

**TECHNIQUES ADOPTED BY ENGLISH TEACHERS FOR  
TESTING SPEAKING SKILL**

**A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English Education  
In Partial Fulfilment for the Master of Education in English**

**Submitted by  
Sumitra Pangen**

**Faculty of Education  
Tribhuvan University  
Kirtipur, Kathmandu  
2012**

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## RECOMMENDATION FOR ACCEPTANCE

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare to the best of my knowledge that this thesis is original; no part of it was earlier submitted for the candidature of research degree to any university.

Date:

**Sumitra Pangen**

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## ABSTRACT

The present study entitled **Techniques Adopted by English Teachers for Testing Speaking Skill** aims at finding the techniques adopted and analyzing the opinions of the teachers towards the techniques used in the testing speaking skill. In this study the researcher selected forty English teachers of secondary level from Palpa district by applying non-random judgemental sampling procedure. I used checklist and questionnaire to collect data. After the study and analysis, it was found that picture description, reading aloud, oral interview, telling a story were to the commonly used techniques. And lack of sufficient materials and time were an obstacle in the proper testing.

This study consists of four chapters. The first chapter includes the general background, review of the related literature, objectives and significance of the study. The second chapter deals with methodology; it take about how the research was carried out. It includes sources of data (primary and secondary), population of the study, sample population, sampling procedure, tools for data collection, process of data collection and limitations of the study. The third chapter is the main part of the study which includes analysis and interpretation of the data. The final chapter deals with the findings and recommendations of the study followed by references and appendices follow this.

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 General Background**

#### **1.1.1 English Language**

Language is the most widely used means of communication, through which we can express our desires, feelings, emotions, plans, etc. in our daily life. Of course, language is the most highly developed and most frequently used means of communication that human being possess. Every human being possesses at least a language in order to make a purposeful communication with other people. So, language is an inseparable part of human communication. It also helps to transfer knowledge from person to person. Language helps to expose the basic needs of human beings. It consists of the vocal noises made by human beings. Vocal sounds such as sneezing, coughing, snoring, etc. can communicate meanings but cannot be considered as language because these sounds are not deliberately used for purpose of communication.

There are different means of communication. Among them language is the most commonly used means of communication. Language is God's special gift to mankind. Language has distinct characteristics. It is vocal, arbitrary, symbolic, unique, creative, complex, conventional and modifiable. So, every language has its own conventions of establishing intimacy of sharing feelings between people. Richard et al. (1999: p. 196) states "Language is the system of human communication which consists of structured arrangement of sounds for their written representation into large units e.g. morphemes, words, phrases, sentences, utterances".

By the above mentioned definition it is clear that language is a purely human communication system which includes a set of vocal sounds which are arbitrarily and voluntarily produced to convey certain type of meaning.

Waren, (1981: p, 38) states "It is the universal medium a like for conveying the common facts and feelings of everyday life and philosophers searching after truth and all that lies between".

Hornby, (2005, p. 862) defines "language as the system of communication in speech and writing that is used by people of particular country or area".

In this globalised era, learning the languages of the world is in wide practice. And it is true that to adopt the contemporary culture and to fit in such a global multicultural, multilingual environment, one has to learn the language.

### **1.1.2 Situation of English Language in Nepal**

In the Nepalese context English is undoubtedly of crucial importance for modernization process. Basically its impact is remarkably noticeable in academic as well as other subsequent fields e.g. tourism, industries, commerce and trade also. So, learning English has vital role to plunge into the depth of knowledge and to explore the technologies and, so for the non-native speakers of English. English is now becoming a global language. The spread of English initiated from various manifestations of the power of its speakers has now been accelerated as a consequence of modern globalization of culture and economy. Moreover, it is due to the impact of global education that English has got the status of global language.

English language teaching in Nepal does not have a long history. If we are to trace the history of teaching English in Nepal, the credit of its initiation goes to Jung Bahadur Rana, the first prime minister of Nepal, after he returned from Britain in 1910 B.S. But in the very beginning, it was just confirmed within their families, later, only after 32 years i.e. in 1942 B.S. Durbar School was opened for the public, which also contributed to open English language teaching nationwide. Trichandra College, along with its establishment in 1975 B.S. gave English the status of compulsory subject. Later, NESP (2028 B.S.) introduced English from the primary level i.e. grade four. Now, it is the compulsory subject from pre-primary up to Bachelor level and optional subject at University level.

### **1.1.3 Teaching and Testing**

The purpose of testing is to assess the level of proficiency or language competence of the students that they gain command on it to make involve both learning through teaching and self-learning. Depending upon the purpose of testing and nature of language skill to be tested, testing device fall under several classifications. As for example, comprehension, grammar, and vocabularies are tested through objective and subjective tests whereas testing and speaking can be tested through oral test. Composition can be tested through written test and so on respectively.

According to Richard et al. (1985: p. 291) 'Teaching and testing are interrelated disciplines. Test is the procedure, for measuring ability, knowledge or performance'.

A test thus measures whether the learners are being taught effectively or not, how much materials they are taught and how much the students have learned. Test is directly concerned with teaching. Test is a measuring device, which we can when we want to compare an individual with other individuals who belong to the same group.

A test is thus a measuring scale used to assess the proficiency of the students of their learning. Language test always leads to meaningful decision and is thus a tool of evaluation.

Teaching and testing cannot be separated. Teaching and learning is judged with the help of a test. Teaching and testing have a common goal i.e. to achieve the proficiency of the learners. Whether they have learnt the materials they have been taught or not. The teaching and learning becomes fruitful when the learners attain the set objectives. Heaton (1998: p.5) says, 'Both teaching and testing or so closely connected that it is virtually impossible to work either field without primarily concerned with the other. Test may be designed to motivate the students and to assess their performance of the taught materials.'

Testing is used after conducting teaching and it is used to test whether the objectives are achieved or not by the students. It is widely accepted that testing offers useful inputs to the teacher to be aware of the effect of his/her teaching and also some insight on whether s/he should continue the ways he teaches or change it in order to make his/her teaching more effective. Even the teacher who does not have adequate knowledge about the theoretical and practical aspects of testing make use of testing for making their teaching effective. Even if the teacher may not have systematic knowledge about the effect of his/her teaching and testing, s/he has to improve his/her performance by gaining insights through examinations queries and classroom or evaluates academic achievement of his/her students depends upon his/her understanding of the what and how to test the language.

Khaniya, (2005: p.3) says 'better understanding of testing technique will lead the teachers to perform effectively in the teaching. Teaching and testing are regarded as integral part of education'.

In conclusion, teaching and testing are interrelated with each other. One is impossible without the other. testing is conducted during or after teaching. If teachers do not test the students, the performance of the students. Without testing, the teachers are not able to know their teaching whether it is good or not.

#### **1.1.4 Language Testing**

Testing simply refers to the activity of measuring somebody's ability, knowledge or performance. Testing is a tool used for evaluation. Testing is a part of evaluation which includes the judgement of total activities involved in teaching and learning. Testing is essential and integral part of education. A test is a measuring device which we use when we want to compare an individual with other individuals who belong to the same group. In other words, testing is a means or tool for evaluation, a measuring rod to evaluate the student's achievement. Testing thus, is a part of evaluation which includes the judgement of total activities involved in teaching and learning. A test is generally



administered in formal situation which includes the judgement or total activities involved in teaching and learning. A test is generally administered in formal situation to grade the students in language education. Thus, test can be defined as any formal procedure for measuring ability, knowledge, or performance of the students.

The term testing is used as a cover term to refer any means of checking what students can do and cannot do with the language taught.

Although testing language has traditionally take form of testing knowledge about language. The idea of testing communicative competence is becoming recognised as being of great importance in second language learning. In testing communicative competence, speaking and listening tests are commonly used. Those required tasks such as the completion of an information gap and role play.

As language teachers, it is important for us to enhance the students' delivery skills, increase their confidence and develop their methods of organization and critical thinking skills.

In testing speaking four components are emphasized. These include: vocabulary, grammar, semantics and phonology. Accurate assessment of limited English speaking learners require a total description of the communication skills, linguistic structures and functional usage of the learner's language within all social domains.

Speaking is probably the most difficult skill to test. It involves a combination of skills that may have no correlation with each other, and which do not lend themselves well to objective testing.

### **1.1.5 Language Skills**

All the languages of the world including English share the common features of language i.e. the same language skills'. They are;

- i) Listening
- ii) Speaking
- iii) Reading, and
- iv) Writing

The above mentioned skills can be found in almost all the languages except in the cases when a language does not have script. Moreover, speaking and listening are the primary and fundamental language skills, which exist in almost all languages no matter whether they possess script or not. The assumption was that learners needed instructions for reading and writing while listening and speaking would be acquired automatically. But being competent merely in four skills cannot be referred to as having mastery or good command over a language. In fact, one should be rather competent in the language aspects as well as language skills.

#### **1.1.6 What is Speaking Skill?**

Speaking is the second language skill. It is a productive skill. Language is primarily speech we use language basically for communication. Speech is the most powerful and effective way of communication. However, speaking takes a long time because the students most know the elements of speaking skill, i.e. how to pronounce the sounds and words with proper stress and intonation, which sentences are grammatical and which are not, selection and use right and appropriate words in sentences or in a discourse. They need speaking tasks to improve their oral English through a great deal of practices in speaking.

Speaking is the human activity. Speaking is primarily a productive skill in the sense that language is primarily manifested in speech. Speech consists of pronunciation of vowels and consonants sounds, stress, rhythm, juncture and intonation. Speaking is directly related to listening. Therefore, listening is prerequisite to speaking. Speaking in general, is one of the primary, productive skills of a language. Speaking is a very sensitive process. A piece of writing can be corrected once or twice but in speech once gone it won't return. If one

misunderstands the other's information his/her understanding in the subject matter will be affected. Khaniya (2005: p. 133) states,

Speaking is a very complex activity in the sense that it is difficult to describe how utterances are processed and how they come out while speaking. Even the speaker himself can have no clue how the utterances are organised in a string in his 'speech control room' and how they come out making an oral interaction consistent relevant and meaningful.

#### **1.1.6.1 Types of Testing**

There are different types of tests. Some of them are given below:

##### **i. Proficiency Test**

Proficiency tests are designed to measure people's ability in a language regardless of any training they may have had in that language. Davies et.al, (1999) defines proficiency test as "a measure of how much of a language someone has learned." The proficiency test is designed to measure people's language ability without considering the course they have been taught and in which situation they have learned. The proficiency test is a way of measuring the language ability of the students in anticipation of some tasks that they are expected to perform. This test measures how much English a student knows. Proficiency test does not limit to particular course. This test determines students into certain categories that is used by the employers. In the case of some proficiency tests, 'proficient' means having sufficient command of the language for a particular purpose.

##### **ii. Achievement Tests**

Davies et al. (1999) describe "an achievement test as an instrument designed to measure what a person has learned within or up to a given time". This in fact is to measure the students learning efforts. It is designed to find out how much the student has actually learned or mastered. This is conducted at the end of the

programme. It should measure learning that has been acquired standard achievement tests are conducted throughout the country. The final examinations in the end of the year in Nepal are the examples of achievement tests. Achievement tests are of two types: class progress test and final achievement test.

### **Final achievement test**

Final achievement tests are administered at the end of a course of study. These tests are directly related to the objectives specified in the curriculum of a particular language programme. They have both purposes: forward looking and backward looking. Normally the tests used in the annual examination are final achievement tests.

### **Progress Achievement Test**

Progress achievement tests are intended to measure the progress that students are making. In other words, progress achievement tests are made to measure the extent to which what has been taught has been achieved. These tests are administered after a particular period of language programme. For example, unit tests, monthly tests, terminal tests, etc. are designed as the progress achievement tests. Since progress is towards the achievement of course objectives, these tests too should relate to objectives. One way of measuring progress would be repeatedly to administer final achievement tests where the increasing scores indicate the progress made.

### **iii. Diagnostic Test**

This type of test indicates the strengths and weaknesses of the students. The teacher then decides whether to continue or stop his course. A diagnostic test is like a diagnosis of a medical doctor. As the doctor makes a judgement on an illness after examining the person in order to pursue further treatment, a teacher administers a diagnostic test to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the students so as to determine the kind of further remedial action needed for a particular group of students.

#### **iv. Progress Test**

Test is conducted at regular intervals. It is used to measure success of the student and the area the students have mastered and the teacher has best taught. This helps to diagnose the knowledge of the students and modify teaching accordingly. The students revise what they have learnt. It motivates them for better performance.

#### **v. Cloze Test**

Close tests are used to measure the students' reading comprehension. In a close test, words are removed from a reading passage at the regular intervals. Leaving blanks and the students have to complete them with appropriate words. For example, every 4<sup>th</sup> word may be removed. The students should guess the missing words.

#### **vi. Subjective and Objective Tests**

The subjective item is the one that requires a constructed response. A test with subjective marking is subjective test. Subjective tests can be factorized in to two categories viz, short-answer tests and long-answer tests. The short -answer tests include making note, making table, making list, compare and contrast, summary writing, answering to the points, whereas long answer tests include describing, narrating, explaining, elaboration, amplifying, giving arguments and opinions, writing essays, etc.

Objective tests, on the other hand, need objectivity and can be marked with out the use of examiners' personal judgement. There is no subjective judgement exercised by the examiner when assessing the mark given for the answers in a objective test. Objective tests have many more individual questions than a subjective test (Davies et al. 1999) defines objective tests as the item that follows the format -multiple choice, true, false, matching, etc.

#### **1.1.6.2 Reasons for Testing Students**

Harmer, (2008, p. 166-7) states following reasons for testing students:

- i) Students are tested to put them in a class at an appropriate level. Such test is termed as placement test.
- ii) Students are tested to see how well they are getting on with the lessons, and how well they have assimilated what they have been taught over the last week, two weeks or a month. Such tests are called progress test.
- iii) Students are tested to see how well they have learnt everything taught. The tests which are taken for this purpose are called achievement tests.
- iv) Students are tested to see what level a student has reached at any one time. Such tests are used by employers and universities and are termed as proficiency tests.
- v) Students are tested to prepare their language portfolios through continuous assessment.

Following Heaton, (1975, p.2) a test is designed and administered for the following reasons/purposes.

- i) To evaluate individual performance.
- ii) To enable teachers to increase their own effectiveness by making judgement in their teaching
- iii) To identify and analyse the errors a student in handling the target language.
- iv) To ascertain which parts of language programme have been found difficulty by the particular group of learners.
- v) To render the assistant through appropriate remedial work or additional practice to minimize the errors and difficulty.
- vi) To evaluate the effectiveness of the syllabus as well as the method and materials being delivered to the students.
- vii) To diagnose the students' weaknesses and difficulties.
- viii) To motivate the students towards their study.
- ix) To promote them to an upper level.
- x) To clarify them that they have complete a level or achieved a course of certain degree.

- xi) To determine their readiness for instructional programmes.
- xii) To make comparison among groups.

### **1.1.7 Problems in Testing the Speaking Skill**

Speaking is probably the most difficult skill to test. It involves a combination of skills that may have no correlation with each other and which do not lend themselves well to objective testing. There are not yet good answers to questions about the criteria for testing these skills and the weighing of these factors.

It is possible to find people who can produce the different sounds of a foreign language appropriately; hence they lack the ability to communicate their ideas correctly. This is one of the difficulties that testers encounter when testing the oral production of learners. However, the opposite situation could occur as well; some people do have the ability of expressing their ideas clearly, but at the same time they cannot pronounce all the sounds correctly. Another difficulty is the administration of speaking skill testing. That is because it is hard to test large numbers of learners in a relatively short time. Therefore, the examiner of oral production is put under great pressure.

The next difficulty discussed here is that speaking and listening skills are very much related to each other; it is difficult to separate them. In most of the cases, there is an interchange between listening and speaking, and speaking appropriately depends on comprehending spoken input. Therefore, this has an impact on testing speaking because the testers will not know whether they are testing purely speaking or speaking and listening together.

Finally, the assessment and scoring of speaking skill is one of its biggest problems. If possible, it is better to record the examinees' performance and the scoring will be done upon listening to the tape. The aspects of speaking that are considered part of its assessment include grammar, pronunciation, fluency, content organization and vocabulary.

Depending on the situation and the purpose of the test, testers need to choose the appropriate methods and techniques of testing.

### **1.1.8 Testing Speaking Skills**

The test of the speaking has to do with the ability to interact. Speaking is not merely a monolithic ability making monologues. It is based on successful interactions.

So, to test a language one's speaking should be tested. Testing the ability to speak is the most important aspect. However, at all stages beyond the elementary level of mimicry and repetition it is an extremely difficult skill to test as it is far too complex a skill to permit any reliable analysis to be made for the purpose of objective testing.

And speaking comprises of sound units and the connected speech so testing of speaking should not test merely one's fluency but also the other aspects of speech, e.g. phones, pronunciation, suprasegmental features and other. So, testing of speaking in English seems and rather best way to test all the aspects and skills of a language in a covering but a short way.

Since while testing speaking we can check one's grammaticality, suprasegmental features, appropriateness, pronunciation and all aspects in speaking skill. Moreover, language is speech not writing so speaking is of vital importance and is a sort of genuine one.

From an instructional point of view, speaking test can take place at two levels: sound discrimination and comprehension of connected speech. Testing sound discrimination can include the followings:

- i) Testing individual sound discrimination
- ii) Stress
- iii) Intonation

Testing these elements of speaking can be done by using objective test. The comprehension of connected speech takes the form of oral communication or



interaction. The demand of tests of testing sound discrimination and comprehension of connected speech one of the different kind to define it in an elaborate way, there are mainly three components of speaking skills as:

- i) Linguistic (or pronunciation) component
- ii) Communicative component
- iii) Social component

Linguistic or pronunciation component refers to the skill of how to say a word in isolation or in connected speech. And, this component, as mentioned earlier, includes; sounds, stress and intonation. So, it is quite clear that, in the test of speaking, written test one's linguistic performance in terms of testing his ability of producing sound in isolation or in connected speech.

Harmer (2000) argues that connected speech, expressive devices, lexis, grammar and negotiation language should be focused while testing speaking. From a testing point of view, the major issue in communication or interaction is how to set tasks that serves the purpose. Weighting is another problem in testing speaking, decisions are needed about what constitutes effective performance and how is realised in test criteria.

Question relating to the criteria for measuring the speaking skills and to the weighting given to such components as correct pronunciation remain largely unanswered. It is possible, for people to produce practically all the correct sound but still be unable to communicate their ideas appropriately and effectively. On the other hand, people can make numerous errors in both phonology and syntax and yet succeed in expressing themselves fairly clearly. Furthermore, success in communication often depends as much on the listener as on the speaker; a particular listener may have better ability to decode the foreign speaker's message or may share a common nexus of ideas with him or her, thereby making communication simpler. Two native speakers will not always, therefore, experience the same degree of difficulty in understanding the foreign speaker. So, however, if the test of speaking manage to test the

language in terms of a sound in particular and also in connected speech along with other intended aspects to be tested, then, we can call it a valid and reliable test, which every test should inherit for maintaining the standard.

Harmer (2001) argues that connected speech, expressive devices, lexis and grammar and negotiation language should be focused while testing speaking. For example, individual phonemes sound different when they are in isolation and when they are in connected speech like, I would have gone and I'd've gone. To be an efficient speaker, one must be able to appreciate the difference.

While testing speaking the test should be able to test the following sub-skills of the speaker. Referring to Bygate, (1987), Hughes, (2003, pp. 114-115):

1. Information Skills

Candidate should be able to:

- i) Provide personal information
- ii) Provide non-personal information
- iii) Describe sequence of events (narrate)
- iv) Give instructions
- v) Make comparisons
- vi) Give explanations
- vii) Present an argument
- viii) Provide required information
- ix) Express need
- x) Express requirements
- xi) Elicit help
- xii) Seek permission
- xiii) Apologise
- xiv) Elaborate an idea
- xv) Express opinions
- xvi) Justify opinions
- xvii) Complain
- xviii) Speculate

- xix) Analyse
- xx) Make excuses
- xxi) Paraphrase
- xxii) Summarise (what they have said)
- xxiii) Make suggestions
- xxiv) Express performances
- xxv) Draw conclusions
- xxvi) Make comments
- xxvii) Indicate attitude

2. Interactional Skills

Candidates should be able to:

- i) Express purpose
- ii) Recognise other speaker's purpose
- iii) Express agreement
- iv) Elicit opinions
- v) Elicit information
- vi) Question ascertains made by other speakers
- vii) Modify statements or comments
- viii) Justify or support statements or opinions of other speakers
- ix) Attempt to persuade others
- x) Repair breakdowns in interactions
- xi) Check that they understand or have been understood correctly
- xii) Establish common ground
- xiii) Elicit clarification
- xiv) Respond to request for clarification
- xv) Correct themselves or others
- xvi) Indicate understanding( or failure to understand)
- xvii) Indicate uncertainty

3. Skills in managing interactions

Candidates should be able to:

- i) Initiate interactions
- ii) Change the topic of an interaction
- iii) Share the responsibility for the development
- iv) Take their turn in an interaction
- v) Give turns to other speakers
- vi) Come to a decision
- vii) End an interaction

### 1.1.9 Techniques of Testing Speaking Skill

Techniques are also called classroom activities. A technique is actually applied in the classroom it is “a particular trick”. Some general techniques of testing speaking skill are as follows:

- i) **Reading aloud:** The students are given a text to read. They read it silently first. Then they read it aloud at normal speed and with appropriate pronunciation, stress and intonation.
- ii) **Picture description:** Pictures are very useful tools to test speaking in different ways. Show the student a picture and asked question based on it.
- iii) **Oral interview:** This is a teacher controlled test. So, try much to make your students relax and try to create a real situation. Make suitable questions to the level of students.
- iv) **Free talking:** Ask the students to make a short talk on a topic, e.g. ‘your school’ or ‘your family’, etc.

While testing speaking skill students may fear from tester, so the teacher must make a relax situation. Prompt the students to speak. Encourage them to speak. Tester should make his/her voice and facial expression friendly.

Hughes (2003, p.119-22) suggests the following techniques of testing skill.

- i) **Interview:** Perhaps the most common technique for the testing of oral

interaction is interview. In its traditional form, however, it has at least one potentially serious drawback. The relationship between the tester and the candidate is usually such that the candidate speaks as to a superior and an unwilling to take the initiative, however, it is possible to get round this problem by introducing a variety of elicitation techniques in to the interview. Useful techniques are :

- a) Questions and requests for information: At the very beginning of the interview, while the candidate is still warming up. Performance of various operations can be elicited through requests of the kind: *can you explain to me how/why...?* and *can you tell me what you think of...?*
  - ) Requests for elaboration: such as *what exactly do you mean?*, *can you explain that in a little more detail?*, etc.
  - ) Appearing not to understand: this is most appropriate where the interviewer really is not source of what the candidate means but can also be used simply used in order to see if the candidate can cope with being misunderstood. The interviewer may say, for example, *I am sorry*.
  - ) Invitation to ask questions: *Is there anything you'd like to ask me?*
  - ) Interruption: to see how the candidate deals with this.
  - ) Abrupt change to topic: to see how the candidate deals with this.
- b) Pictures: Single pictures are particularly useful for eliciting description.
- c) Role play: Candidates can be asked to assume a role in a particular situation. This allows the ready elicitation of other language functions.
- d) Interpreting: It is not intended that candidates should be able to act as interpreters. However, simple interpreting tasks can test both production and comprehension in a controlled way.
- e) Prepared monologue: It could be appropriate in a proficiency test for teaching assistants or in an achievement test where the ability to make presentations is an objective of the course.
- f) Reading aloud: This is another technique of testing speaking skill.

- ii) Interaction with fellow candidates: An advantage of having candidates interacting with each other is that it should elicit language that is appropriate to exchanges between equals, which may well be called for in the test specifications. Possible techniques are:
  - a) Discussion
  - b) Role play
- iii) Responses to audio/ video recording: These include
  - a) Described situations
  - b) Simulated conversation

## **1.2 Review of Related Literature**

Obviously, the research remains incomplete if earlier findings are not included and it will be futile and worthless if no newness is shown and no investigation is done. Several researches have been carried out on speaking test. Some of them have focused on the speaking skills whereas some of them have focused on the qualities and techniques of testing speaking skills.

Oli (2003) carried out a research entitled 'The Proficiency in the Speaking Skill of the 9th Graders from the Public School'. The main objective of the study was to find out the proficiency in the speaking skill of the 9th graders. The researcher prepared six different types of tests in the form of questionnaire. The selected 10 schools from two districts five from each. 200 students were tested on the basis of grammar, pronunciation and fluency. The researcher had the responses of the 10 English teachers of the concerned school on written form. In this study he found the fact that urban area and the students from there were comparatively good at speaking than those of rural area.

Pandey (2007) carried out a research entitled 'Teaching of Speaking at the Secondary Level. An Analysis of Classroom Activities'. The main objectives of this study was to identify the activities used for teaching speaking and practical constraints in conducting speaking activities. This research study was done using both primary and secondary sources of data. For primary data, she

observed classes of secondary level teachers with a prepared checklist and distributed them a set of questionnaire as well. After the study and analysis, she found that group work, pair work and discussion were commonly used speaking activities and inhibition, lack of physical facility and mother tongue use are the main problems in teaching speaking.

Paudel (2007) carried out a study on 'Testing Quality of Speaking Test: A Case of SLC spoken Test'. The main objective of the study was to find out the quality of speaking in terms of content, context, material and process. The study was concentrated on the speaking test used in the SLC examination in the year 2063. The researcher utilized the three sets of questionnaire and were provided to 60 SLC students, administrators and DEOs of the 3 districts. It was found that the contents, context, materials and process used in the SLC spoken text were not fixed and standard. In the response of the students and teachers the test were only a formality.

Although the above mentioned works were related to the techniques of teaching speaking, testing quality of speaking test. Apart from these, no any conclusive study has been carried out on techniques adopted by English teacher for testing speaking skill. It is the first research of its kind and nature. So, it is a unique work itself. However, I have gone through several research works which are totally different in their objectives and nature in comparison to this study but they have also tried to address the problems raised in teaching speaking, techniques in teaching speaking skills and some are about the qualities of testing speaking skills.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- i) To find out the techniques adopted and analyze the opinion of the teachers towards the techniques used in the testing speaking skill.
- ii) To suggest some pedagogical implications.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This study provides the information about the techniques adopted by English teacher for testing speaking skill. This will be valuable work for the department itself in the sense that, this unique topic provides some insightful works for the further researcher. This study can be beneficial to the students, teachers, syllabus designers, textbook writers, syllabus designers and all those who are interested in language teaching and learning.

More specifically, it is significant to those teachers and students who are directly or indirectly involved in testing speaking skill. Moreover, it can be useful to language practioners, subject experts, curriculum designers and textbook writers of ELT in that they can infer from the study shape their methodology.



## **CHAPTER-TWO**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The following methodology was adopted to achieve the objectives of the present study:

#### **2.1 Sources of Data**

In order to conduct this study, data were collected using both primary and secondary sources.

##### **2.1.1 Primary Sources of Data**

The primary sources of data for the study were the English teachers, teaching in the selected schools of Palpa district.

##### **2.1.2 Secondary Sources of Data**

The researcher has used different books related to research to facilitate the present study. Some of them were, Davies, A. et al. (1999), Harmer, J. (2008), Hughe, A. (2003), Khaniya (2005), Yadav, R.N. (2011).

#### **2.2 Population of the Study**

The population of the study were the secondary level English teachers of the Palpa district.

#### **2.3 Sampling Procedure**

Forty English teacher of secondary level were selected applying non-random judgmental sampling procedure. The researcher selected two English teachers from each of the twenty different secondary schools.

#### **2.4 Tools for Data Collection**

A set of questionnaire was prepared to distribute to the selected teachers (see Appendix No. I). And observation checklist was also prepared for the classroom observation (see Appendix No. II).

## **2.5 Process of Data Collection**

The researcher followed the following procedures for the collection of data:

- i. First of all, the researcher visited the selected schools and talked to authority to get permission to carryout this study.
- ii. The researcher selected two English teachers (from each school)
- iii. Then the researcher consulted the English teacher and explained the purpose of the research and requested them to allow observing their class.
- iv. After that, the researcher observed the classes with the help of the checklist.
- v. Then the researcher distributed the questionnaire to the teachers and requested them to fill it.
- vi. At last the researcher collected, tabulated the obtained data from the questionnaires.

## **2.6 Limitations of the Study**

This study had the following limitations:

- a. The population of the study was limited to the twenty secondary school from Palpa district.
- b. The study was limited to techniques of testing speaking skill.
- c. Data collection was conducted through classroom observation and questionnaire.

## CHAPTER -THREE

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter provides a detail analysis and interpretation of the collected data and analyzed descriptively under the following subheadings:

- I. Analysis of the teachers responses.
- II. Classroom observation of the secondary English teachers.
- III. Teachers views on testing speaking skill.

#### 3.1 Analysis of the Teachers' Responses

This section analysis the techniques of testing speaking skill according to the information provided by the informants, the secondary level English teachers through the questionnaire given to them. The total number of sample teachers were 40 from 20 selected secondary school of Palpa district. Those teachers were selected non-randomly. Altogether there were 25 questions, among them question no. 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23, 24, 25 were open and opinion oriented and questions No. 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 21, 22 were close ended.

##### 3.1.1 Analysis of Open Ended Questions

In question no. 1, 30 teachers prepared temselves for conducting speaking test in such a way that, they collect various pictures, reading test, etc. it is the 75 percent of the total. Though 10 teachers prepared question type as provided in the grid. It can be shown in the following table.

**Table No. 1**  
**Ways of Conducting Test**

Ways of Conducting Test	Using Pictures, Reading Text		Preparing Questions	
	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	Percent
	30	75	10	25

In case of question no. 2, 20 teachers test speaking skill in classroom to check the students speaking ability and 10 teachers test speaking skill to find out the pronunciation skill and 10 teachers test speaking skill to check communication skill. The following table shows the clear picture.

**Table No. 2**  
**Reason for Testing Speaking Skill**

Reason for Testing Speaking Skill	Speaking ability		Pronunciation skill		Communication skill	
	No. of Teacher	Percent	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	Percent
	20	50	10	25	10	25

In question no. 3, the researcher were found that 15 teachers aroused interest in taking part in speaking test by showing the important of spoken language and 25 teachers were aroused students interest by presenting and providing free questions, pictures, map, diagram to avoid their nervousness. It can be shown in the following table.

**Table No. 3**  
**Interest in Speaking Test**

Interest in Speaking Test	Showing the Importance of English Language		Presenting Pictures, Maps	
	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	Percent
	16	40	34	60

In response to question no. 4 and 8, 25 teachers preferred picture description, timetable description, reading aloud, free talking techniques. And 15 teachers

used only picture description and interview and they told the researcher, picture description and interview were very easy to use while testing speaking skill.

In case of question no. 9, all those 40 teachers told that students were not really interested in participating speaking test. Because they thought that they can pass the exam without taking part in such a test. In response to question no. 13, 35 teachers told that if students were talented they felt confident and 5 teachers told that if the students were not talented they felt nervous.

In case of question no. 16, 30 teachers found oral interview and 6 teachers found picture description. And 6 teachers found free talking because they found that they can create the sentences according to picture. It can be shown in the following table.

**Table No. 4**  
**Techniques of Testing Speaking Skill**

Techniques of Testing Speaking Skill	Oral interview		Picture Describing		Loud reading	
	No. of Teacher	Percent	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	Percent
		28	70	6	15	6

Question no. 17 shows that all 40 teachers found difficulties in testing speaking skill because low abilities students cannot perform better. As far as the response to question no. 18, 25 teachers have taken teacher's profession development training for testing speaking. 5 teachers, did not have any special language training except. Simple training provided by NELTA and 10 teachers have taken TPD module 1st training.

In question no. 20, 30 teachers out of 40 make speaking test effective showing the records how native speakers speak and the 10 teachers involved all the students in speaking. Most of them said that if we provided native speakers recorded voice they know how should we speak.

In the case of question no. 23, 25 teachers got problem because students remain rather shy to speak. 10 teachers said that they felt hesitation because they have lack of fluency and communication skill and rest of other said that students feel nervous. And in question no. 24, 35 teachers were conducted group work, information gap activities and pair work but the 5 teachers did not use any extra communicative activities. In response to question no. 25, all 40 teachers found that scoring was one of the most difficult task because scoring is some how

subjective rather than being objective. Because allotted time is not sufficient to test speaking skill.

### 3.1.2 Analysis of Close Ended Questions

As far as the response to question no. 5, the researcher gave six aspects about the speaking and asked which aspects of speaking they thought most important to test among them 30 teachers answered pronunciation, 5 teachers found fluency and 5 teachers answered content aspects of speaking. It can be shown in table following table.

**Table No. 5**  
**Aspect of Speaking Skill**

Aspect of Spea king Skill	Pronunciation		Fluency		Content	
	No. of Tea cher	Percent	No. of Teac hers	Percent	No. of Teac hers	Percent
	28	70	6	15	6	15

Most of the teacher thought all aspects of speaking skill were important but among them pronunciation, fluency and content were the key ones.

Question no. 6 reveals that 30 teachers felt easy for intonation and 10 teachers felt easy for stress to test. They told that sound discrimination at the lower level and comprehension at the higher level.

Question no. 8 and 10, deals with test format. In that question their response was 22 teacher preferred picture and describing people's appearance and rest of 18 teachers preferred multiple choice and listening to the instruction to check the language skills of students. It can be shown in the following table.

**Table No. 6**  
**Test Format**

Test Forma t	Pictures		Describing People's appearance	
	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	Percent
	22	55	18	45



Question no. 11, deals with what types of visual materials they used test speaking skill, in response to this question all of them used pictures maps, charts, slides. Because they thought they were very easy to used.

In case of question no. 12 6 teachers used reading aloud daily, 10 teachers used free talking once a weak and interaction with fellow candidates some times and 24 teachers never used responses to audio or video recording because there was no electricity. It can be shown in the following table.

**Table No. 7**  
**Techniques of Speaking Skills**

Techniques	Daily		Once a weak		Sometimes		Never	
	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	
Reading aloud	6	15						
Free talking			10	25				
Response to audio and video recording							24	

### **3.2 Classroom Observation of the Secondary English Teacher**

Classroom observation of the secondary level English teachers were shown

under the following subheading.

### 3.2.1 Classroom Management

Classroom management refers to how well a teacher handled the classroom environment. The researcher observed the classes to see how far the teachers were able to manage their class for the peaceful testing of speaking skill out of total 40 teachers. 5 Percent were found excellent in classroom management. 15 percent were very good in classroom management, 40 percent were satisfactory. Similarly, 40 percent were found fair satisfactory in the classroom management.

**Table No. 8**  
**Classroom Management**

Classroom management	Excellent		Very good		Satisfactory		Fairly	
	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	
	2	5	6	15	16	40	16	

Thus, it was clear that classroom management for the testing of speaking skill was satisfactory in the classroom understudy.

### 3.2.2 Students Motivation and Interest

**Table No. 9**  
**Students Motivation and Interest**

Students Motivation and	Excellent		Very good		Satisfactory		Fairly	
	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	

Interest	2	5	6	15	18	45	14	
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The above table clarifies as to how far the students were motivated in taking part in speaking exam. 5 percent teachers were found excellent in motivating students and creating interest. Similarly, 15 percent of teachers were very good in motivating the students, 35 percent were found satisfactory in motivating the students and 35 percent teachers were found fairly satisfactory in motivating students.

Hence, motivation and interest of students for taking part in speaking exam was satisfactory.

### 3.2.3 Use of Materials in the Classroom

While testing speaking skill at the classroom materials play a vital role. The researcher observed how often the teachers used the materials. It was found that using usual classroom materials rather the new ones. The table shows that the use of materials in the classroom for testing speaking skill.

**Table No. 10**  
**Use of Materials in the Classroom**

Use of Materials in the classroom	Excellent		Very good		Satisfactory		Fairly	
	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	
	-	-	2	5	18	45	20	

The table no. 11 shows that 50 percent teachers were found fairly satisfactory to used materials in the classroom, 45 percent were satisfactory and only 5 percent were very good in the use of materials in the classroom.

Hence, it was know that a less number of teacher used extra materials in the

classroom though they were very useful in motivating students in learning and creating interest among them.

### 3.2.4 Teachers' Attention to test speaking Skill

The four major language skills are listening, speaking, reading writing. These were very important to develop the competence in the language. Here, my focus is only speaking skill.

The table below shows it.

**Table No. 11**  
**Teachers' Attention to Test Speaking Skill**

Teachers' attention to test speaking skill	Excellent		Very good		Satisfactory		Fairly	
	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	Percent
	-	-	2	5	18	45	14	

The above table shows that teachers were not very much aware of testing speaking skill in the classroom, most of the teachers in government aided school were found to give less attention on it.

### 3.2.5 Teachers Control Over Class

In modern testing, teachers should not be authoritative in the classroom. She/he should behave as a facilitator. The class in the government aided school were found nosier and out of control. The table below shows the control of the teachers of their classes at secondary level classrooms.

**Table No. 12**  
**Teacher's Control Over Class**

Teacher's Control Over Class	Excellent		Very good		Satisfactory		Fairly	
	No. of Teac hers	Percent	No. of Teac hers	Percent	No. of Teac hers	Percent	No. of Teac hers	
	2	5	4	10	20	50	14	

From the table, it was known that 5 percent teachers were excellent to control the class, 10 percent teachers were very good to control the class, 50 percent teachers were satisfactory and 35 percent teachers were found fairly satisfactory in controlling the class.

Despite the some exception cases most of the teachers were found satisfactory to control their students as a facilitator in the classroom.

### **3.2.6 Interaction in the Classroom**

Testing speaking is impossible in the absence of interaction. If we did not interact we can't test their speaking skill in the classroom. Interaction is very important for speaking. Without it, speaking is impossible. We rarely have monologues also people interact with themselves. In the language class interaction can be between teacher and students as well as students and students. The following table presents the type of the interaction that took place in the classroom.

**Table No. 13**  
**Interaction in the Classroom**

Students Motivation and Interest	Excellent		Very good		Satisfactory		Fairly	
	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	
	2	5	4	10	18	45	16	

### 3.2.7 Students Involvement

Testing speaking means to participate the students in real life situation. Until and unless the students were involved practically, they can't take part in testing speaking skill. The researcher observed one class each of 40 teachers. She found that the students' involvement was satisfactory in testing speaking skill. The following table shows the involvement of the students in speaking.

**Table No. 14**  
**Students Involvement**

Students Involvement	Excellent		Very good		Satisfactory		Fairly	
	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	
	2	5	2	5	30	75	6	

Among the teachers' understudy, 5 percent were found excellent in involving students 15 percent were found very good in involving students, 75 percent were found satisfactory and 15 percent were fairly satisfactory to involve the students.

This makes it clear that all of the teachers at least tried to involve the students

in speaking test.

### 3.2.8 Language Functions

The researcher collected the language functions from the prescribed textbook of grade 9 and 10 she had observed the class to find out which were used frequently used the classroom to test speaking skill. The following data presents the language functions in percentage.

**Table No. 15**

**Language Function Testing in the speaking skill in the Classroom**

S	Language function	Excellent		Very good		Good		Fair		Poor	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Advising	4	1	8	2	2	5	4	1	4	1
2	instructing	6	1	2	5	8	2	2	5	4	1
3	Persuading	-	-	2	5	1	3	1	2	1	4
4	Prorating	-	-	8	2	2	6	6	1	2	5
5	Describing	4	1	6	1	1	3	1	3	4	1
6	Describing	2	5	8	2	1	3	1	2	8	2

	people										
7	Describing object	6	1	1	2	8	2	1	2	6	1
8	Expressing like/dislikes	-	-	1	2	2	5	8	2	2	5
9	Agreement disagreement	4	1	6	1	1	3	1	2	8	2
1	Requesting commenting	4	1	6	1	1	3	1	2	8	2
1	Directing	4	1	8	2	2	5	6	1	2	5
1	Offering	4	1	8	2	8	2	1	4	2	5
1	Invitation	2	5	1	3	1	4	2	5	6	1
1	Suggesting	2	5	6	1	1	3	1	4	2	5



1	Preferences	-	-	1	3	1	4	8	2	4	1
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The table no. 16 clarifies that teachers taught all the given language function there is no equal frequency in the use of language functions. It does not mean that teachers did not give any attention to these language functions. This happened because I had observed only one class of a teacher. From the given table she knows that most of the teacher used almost all the language function to test speaking skill.

### 3.2.9 Techniques for Testing Speaking Skill

To test speaking skill of the students different techniques were used. The researcher listed some techniques which were applied at the secondary classroom and tried to observe their frequency of use by the teachers. Teacher were found to use different techniques in their classes. They tried their best to test the students speaking skills.

**Table No. 16**  
**Techniques for Testing Speaking Skill**

S	Techniques	Frequency		Sometimes		Seldom	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Reading aloud	20	50	12	30	8	20
2	Oral drill	16	40	16	40	8	20
3	Picture description	26	65	6	15	8	20

4	Oral interview	8	20	10	25	22	55
5	Telling a story	18	45	12	30	10	25
6	Interview	12	30	8	20	20	50
7	Interaction with follow candidates	8	20	12	30	20	50
8	Discussion	4	10	8	20	28	70
9	Role play	10	25	10	25	20	50
1	Responses to audio/video recording	-	-	30	75	10	25
1	Simulated conversation	-	-	12	30	28	70

In table no. 17 the researcher found 50 percent of the teachers used reading aloud frequently, 30 percent of the teachers used reading aloud sometimes and 20 percent of the teachers used reading aloud technique seldom. Similarly, 40 percent of the teachers were used oral drill technique frequently, 40 percent of the teachers were used oral drill techniques sometimes and 20 percent of the teachers were used oral drill techniques seldom, 65 percent teachers used picture description technique frequently, 15 percent teachers were used sometimes and 20 percent teachers used picture description seldom. Similarly, 20 percent teachers were used oral interview technique frequently, 25 percent teacher used oral interview sometimes and 55 percent teachers were used oral interview seldom. 45 percent teachers were used telling a story sometimes and 25 percent teachers were used telling a story seldom. Similarly, 30 percent teachers used interview technique frequently, 20 percent teachers used

interview technique sometimes and 50 percent teachers were used interview technique seldom. 20 percent teachers were used interaction with follow candidates techniques frequently 30 percent teachers were used interaction with fellow candidates and 50 percent teachers were used this techniques seldom. 10 percent teachers were used discussion technique frequently, 20 percent teachers were used discussion technique sometimes and 70 percent teachers were used discussion technique seldom. Similarly, 25 percent teachers were used role play technique frequently, 25 percent teachers were used role play technique sometimes and 50 percent teachers were used role play technique seldom.

None of the teachers used responses to audio/video recording frequently, 75 percent teachers were used responses to audio /video recording sometimes and 25 percent teachers were used this techniques seldom. And none of the teachers were used simulated conversation frequently, 30 percent teachers were used simulated conversation sometimes and 70 percent teachers were used this technique seldom.

The researcher listed 11 different techniques to test speaking skill. She found that reading aloud was more frequently used at secondary classroom. The teacher were found to use oral drill, picture description, oral interview telling a story similarly they were also found to use interview techniques.

They used discussion, role play and interaction with follow candidates rarely. This makes clear that secondary level English teachers used reading aloud oral drill, picture description, telling a story more frequently than the other techniques.

### **3.3 Teacher's Views on Testing Speaking Skill**

Teacher's view on testing speaking skill can be shown in the following:

**Table No. 17**  
**Testing Speaking: An Easy Task**

Testing Speaking: An Easy Task	Easy		Difficult	
	No. of Teachers	Percent	No. of Teachers	Percent
	12	30	28	70

Table No. 18 shows that 30 percent teachers were felt testing speaking easy task and 70 percent of teachers were felt testing speaking difficult task.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 4.1 Findings

This study was an attempt to find out the techniques adopted by English teacher for testing speaking skill, this study focused on speaking on the basis of analysis and interpretation of data, the following findings have been made:

- i. A majority of the teachers have conducted speaking test in the classroom. Among them nearly 60 percent of the teachers were trained for the testing of speaking skill.
- ii. Teachers were found using different techniques for testing speaking skill. Among them picture description, reading aloud, oral interview, telling a story were more common in the classroom.
- iii. Language functions included in the text book were given more emphasis by the teachers.
- iv. Techniques used by the teachers were found satisfactory to the level of the sts.
- v. Most of the techniques were found relevant to the course objectives.
- vi. The techniques prescribed in the textbook were not found enough for the testing of speaking skill.
- vii. It was found that 85 percent of the teachers commonly pointed out their sts.
- viii. Lack of sufficient materials for speaking test was also an obstacle in the proper testing.
- ix. Testing speaking was found more problematic because of less time allotment to its testing a large number of students inhibition, lack of physical facility, etc.
- x. From the classroom, it was found that students motivation and interest in speaking was satisfactory.
- xi. A very few teacher used materials for testing speaking skill.
- xii. Most of the classes were dominated by teachers. Student -students interaction was less emphasized the student teacher interaction.

- xiii. Listening is found more commonly integrated with speaking.
- xiv. It was found that 30 percent of the teachers were felt speaking test as a easy task and 70 percent of the teachers were felt speaking test as a difficult task.

#### **4.2 Recommendations**

On the basis of the above findings the following recommendations are made.

- i. The techniques included in the textbook were not sufficient for testing speaking skill. So, the curriculum designer and textbook writers should be included more techniques for the testing of speaking skill.
- ii. Teacher should involve more students in discussion and interaction so that they did not hesitate in speaking. It would be better to involve students voluntarily.
- iii. The teachers should encourage students to participate speaking test and s/he should provide the opportunity to speak in the target language by using different interesting games and behaving as friend with them.
- iv. Audio-visual aids were more effective for conducting speaking test. So, the teachers should include these aids in the testing of speaking.
- v. Student -student interaction should be encouraged so that they get adequate time for speaking.
- vi. The time allocated for speaking was found not adequate the teachers gave much emphasis on reading and writing rather than listening and speaking. So, equal emphasis should be given on all skills.
- vii. Training should be conducted by the concerned authorities periodically to the teachers to equip them with skill for effective testing of speaking skill. So, that they can involve a large number of students in speaking test without hesitation.
- viii. The content should be familiar and the question types should be open closed and alternative.
- ix. The appropriate context should be provided to all the students to perform well in the test.
- x. The students should also get the opportunity to develop the language

skills in classroom so that they can face any sort of situation during their test.

- xi. Further research studies related to the testing of speaking should be conducted. So, that testing could be made more effective and behavioural.

### **4.3 Pedagogical Implication**

- As English is an international language everyone should have the sound knowledge of listening and speaking to communicate effectively in the present context.
- listening and speaking are interrelated language skills, which go side by side without learning these two skills the learners cannot develop the ability of reading and writing. These two primary language skill always help in learning reading and writing.
- As language is a means of communication and a vehicle of transmitting message feelings and emotions through aural-oral medium, it helps the learners to enhance and strengthen the knowledge they require.
- Teaching and testing are interrelated. Testing is the integral part of teaching. In the absence of testing teaching can't be success for the important of teaching, testing should be administered. To show the good quality of test, test also should be done properly.
- With the help of the speaking test and its result the teacher knows the pronunciation, fluency, accuracy and appropriate level of students. Therefore, s/he can use suitable techniques, methods and approach. For the student of secondary level.
- With the help speaking test teacher know the students proficiency level and interest s/he can select the materials to enhance their learning.
- With the help of students' result the teacher knows which part of the speaking test should be emphasized or students feel easy to improve their pronunciation and fluency.

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