluating speaking. That is why speaking gets less focus and less preference than reading or writing in the course.

> "We don't evaluate speaking performances of students, not
> in the in-course or the final. There is no provision for that
> in the department. They have only written test and they
> have attendance and a midterm mostly in writing. So I
> guess the speaking is being neglected." (Teacher 3)

One of the teachers evaluated speaking with class test/assignment marks. However, others commented that there are no marks allotted in their department for class test/assignment.

In the evaluation of the course, Khan (2000) reported that the teachers emphasized the importance of speaking skill and proposed that this skill should be tested (see 2.3.1). However, even in 2018 that suggestion has not been materialized.

5.5.4 Teacher cognition

The findings reveal that there is considerable difference in teacher cognition about speaking practice. This difference is obvious in the use of different techniques by the teachers. These techniques result in varied attempts which are more of less effective in achieving speaking proficiency of the students.

Firstly, some teachers pointed out that they practice speaking in the introductory classes and then move on to other skills. By the separation of skills, the students are losing valuable practice which, if made regular could help the students with their proficiency and anxiety.

Secondly, some teachers pointed out that they do not practice speaking separately with specific speaking activities after the first few classes. According to some of the teachers, students get opportunities to speak even when the other skills are focused. Class observation shows that during reading or writing activities, the teachers asked questions to the students. They spend considerable amount of time doing this. However, it was also observed that the less proficient students did not volunteer to answer and kept silent throughout the class. So, the teachers thought that they are giving a lot of time speaking. However, it is not helping all the students. This finding is an instance of latent level analysis (see 3.4).

Thirdly, teachers are afraid of losing control over the class if they have speaking activities. They said that there will be a chaos if students are allowed to speak freely. However, pair work and group work are the only ways that maximizes class participation (teacher 3). This misconception comes from lack of knowledge in language teaching.

Lastly, in the introductory classes, some teachers use pair work only for introduction and very few discussions. Most of the time is spent on public speaking or prepared speech where the students faces the class and delivers his speech one by one. An individual student gets only one or two minutes to deliver a speech from memory though the teacher is happy to spend two or three classes believing that the students are practising speaking. This activity is not communicative, lacks reciprocity condition, goes against the belief of dialogic learning and increases anxiety among the students.

Thus we can see that, teacher cognition on speaking differs between teachers with and without ELT background. Most of these misconceptions were found with the teachers who do not have the knowledge and training in ELT. Proper knowledge of language teaching will help the teachers in choosing the most effective activities to help increase the proficiency level of the students in the shortest possible time.

5.6   Suggestion from both teachers and students

Different points of view on improving the practice of speaking skill were gathered by asking both the students and the teachers. First and foremost, the students stated that they want more opportunity for speaking. Some of them specified that they wanted state of the

art technique to be used which maximizes speaking opportunity for every student. There was a similar finding by Chaudhury (2013) where the participants considered speaking and writing as most important. (see 2.3.3). About 66% of the students opted for more opportunities and new techniques. They also wanted modern technological support, teaching of vocabulary and pronunciation. These topics have been dealt earlier in this chapter.

The teachers emphasized that speaking test should be included in the examination. All the skills should be taught in an integrated way and tested without giving too much focus on any specific skill. The concerned department should not ask the teacher to concentrate on any specific skill. In addition, marks allotment in the examination should be changed.

The teachers argued that class size should be reduced and logistic support should be improved. Class time should also be a suitable one. One of the teachers with ELT background suggested that teachers should try to create a natural setting within the classroom. Teachers should keep in mind what Krashen mentioned as the Natural Approach. Like Bangla they need to learn English the way they picked up their mother tongue. If the setting is created the learners will automatically speak. So we need to have a natural setting within the classroom so that they know,

> "… this is the way how they are supposed to engage in a conversation and this is the way they are supposed to speak English." (teacher 3)

5.7   Efforts to minimize the problems

It is not easy to deal with all these problems single handedly. This puts tremendous burden on the teacher. Again, these teachers being adjunct faculties lack communication with the parent department teachers and with other English language teachers. That is why their efforts and successes are not communicated. There is no forum where they can come together and address their problems and try to find ways to solve these collectively.

5.8   **Conclusion**

The findings show that both students and teachers are trying their best to practise speaking. However, there are a number of obstacles that hinders the teaching and learning of this skill. It is not easy to tackle these problems alone. There should be a collective effort for handling these problems. These will be discussed in the next chapter.

Main problems as analysed by the research:

- Lack of evaluation of speaking skill in the examination;
- Large class- too many students making it difficult to implement techniques of teaching speaking;
- Lack of collective effort;
- Lack of logistic support;
- Time restraint in teaching the four skills together;
- Not giving equal time and importance to all the skills, speaking is neglected in class;
- Lack of regular speaking activities in class;
- Lack of training of the teachers;
- Mixed proficiency level of students;
- Anxiety suffered by students;
- Problems of teaching pronunciation and vocabulary;
- Problem of providing individual attention by teachers;
- Problem of motivation of both teachers and students;
- Difference in teacher cognition resulting difference in teaching techniques.

Chapter VI

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research which is exploratory in nature tried to find out and analyse the problems of speaking in the English language courses offered in the University of Dhaka. It also aimed to get an insight into the day to day struggle of the teachers in order to find out ways to deal with these problems.

6.1 The problems summarized

After twenty years of its commencement, there still exist a lot of problems in the teaching-learning situation in the English Language course at the University of Dhaka. Most of these problems stem from the lack of logistic support, large classes and absence of proper training programmes for the teachers. The problems identified by the research are stated below:

6.1.1 Logistic Support

Limitation in logistic support hampers the quality of teaching in the language classes. There are lights, fans and sometimes air coolers. However, due to lack of space especially in the large classes, the students cannot sit comfortably. Even the teachers cannot walk about freely. Again in most classes, students sit in benches which make group work difficult to be executed.

There was no supply of materials for speaking activities. The teachers are neither allowed to make photocopies of materials nor do they have audio-visual support to introduce topics for discussion. Thus, absence of audio-visual support, lack of concern from the authority and overcrowded classes are the main problems of having proper speaking practice in the classroom.

6.1.2 Time Allotment

Every teacher has his/her own way of allotting time for speaking practice. Speaking is one of the four skills. As a rule it should be practiced in one fourth of the class time. However, this time is not given by the teachers. Again, the teachers found it difficult to ascertain the class time that is given for this skill as they do not conduct speaking activities in all the classes. Some even stop speaking practice after the introductory classes. Thus, lack of regular practice is one other major problem identified by the study. Again, not giving equal time for all the skills imply that equal importance is not given to speaking.

6.1.3 Classroom activities

Different types of speaking activities which are used to practice speaking were identified by the study. They are pair work, group work, prepared speech, teacher-student interaction etc. All these activities are done in different ratio among the teachers. The problems faced by both the students and the teachers while having these activities is discussed below:

6.1.3.1 Pair work

Pair work is one of the activities that can be done with both regular and large number of students in a limited space. However, this activity is found to be done in the initial classes and later on only sometimes as a part of other skills. Students reported that there is a lack in different areas like proficiency, motivation of both students and teachers; and suitable environment which hinders this activity. On the other hand, noise, large class and time constraint are the major problems pointed out by the teachers. Based on analysis of the findings, it can be said that lack of training in conducting these sort of activities by the teacher, especially in large classes, are also one of the main hindrances of this type of practice.

6.1.3.2 Group work

The research reveals that this activity is rarely done in most of the classes. Some teachers could not even consider trying group work because of the lack of space in large classes.

Students reported of having problems in proficiency, anxiety, domination etc. Problem with linear sitting arrangement is also a big obstacle considered by the teachers in making groups. In addition, high level of noise that is created during group work, too many groups to monitor by the teacher and fear of losing control over the class also hinder this activity.

6.1.3.3 Prepared speech

It was found that too much focus is given to prepared speech. This time consuming activity is not really communicative and it also minimizes speaking practice within the allotted class time. This activity is not dialogic in nature (see 2.1.2). This was also found to be a source of anxiety among the less proficient students. However, most of the teachers who do not have sufficient knowledge of ELT are unaware of the shortcomings of this activity.

6.1.3.4 Teacher-student interaction

Teachers spend some time in each class interacting with the students. Except a few introductory classes, this is the only regular speaking practice that is done in class. Teachers' tend to ask questions generally and only the proficient and dominating students answer. It was observed that most of the weak students keep silent. Occasionally, the teacher focuses on the weaker students. However, they suffer from anxiety in answering in front of a large number of students due to lack of regular practice in pair work and group work activities.

It was revealed that teachers' lack of knowledge also acts as a barrier. Most of them lack knowledge of the teaching techniques used in Communicative Language Teaching. Again, not having proper training in ELT creates obstacles in implementing the teaching techniques like pair work and group work. As a result, they use techniques like prepared speech and teacher-student interaction which kills time and minimizes practice for individual students.

6.1.4   Class performance of students

Different types of problems faced by the students, either individually and /or collectively were explored. These problems were considered and analysed. They are discussed below:

6.1.4.1   Large class

It is identified as one of the main problems that hinders speaking practice. All the problems faced by the students during speaking activities are aggravated in large classrooms. For example, a simple matter like difference in opinion among group mates become a problem because of the teacher's inability to provide attention to individual students. Learners also suffer from additional problems like high noise level, congested sitting arrangement, fatigue, disciplinary problems etc. due to a large number of students in a limited space.

Teachers complained of time constraint, difficulty in making groups, difficulty in implementing techniques, getting feedback, monitoring progress, difficulty in taking care of pronunciation, intonation, fluency, accuracy and keeping up motivation of students. Some even do not find it possible to make groups and having speaking activities among so many students. Above all, these problems make it difficult for the teacher to keep up motivation in implementing speaking activities in a large classroom.

6.1.4.2   Mixed proficiency level

More than one fourth of the respondents identified mixed proficiency level as a barrier in speaking practice. The less proficient students feel shy and intimidated by the more proficient students. Thus, this becomes a source of anxiety among the learners. In addition, it is difficult to neutralize the dominating students during speaking activities. Very few instances of scaffolding, according to Vygotskian theory, was found in the classes (see 2.1.1). The teachers reported that they also find it difficult to choose materials for activities in multi-level classes as they cannot decide which level of the students to address.

6.1.4.3 Pronunciation

The study shows that very little effort is given to improve the pronunciation of the students. Most of the teachers correct the pronunciation of individual students during teacher-student interaction or when a student sometimes reads aloud from a text. In addition, it was found that only half of the teachers use activities focused on pronunciation in the class.

6.1.4.4 Anxiety

Anxiety was identified as a great barrier in speaking practice by both the teachers and the students. The students stated that they feel shy and nervous to speak. Again, some of them are afraid of being mocked at by more proficient students. Most teachers do not seem to be able to deal with this problem successfully because of large classes and time constraint in giving individual attention. Another problem which was found to aggravate anxiety was prepared speech which a student had to deliver in front of a large number of classmates. However, due to lack of training in ELT and having to deal with a large number of students often made it impossible for the teacher to deal with this problem successfully.

6.1.4.5 Learner autonomy

More than 60% of the students try to practice speaking with their friends or family members apart from class time. Some even use different computer assisted applications. However, only one teacher has succeeded in motivating the class jointly where his students use dictionary in their mobiles to learn pronunciation and vocabulary. This type of effort should be spread among the other classes and it should be collective, not individual.

6.1.4.6 Vocabulary

The learners gave importance to learning vocabulary and regularly practising new words in class. The teachers pointed out that though students are able to use simple day to day words, their vocabulary is quite limited. As they do not have the habit of reading books, it is difficult to learn new words autonomously. Some students try to learn from dictionary

but without understanding the context, it does not help them much. The study also revealed that due to lack of regular practice, the students do not remember known words in time to finish sentences successfully when they speak. The teachers explain words that come up during reading activities. However, this effort was observed to be quite limited and its importance varied among teachers.

6.1.5   Teacher role

The role of the teacher is of great importance here because it is the teachers who have the responsibility of increasing students' proficiency in speaking in English in a limited time. The problems faced by them are discussed below:

6.1.5.1   Providing individual attention

More than half the participants confirmed that they did not receive attention from the teacher. This is more so in case of the large classes. While discussing the problems of large classes, the learners described lack of attention of the teacher as a point of difficulty. The teachers also find it difficult to provide individual attention because of the sheer number of students in their class. Even though they walk between the rows of students, it is difficult for them to address each problem of the students. In addition, problems like time restraint, difficulty in monitoring whether the students have understood, lack of concentration, tiredness etc. make it impossible for the teachers to provide individual attention to students. The attempts taken by the teachers so far to solve this problem has been unsuccessful.

6.1.5.2   Motivation

This was pointed out by the learners as a problem during both pair work and group work activities. They could not practice properly because of the lack of motivation of their partner/s. On the other hand, we find a large number of students who are motivated to practice speaking autonomously. Again more than half the learners suggested that more opportunities should be created for speaking activities. So, the main problem is the difficulty in motivating the whole class to practice speaking at the same time. This

becomes more challenging in the large classes. The reason is that as speaking is not evaluated, some students do not comprehend its importance.

The teachers, on the other hand, find it difficult to voice their problems as most of them are adjunct faculties. They are not provided places to sit and advise or guide the students in their spare time. They are not given the necessary logistic support. Eventually, they lose motivation to fight the obstacles and practice speaking.

6.1.5.3 Testing and evaluation

One of the major problems of practising speaking in the English classroom is the absence of evaluation of this skill. No mark has been allotted in the curriculum to the evaluation of this skill. Thus, neither the students nor the teachers give this skill the attention needed to improve the proficiency of the students. Thus, there is lack of motivation which hinders regular classroom practice.

6.1.5.4 Teacher cognition

Different techniques that are used to practice speaking differ from person to person. Some teachers give whole class for speaking in the beginning and later stop practicing regularly, which hampers improvement in this skill. Most speaking practice consists of teacher-student interaction in class which uses valuable time but minimizes practice for individual students. Again, teachers do not use group work or pair work in fear of losing control. Lastly, prepared speech by the students goes against dialogic learning and is not communicative. Thus, it was observed that lack of knowledge and training in ELT are the root of a lot of misconceptions of the teachers.

6.1.6 Suggestion from teachers and students

Both teachers and students gave a number of valuable suggestions. The students wanted more opportunity for speaking and emphasized the use of state of the art techniques. They also wanted more technological support, and teaching of vocabulary and pronunciation.

Teachers suggested that speaking test should be included in the examination. Teachers should be able to teach all the skills in an integrated way without pressure from the department to emphasize on any specific skill. Above all, marks allotment should be changed in the curriculum and marks should be allotted for speaking test. They also advised that class size should be reduced and logistic support to be improved.

6.1.7 Efforts to minimize the problems

Collective efforts to minimize the problems of speaking have been absent so far. The study shows that some teachers have been successful in dealing with some specific problems. However, there is no scope to share their little successes.

6.2 Recommendations

We need to bring about some positive changes to improve the existing situation in our classrooms at the University. Creating a more teacher and student friendly atmosphere should be the goal. Only then will we be able to ensure that speaking is given the importance that it deserves as one of the four skills in language teaching.

The first and foremost change that we need to bring is that we have to start evaluating this skill. If necessary both the curriculum and the system of examination has to be revised. There is viva-voce in the curriculum in most of the departments. Thus speaking test, in a nearly similar format should not be too difficult to implement. As a backwash effect, both the students and the teachers will be motivated to start as they will find it as an immediate goal. In the BA in ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) programme in the Institute of Modern Languages, speaking is practised with forty students and speaking test is administered in the course BEFL 102, titled- English for academic Purposes – 1. This course includes the skills Listening and Speaking. In the evaluation of Foundation Course by Khan (2000), we find that the teachers who were full time faculty of the Department of English, stressed the importance of speaking skill and proposed that this skill should be tested. However, no initiative has been taken so far.

Large class is another major problem. Having a large number of students in a classroom makes it difficult to plan and implement techniques of practising speaking. So, large

classes have to be divided into different sections making the class more manageable to the teacher. In the department of Arabic we find that two sections were made consisting of eighty students each. However, according to my own experience of teaching the students of ESOL at the Institute of Modern Languages it can be suggested that there should not be more than forty students in a classroom. If the students are divided according to proficiency, the problem with mixed ability classes can also be solved.

Without providing proper logistic support, we cannot expect any improvement in the course. Audio-visual support is a must. Movable microphone supported by proper sound system is necessary in all the classes. We also need movable chairs in the language classes to facilitate group work like group discussion, problem solving activities, debate etc.

Training of the teachers should be given utmost importance if we want to improve the situation. Analysis of the findings in the study shows that there is a considerable difference in teacher cognition (see 5.5.4) among the teachers with ELT and non-ELT background. Knowledge of language teaching will help the teachers give equal importance to all the language skills. Again, proper training is necessary to implement teaching techniques like pair work and group work. Khan (2000) had suggested that in-service training should be introduced. However, none of the teachers interviewed had received any type of in-service training so far. A trained teacher will be able to identify, understand and provide guidance in dealing with the student's problems of anxiety and motivation. He/she will also be able to address the students' various learning needs like vocabulary and pronunciation in a proper way.

Khan (2000) also motivated the teachers to do action research on the course. Only a trained teacher will be able to carry out action research. Again what the teachers are doing to solve the problems are scattered efforts. We need to combine these efforts and work collectively. To do that, we need to bring them to a common forum. We need them to share their problems and their own solutions which they work up based on their experiences. We need them to realize that they are part of something big. They can bring positive change not only to one class or one group of students, but the students of the whole university.

Special Interest Groups (SIG) among the teachers should be built up so that the teachers may have a common forum to share their problems and successes. There they can discuss, decide and voice their needs collectively. In this way the teachers can also be able to help each other in keeping up their motivation.

As a long term goal, an Institute of English Language should be established to provide present teachers the needed training in language teaching and revise and implement a new curriculum which gives importance to all the skills. The existing teachers of the English language department at the institute of Modern Languages along with the teachers of the related field can come under this institute to create a framework and plan and implement various training programmes for the teachers of this English Language course. Again, we need full time faculty among the English teachers. If large classes are divided, we will have more classes or sections to teach. The full time faculty will be motivated to give time. We need teachers with ELT or TESOL background. Dhaka University has its own resources. At the Department of English students get a degree in Applied Linguistics and ELT each year. At the department of English Language at the Institute of Modern Languages, students will very soon complete their MA in TESOL. The full time faculty can work under the new English Institute. It will solve the problem of motivation of the teachers. These teachers will know how to implement various teaching techniques of speaking. In addition, they will be able to voice their needs, share their successes and above all be free from the pressure of the concerned department as we have found out from the study. Furthermore, they will also be able to help each other to be second examiners and /or externals of the examinations.

Hence, the recommendations discussed above are stated below in a nutshell:

- We must evaluate speaking skill in the examination.
- Large classes should be divided into smaller and more manageable classes.
- Logistic support like Audio-visual support and movable chairs should be provided.
- Teacher training should be implemented without delay.
- Action research should be carried out.

- Special Interest Groups (SIG) should be created to give the teachers a forum to share their problems and successes.
- An institute of English Language should be established to take care of the whole teaching-learning situation on a large scale.

6.3   Future Directions

There should be more research on teaching-learning situation in the classroom. Importance should be given to observation of classrooms where speaking is practised. Each of the problems that were identified by the study needs in depth research. Large classes, especially, should be explored separately. Individual faculties of the University can be addressed separately and needs analysis should be carried out properly as there can be difference in teaching-learning goals. Action research should be conducted by the teachers and the results ought to be shared.

6.4   Limitation

English is taught in most of the faculties under the University of Dhaka. It was not possible to explore English classrooms of all the faculties because of the time constraint and the qualitative nature of this research.

6.5   Final Conclusion

It is a very difficult task to make a teacher-student friendly atmosphere in the classroom that will enhance proficiency in speaking. Learning does not depend on the teacher alone. The study unveiled lots of problems that hinder successful practice of the speaking skill. We need to solve the problem of logistic support. We must make the classes more manageable. Above all, we need all the stakeholders to come together to make this English Language course a success.

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Appendices
Appendix 1

Student Questionnaire

Course Title:

Course Code:

Male/Female:

Name of the Department:

You are taking part in a survey, which will be kept confidential. This is a research on the problems of practicing speaking skill in your English class. Most of the questions are open ended so that you can give your observation and opinion.

Please put a tick mark to answer the questions. Choose the correct frequency. If you wish to add a comment please write in the space specified for writing.

Logistic support

1. Are the classroom facilities adequate for practicing speaking?
   - Yes
   - No
   - To some extent

2. Are you supplied with materials for having speaking activities? If yes, then go to the next question.
   - Yes
   - No
3. Do you think the materials are adequate for having speaking activities throughout the course? If no, then go to the next question.
   - Yes
   - No

4. Why are the materials not adequate?

Time Allotment

5. What percentage of the class time in your opinion is given to speaking?

- Always (more than 75%)
- Most of the time (75%)
- Often (50%)
- Sometimes (25%)
- Rarely (10%)
- Very rarely (less than 10%)
- Never (0%)

6. Do you think it is adequate for improving your speaking skill in English?
- Yes
- No

Classroom Activities

7. Does the teacher use pair work as a speaking activity? If yes/sometimes, then go to the next question.
- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

8. Do you face problems while doing during pair work with your friend? If yes, then go to the next question?
- Yes
- No

9. What are the problems of having pair work activities in your class?

10. Does the teacher use group work (3 to 4 students) as a speaking activity? If yes/sometimes, then go to the next question.
- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

11. Do you face problems while doing during group work with your friend? If yes, then go to the next question?

- Yes
- No

12. What are the problems of speaking to your friends in a group (3 or 4 students) to perform speaking task in the class?

Class Performance of Students

13. Do you think the large number of students in your class create difficulty in doing speaking activities? If yes, please specify the difficulties.

14. Some students are more proficient in speaking than others. Do you think that creates any problem during speaking activities? If yes, please specify the problems.

15. Are there any specific activities that are done in your class to improve your pronunciation? If yes, please specify the activities.

16. Are you afraid of making mistakes while speaking in English? If yes, why?

17. Do you practice speaking outside the classroom? If yes, with whom and how?

Teacher Role

18. Do you think there is any difficulty for the teacher in providing individual attention to students? If yes, please specify the difficulties.

Suggestion
19. What improvements in speaking practice, if any, should be done in your opinion?

Appendix 2

Interview of the Teacher

Name of the Department:

Number of students in your class:

You are taking part in a survey, the result of which will be kept confidential.

These are the questions that you are going to be asked in the interview.

Logistic Support
20. Are you satisfied with the classroom facilities, materials and logistic support of the department?

Time Allotment
21. What percentage of the class time is given to speaking?

Classroom activities
22. What techniques do you use to teach speaking in English? Are there any problems that you face?

Class performance of students
23. Would you consider your class as a large classroom? If yes, what problems do you face?
24. Do you think the students with mixed ability in your class create problem in teaching speaking?
25. How do you balance the dominating students?
26. It was found that the less proficient students feel shy and nervous while speaking. How do you mitigate the problem?
27. How do you help the students with their pronunciation?
28. Do you think the students can use a wide range of vocabulary in speaking?
29. How do you motivate or help the students with autonomous learning?

Teacher Role
30. Do you face problems in providing individual attention?

31. Do you test speaking? Why / why not?

Suggestion

32. Is there anything more that you would like to share before we conclude?

Appendix 3
Observation Checklist

Classroom observation

Tutor's Name	
Name of the Department	
Number of students	
Date:	Time: started ended

Logistic support

	Completely	Mostly	Somewhat	Little bit	Not at all
a. Classroom facility was adequate and furnished with necessary equipment (Board, marker, speaker, multimedia etc.)					
b. Classroom environment was appropriate to facilitate learners' learning (light, fan, AC)					
c. The sitting arrangement is suitable and not overcrowded					
d. Students are supplied with materials					
e. Use of materials during speaking activities					
f. lesson material for speaking was meaningful, motivated, contextualized					

Time Allotment

	75%	50%	25%	20%	10%	5%
Percentage of the class time allotted to speaking activities						
Wait time (time between teacher's question and student's answer)						

Classroom Activities

Are activities done	
Is pair work done	
Why/why not	
Is group work done	
Why/why not	
Are any other activities done	

Class Performance of Students

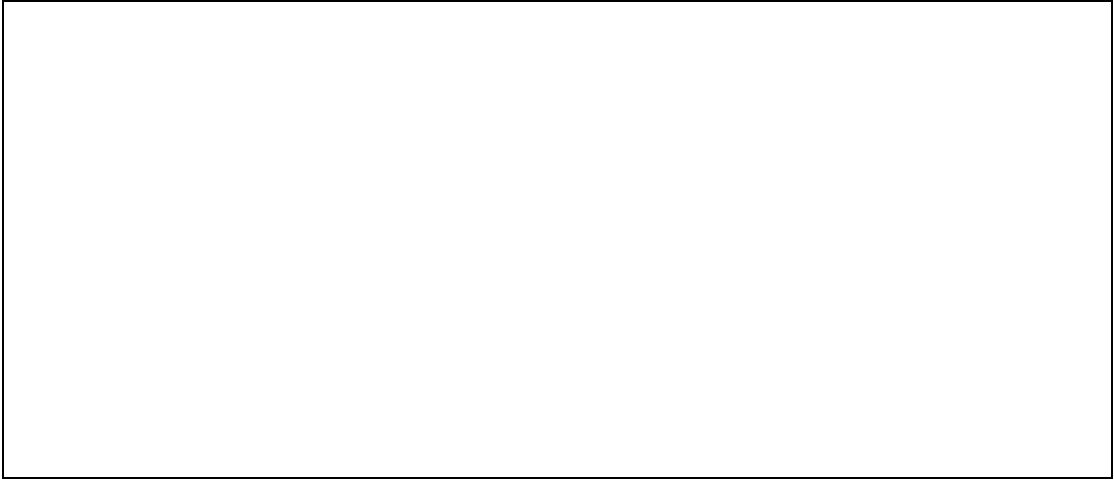|	
The seating arrangement is suitable, not overcrowded	
Some students tried to dominate during speaking activities	
Students showed use of enough vocabulary to communicate	
There were effort to improve pronunciation	
Students suffered from anxiety during speaking activities	

Teacher Role

Individual attention to students	
Space to walk and reach the students during activities	
Use of logistics by the teacher	
Interaction of teacher and learner during speaking activities	
Neutralizing dominating students during speaking activities	
Teaching of tactics to compensate lack of vocabulary of the students	
Helping the students improve their pronunciation	
Mitigating anxiety of students	

Comments