

**FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS' ORAL
CLASSROOM PERFORMANCE**

**A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English Education
in Partial Fulfillment for the Master's Degree in Education**

**Submitted by
Prem Prasad Kandel**

**Faculty of Education
Kathmandu Shiksha Campus,
Ramshahpath, Kathmandu, Nepal
2009**

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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: 24th Bhadra, 066

Prem Prasad Kandel

DEDICATION

Dedicated
To
My Parents
And
Family Members

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Carrying out a research is a Herculean task. In the course of this thesis writing, several people of different walks of life have contributed a lot from their part. My sincere thanks are due to them.

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ABSTRACT

The present study entitled "Factors Affecting Students' Oral Classroom Performance" aimed at identifying the factors that affect students' oral classroom performance. The study mainly focused on the production aspect of language. The study was carried out with the hypothesis that the effect of personal factors associated with the learners play a significant role in language learning, especially second language learning. In this connection, the researcher used both primary and secondary sources of data. For primary sources of data, the researcher used all three research tools viz: Questionnaire for students, Classroom observation forms and structured interview sheets for teachers. The students of class nine from four purposively selected schools were the population of the study. Only 80 students from four public schools in Kathmandu district were the sample of the study. Twenty students from each school were selected through simple random sampling procedure using fishbowl draw method. In addition to this, English teachers from the respective schools were also the population of the study. The finding shows that motivation, risk taking, learning strategies, teaching methods, use of teaching materials, classroom size and personality were the major factors affecting students' oral classroom performance.

This thesis consists of four chapters. The first chapter of the study deals with the general background, review of the related literature, objectives of the study and significance of the study. The second chapter deals with the methodology which includes the sources of data, population of the study, sampling population and 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 presents the analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the various informants and the fourth chapter presents the findings of the study and recommendations made on the basis of the findings.

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

A. D.	Anno Domini
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
Viz	Namely
etc	et cetera
e.g.	exempli gratia
CLA	Communicative Language Ability
TL	Target Language
<i>et al.</i>	and the others
CALP	Cognitive Academic Language Ability
BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
MLAP	Modern Language Aptitude Test
NELTA	Nepal English Language Teachers Association
Vol	Volume
OUP	Oxford University Press
CUP	Cambridge University Press
UK	United Kingdom
T.U.	Tribhuvan University
M.Ed.	Masters in Education
USA	United States of America
UN	United Nations
TESL	Teaching English as Second Language
ELT	English Language Teaching

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Background

Language is a unique gift given to human being which differentiates him from animals. Among several modes of communication, language is regarded as the most powerful and widely used means of communication. It is one and only property of human beings which is not possessed by any other living beings. By means of language, we express our ideas, feelings, thoughts and emotions.

Language has been defined variously by various scholars and linguists. Crystal (1992, p.212) defines language as “the systematic, conventional use of sounds, signs or written symbols in a human society for communication and self expression.”

According to Finocchiaro (as cited in Brown, 1994, p.4), “Language is a system of arbitrary, vocal symbols which permit all the people in a given culture, or other people who have learned the system of that culture, to communicate or to interact.”

Similarly, Wardhaugh (1972, p.3) defines language as “a system of arbitrary vocal symbols used for human communication.”

Likewise, Sapir (1921, as cited in Lyons, 1981, p.3) says, “Language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols.”

In the same way, Brown (1994, p.5) gives a composite definition of language in the following way:

1. Language is systematic and generative.
2. Language is a set of arbitrary symbols.
3. Those symbols are primarily vocal, but may also be visual.
4. The symbols have conventionalized meanings to which they refer.
5. Language is used for communication.
6. Language operates in a speech community or culture.
7. Language is essentially human, although possibly not limited to humans.
8. Language is acquired by all people in much the same way- language and language learning both have universal characteristics.

Language and the people who speak it are very closely related. So intimate is the relation between a language and the people who speak it that the two can scarcely be thought of apart. A language lives so long as there are people who speak it and use it as their native tongue, and its greatness is only that given to it by these people. A language is important because the people who speak it are important.

There are many languages in existence in the world. It is believed that of about 6000 languages being spoken in the world, English is, by far the most widely used language. It has achieved the recognition of international language. It is used as a key language in almost all areas, such as trade, education, mass media, science and technology, international diplomacy, politics, economics, medical science and so on. It is used as lingua franca to facilitate communication among the speakers of languages. Richards and Rodgers (2001, p.1) highlighting importance of the English language say,

It has been estimated that 60% of today's world population is multilingual. Both from a cotemporary and historical perspective, bilingualism or multilingualism is the norm rather than exception. It is fair, then, to say that throughout history, foreign language learning, mainly the English language, has always been an important practical concern. It is also one of the six languages officially used in the United Nations (UN).

So far as the use of the English language in Nepal is concerned, its credit goes to the Prime Minister Junga Bahadur Rana who established a school named Durbar High School in 1910 B.S. which was not accessible to general public. However, the establishment of Tri-Chandra College in 1918 A.D. marks the beginning of formal English language teaching at higher level. Currently, English is taught as a compulsory subject from primary to bachelor level in Nepal.

1.1.1 Language Skills

Language learning means learning different language skills. The purpose of learning a language is to enable the students to communicate in that language. It is essential, therefore, that every second of every language class is directed to develop in the students the language skills they really need in real life situation. There are four basic skills of language namely,

- Listening skill
- Speaking skill
- Reading skill and
- Writing skill

The four language skills mentioned above are related to each other by two parameters:

- The mode of communication: oral or written.
- The direction of communication: receiving or producing the message.

This relationship among the four skills can be represented as below:

	Oral	Written
Receptive	Listening	Reading
Productive	Speaking	Writing

1.1.1.1 Listening Skill

Listening is the receptive skill in the oral mode. Underwood (1989, p.1) defines listening as “an activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear.” Thus, listening means trying to understand the oral message people are conveying. A successful listener needs to be able to work out what speakers mean when they use particular words on particular occasions, and not simply to understand the words themselves.

There are two kinds of listening situations we find ourselves in: interactive and non-interactive.

Interactive listening situations include face to face conversations and telephone calls, in which we are alternatively listening and speaking and in which we have a chance to ask for clarification, repetition or slower speech from our conversation partner. However, in a non-interactive listening situation, we usually do not have the opportunity to ask for clarification, repetition or slower speech. Some non-interactive listening situations are listening to the radio, T.V. films, lectures or sermons.

Despite the fact that listening is a primary skill of language, it remained neglected in foreign language teaching and learning for a long time. However,

recently foreign language teaching programs have begun to include listening in their courses.

1.1.1.2 Reading Skill

Reading is the receptive skill in the written mode. Simply, reading can be defined as understanding or comprehending a text. In a usual way, reading is handled as reading comprehension. Grellet (1981, as cited in Khaniya, 2005, p.139) defines reading comprehension as extracting the required information from a written text as efficiently as possible. This implies that reading varies according to the purpose of reading and type of text being read.

According to Munby (1978, as cited in Sharma and Phyak, 2006, p.232), reading involves a variety of skills as listed below:

- Recognizing the script of language.
- Deducing the meaning and use of unfamiliar lexical items.
- Understanding explicitly stated information.
- Understanding information when it is not explicitly stated.
- Understanding conceptual meaning.
- Understanding the communicative value of sentences and utterances.
- Understanding relations within the sentences.
- Understanding relation between parts of a text through lexical cohesion devices.
- Understanding cohesion between parts of a text through grammatical cohesion devices.
- Interpreting text by going outside it.
- Recognizing indicators in discourse.
- Selecting extraction of relevant points from a text.

Readers do not normally go through a text unless they have some purpose in mind. Based on the purpose of reading and the level of the readers involved, we can identify different types of reading such as,

- reading aloud
- silent reading
- rapid reading
- intensive reading
- extensive reading
- skimming
- scanning

1.1.1.3 Writing Skill

Writing is the productive skill in the written mode. It is perhaps the most difficult skill for L2 learners to master because it involves not only a graphic representation of speech but also the development and presentation of thoughts in a structured way.

According to Widdowson (1978, as cited in Khaniya 2005, p.147) one way of describing writing is to say.....the use of the visual medium to manifest the graphological and grammatical system of the language and another that writing is the act of making up correct sentences and transmitting them through the visual medium as marks on paper.

The sub-skills of writing as given by Munby (1979, as cited in Sharma and Phyak, 2006, p.255) are listed below:

1. Manipulating the script of a language
 - Forming the shapes of letters
 - Using the spelling system
 - Using punctuation
2. Expressing information explicitly

3. Expressing information implicitly through
 - Inference and
 - Figurative languages
4. Expressing the communicative value of sentences and utterances
5. Expressing relations within a sentence using
 - Elements of sentence structure
 - Modal auxiliaries
 - Intra-sentential connectors
6. Expressing relations between parts of a text through lexical cohesion devices
7. Expressing relations between parts of a text through grammatical cohesion devices
8. Using indicators in discourse for
 - Introducing an idea
 - Developing an idea
 - Transition to another idea
 - Concluding an idea
 - Emphasizing a point
 - Explanation of point already made
 - Anticipating an objection
9. Reducing the text through avoiding irrelevant information

1.1.1.4 Speaking Skill

To put it simply, speaking is the ability to express oneself fluently in a foreign language. It is the productive skill in the oral mode. Speaking is considered to be the most important skill of all the four skills. It is also a complex and complicated skill because it involves not only the structures and vocabulary items but also thinking of what is to be said in a given situation. It is particularly difficult in L2 learning because effective oral communication

requires the ability to use the language appropriately in social interactions. It requires more than its grammatical and semantic rules. Diversity in interaction involves not only verbal communication, but also suprasegmental elements of speech such as pitch, stress and intonation. In addition, non-linguistic elements such as gestures, and body language/ posture, facial expression and so on may accompany speech or convey messages directly without any accompanying speech.

Munby (1979, as cited in Sharma and Phyak, 2006, p.232) has identified the following sub-skills of speaking:

- articulating sounds in isolate forms.
- articulating sounds in connected speech.
- manipulating variation in stress in connected speech.
- manipulating the use of stress in connected speech.
- producing intonation patterns and expressing attitudinal meaning through variations in pitch, height, pitch range and pause.

1.1.2 Importance of Speaking Skill

There is no debate on the primacy of speech. Basically a language is learnt for interaction. Therefore, speaking is an extremely important skill to be mastered by L2 learners. Ur (1996, p.120) argues, Of all the four skills, speaking seems intuitively the most important: people who know language are referred to as ‘speakers’ of that language, as if speaking included all other kinds of knowing; and many if not most foreign language learners are primarily interested in learning to speak. Similarly, McDonough and Shaw (1999, p.133) rightly comment,

In many contexts, speaking is often *the* skill upon which a person is judged at face value. They further say that people may often form

judgments about our language competence from our speaking rather from any of the other language skills.

Hence, the primary objective of language teaching courses is to develop learner's ability to express themselves through speech. Speaking is, therefore, a key skill to establish and maintain social relationships and friendships. Brown and Yule (1983, p.33) write, "Conversations are for the people who are participating in them to achieve their purposes in being friendly, hospitable, comforting or whatever."

Communicative language teaching also attaches great importance to this skill. The following four characteristics of a communicative view of language as given by Richards and Rodgers (2001, p.161) support the fact.

1. Language is a system for the expression of meaning.
2. The primary function of language is for interacting and communication.
3. The structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses.
4. The primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse.

1.1.3 Components of Speaking

Speaking ability has often been compared with communicative ability and its components are considered to be the components of speaking ability. There is, however, no agreement on what exactly communicative ability consists of. Hymes (1972, as cited in Sharma and Phyak, 2006, p.218) assumes that L2 learners need to know not only the linguistic knowledge, but also the culturally acceptable ways of interacting with others in different situations and

relationships. His theory of communicative competence consists of the interaction of grammatical, psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic and probabilistic language components.

Building on Hymes' theory, Canale and Swain (1980, 1983 as cited in Sharma and Phyak, p.219) proposed that communicative competence includes grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence, which reflect the use of linguistic system and the functional aspects of communication, respectively. Bachman (1990, as cited in Sharma and Phyak , 2006, p.219) prefers to call it communicative language ability (CLA) which includes three components: language competence, strategic competence and psycho-physiological mechanisms. Sthapit (2000), however, adopts an entirely different approach in the specification of communicative competence consisting of extended linguistic competence, extra-linguistic competence and pragmatic competence or language sensitivity. Harmer (2001, p. 269) says that the ability to speak fluently presupposes not only knowledge of language features, but also the ability to process information and language 'on the spot'.

1.1.3.1 Language Features

Among the elements necessary for spoken production (as opposed to the production of the practice examples in language drills, for example), are the following:

i. Connected Speech

Effective speakers of English need to be able not only to produce the phonemes of English but also to use 'connected speech' fluently. In connected speech, sounds are modified (assimilation), omitted (elision), added (linking r) or weakened (through contractions and stress patterning). It is for this reason that

we should involve students in activities designed specifically to improve their connected speech.

ii. Expressive Devices

Native speakers of English change the pitch and stress of particular parts of utterances, vary volume and speed, and show by other physical and non-verbal (paralinguistic) means how they are feeling (especially in face to face interaction). The use of these devices contributes to the ability to convey meanings. They allow the extra expression of emotion and intensity. Students should be able to deploy at least some of such suprasegmental features and devices in the same way if they are to be fully effective communicators.

iii. Lexis and Grammar

Spontaneous speech is marked by the use of a number of common lexical phrases, especially in the performance of certain language functions. Teachers should therefore supply a variety of phrases, especially in the performance of certain language functions. Teachers should therefore supply a variety of phrases for different functions such as agreeing or disagreeing, expressing surprise, shock, or approval. Where students are involved in specific speaking contexts such as a job interview, we can prime them, in the same way, with certain useful phrases which they can produce at various stages of an interaction.

iv. Negotiation Language

Effective speaking benefits from the negotiatory language we use to seek clarification and to show the structure of what we are saying. We often need to 'ask for clarification' when we are listening to someone else talk. For students this is especially crucial. A useful thing teachers can do, therefore, is to offer them phrases such as the following:

(I'm sorry) I didn't quite catch that.

What exactly does X mean?

A way of getting students to practice this language is to give individuals cards which each have one of these phrases written on them. We can then start to explain something but insert words or explanations that are purposefully incomprehensible or obscure. Students then have to use the language forms written on their cards to interrupt and ask what we mean. (Harmer, 2001,p.270)

Speakers also need to ‘structure their discourse’ if they want to be understood, especially in more ‘writing-like’ speech such as giving presentations. They need to use certain phrases to highlight the content structure of their discourse. They use negotiation language to show the structure of their thoughts, or reformulate what they are saying in order to be clearer, especially when they can see that they are not being understood.

We can help our students to structure discourse by giving them language such as the following:

The important thing to grasp is that.....

To begin with/and finally.....

What I am trying to say is that.....

What I mean is.....

The point I am trying to make is that....

... Or, to put it another way.....,

etc.

1.1.3.2 Mental/Social Processing

If part of a speaker’s productive ability involves the knowledge of language skills such as those discussed above, success is also dependent upon the rapid processing skills that talking necessitates.

i. Language Processing

Effective speakers need to be able to process language in their own heads and put it into coherent order so that it comes out in forms that are not only comprehensible, but also convey the meanings that are intended. Language processing involves the retrieval of words and phrases from memory and their assembly into syntactically and propositionally appropriate sequences. One of the main reasons for including speaking activities in language lessons is to help students develop habits of rapid language processing in English.

ii. Interacting with Others

Most speaking involves interaction with one or more participants. This means that effective speaking also involves a good deal of listening, an understanding of how the other participants are feeling, and a knowledge of how linguistically to take turns or allow others to do so.

iii. (On the spot) Information Processing

Quite apart from our response to other's feelings, we also need to be able to process the information they tell us the moment we get it. The longer it takes for 'the penny to drop' the less effective we are as instant communicators. However, it should be remembered that this instant response is very culture-specific, and is not prized by speakers in many other language communities. In conclusion, we can draw the following components of speaking skill:

i. Articulation and Production of Sounds and Sound Sequence

Language ultimately consists of individual distinct sounds. Such sounds are either all under 'vowel' or 'consonant' category. The number and nature of these speech sounds can differ according to the language the learners belong to. Different learners can have different types of articulation and production difficulties of varying degrees.

The first thing a teacher has to do is to teach the students to pronounce speech sounds and sound sequences. There is not a hard and fast rule on teaching the pronunciation of sounds/sound sequences. Doff (1988) gives the following instruction as important points for teaching sounds:

- Say the sound alone
- Say the sounds in a word
- Contrast it with other sounds
- Explain how to make the sound
- Get the students to repeat the sound in chorus
- Get the individual student to repeat the sound

All the points mentioned above, however, may not be equally important. The teacher has to make a wise selection of activities.

ii. Production of Stress and Intonation Pattern

Stress can be described as the degree of force with which a sound or syllable is uttered. The usual distinction is made between **stressed** and **unstressed** syllables. In addition, a division is made between **word** and **sentence stress** as well. Intonation, on the other hand, refers to the pattern of pitch changes in a sentence.

Stress and intonation play a vital role in English speech; therefore, our students should learn to produce stress and intonation correctly. English is a 'stress-timed' language. This means that the length of time between stressed syllables is always about the same, and if there are several unstressed syllables they must be said more quickly.

Teachers should first be aware that change in word stress can change the class of the words (e.g. 'report' stressed in first syllable is a noun and stressed in

second syllable is a verb). Similarly, they should keep in mind how change in stress can change the pronunciation of words. Intonation in the same way reflects the intention and emotional attitude of the speaker (angry, happy, sleepy, disappointed, etc). For example *thank you* said with a falling intonation functions differently. When we want to show the real gratitude we say *thank you* in a falling intonation, but a bus conductor, for example, will say *thank you* in rising intonation when s/he collects our money.

Doff (1988) suggests three ways to show stress pattern of a sentence in a class.

Using the teacher's voice: Saying the sentence, exaggerating the difference

- Representing each syllable with a sound, e.g. a kilo of sugar = de-DA-de-de-DA-de (capital letters represent the stressed syllables while the small letters represent unstressed ones)

Using gestures: Using arms like a conductor of an orchestra, using a stronger gesture for the stressed syllables.

- Clapping (or tapping on a desk), clapping more loudly for the stressed syllables.

Using the blackboard: Writing dots and dashes: e.g. a kilo of sugar = . -

- Underlining the stressed syllables.
- Writing the stressed syllables in heavier letters

English intonation patterns are quite complex and it is better for students to acquire them naturally rather than try to learn them consciously. Doff (1988) suggests the following techniques for teaching intonation:

Repetition: Students practice intonation through repetition drills. They must be made interesting and challenging. The teachers must give a good model of sentence themselves, saying it at normal speed and using natural intonation.

Use of gestures: The teacher indicates the stress and intonation clearly, using gestures. The students follow him/her.

Back chaining: This is a technique to practice the sentence in *section*, starting with the *end* of the sentence and gradually working backward to the beginning, e.g. living here/been living here/have you been living here/ How long have you been living here? This back chaining can come as a form of ‘repetition drill’ as well in the beginning, and only ‘gesture’ later.

iii. Connected Speech

Speech is a continuous stream of sounds, without clear-cut, borderlines between each word. In spoken discourse, we adapt our pronunciation to our audience and articulate with maximal economy of movement rather than maximal clarity.

There are a large number of words in English which can have a ‘strong’ form and a ‘weak’ form. Some examples are:

fish and chips (fish `n chips)

You have finished? (Weak)

Yes, I have. (Strong)

She can speak Spanish better than I can (the first ‘can’ is the weak form, the second the strong form).

iv. Communicative Skills

Learners cannot use English unless they do really use it. Communicative skills are those activities with which learners develop an ability to use language for communicative purpose. Following Littlewood (1981), there are two types of communicative activities or skills: **pre-communicative activities** and **communicative activities**. Pre-communicative activities tend to focus on

isolated parts of language: pronunciation drills, etc. Communication activities, on the other hand, give students a chance to use whole language, they should provide information, focus on content rather than form, and allow for improvisation with as little teacher intervention as possible.

Communicative skills broadly consist of the following rules of speaking:

- knowing how to use and begin different types of speech events
- knowing which forms of address should be used with different people and different situations
- knowing how to use different types of speech acts such as requests, apologies, thanks, etc.

Communicative skills, therefore, consist of a set of activities and strategies to carry out real world communicative tasks. The students should be able to use the strategies like asking for clarification, paraphrases, compensating, etc. Speakers often need to 'ask for clarification' when they are listening to someone else talking. A useful thing teachers can do, therefore, is to offer them phrases such as the following:

(I'm sorry) I didn't quite catch that.

(I'm sorry) I don't understand.

What exactly does 'connoisseur' mean?

Could you explain that again, please?

We can help out the students to structure discourse by giving them language such as the following:

What I mean to say is that.....

What I am trying say is.....

To put it another way....

The point I am trying to make is that.....

Speakers should be efficient on how to 'initiate', 'maintain', 'terminate' and 'repair' their speech according to the participant role relationship, situation and level of formality required.

Also the paralinguistic features such as facial expression, gesture and posture are a part of communication. Speakers of English should be able to use such features with appropriate discourse markers, e.g. *well, I see, you know, by the way, etc.*

iv. Phatic Communion

The fact that human beings tend to talk when they meet often leads to a sense of discomfort, even hostility, when silence occurs in such a meeting. Because talk is often a first step in establishing a relationship, it is characterized by a stock of conversational utterances which break such silences and help to establish the participants in a mutual situation in which awkwardness and tension gradually disappear.

This kind of utterance was given the name *phatic communion* by the British-Polish anthropologist Malinowski (1884-1942) to refer to communication between people which is not intended to seek or convey information but has the social function of establishing or maintaining social contact. He described such talk as a means by which 'ties of union are created by the mere exchange of words'. Typically, in English speaking countries (e.g. England) such phatic communion centers on comments about the weather, on personal appearance, enquiries about health, or affirmations about everyday things. These expressions 'provide lubricant for social interaction' and play important roles for 'ice-breaking'. They are the reflection of communicative attitudes rather than facts. They consist of familiar expressions of greeting, gratitude, farewell, introduction, etc.

Here are some examples:

How are you today?

Nice weather, isn't it?

Good morning. How are you? /Fine thanks.

Hi Andy? How's it goin'? /Just fine. Not bad.

Phatic communion is a language function, therefore, we can follow the same classroom procedure as any other language function.

1.1.4 Stages of teaching speaking

It is quite difficult to teach speaking in a common classroom. Speaking is a complex skill because of its vast network. So, it needs systematic progression from easy to difficult stages and aims to teach pronunciation, grammar and so on. Generally, teaching speaking skills involve the three stages (Harmer, 1991: p. 51)

1.1.4.1 Introducing New Language

The introduction of new language is an activity that falls at non-communicative end of speaking continuum. Here, the teacher often works with controlled techniques, asking students to repeat and perform in drills. At the same time, we will insist on accuracy, correcting where students make mistakes. Although these introduction stages should be kept short and the drilling abandoned as soon as possible, they are nevertheless important in helping the students to assimilate facts about new language and in enabling them to produce the language for the first time.

1.1.4.2 Practice

Practice activities are those activities which fall somewhere between the two extremes of our speaking continuum. While students are performing, they may

have a communicative purpose, and while they may be working in pairs, there may also be a lack of language variety and the materials may determine which the students do or say. During practice stage, the teacher may intervene slightly to help, guide and to point out inaccuracy.

1.1.4.3 Communicative Activities

Communicative activities are those which exhibit the characteristic at the communicative end of speaking continuum. Students are somehow involved in activities that give them both the desires to communicate and a purpose which involves them in a varied use of language. Such activities are vital in language classroom since the students can be their best users to use the language as individuals arriving at a degree of language autonomy.

1.1.5 Problems with Speaking

Teaching speaking is not an easy task. The problem may lie with the teaching process or with the students or with the material itself. The degree of difficulty often differs according to the situation and the background of the learners.

Ur (1996, p. 121) notes the following most frequently noted complaints from the language teachers.

1.1.5.1 Inhibition

Unlike reading, writing and listening activities, speaking requires some degree of real-time exposure to an audience. Learners are often inhibited about trying to say things in a foreign language in the classroom: worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism or losing face, or simply shy of the attention that their speech attracts.

1.1.5.2 Nothing to Say

Even if they are not inhibited, you often hear learners complain that they cannot think of anything to say: they have no motive to express themselves beyond the guilty feeling that they should be speaking.

1.1.5.3 Low or Uneven Participation

Only one participant can talk at a time if he or she is to be heard; and in a large group this means that each one will have only very little talking time. This problem is compounded by the tendency of some learners to dominate, while others speak very little or not at all.

1.1.5.4 Mother-Tongue Use

In classes where all, or a number of, the learners share the same mother-tongue, they may tend to use it: because it is easier, because it feels unnatural to speak to one another in a foreign language, and because they feel less 'exposed' if they are speaking their mother tongue. If they are talking in small groups it can be quite difficult to get some classes- particularly the less disciplined or motivated ones- to keep to the target language.

1.1.6 Second Language Acquisition/ Learning

A distinction is often made between acquisition and learning in the field of second language. The term 'acquisition' refers to the gradual development of ability in a language by using it in communicative situations. The term 'learning' on the other hand applies to a conscious process of accumulating knowledge of vocabulary and grammar of a language (Yule, 1985, p.191). Language acquisition is the natural way to develop linguistic ability and is a sub-conscious process. By contrast, language learning refers to explicit knowledge of rules being aware of them and being able to talk about them. It is a conscious process (Krashen and Terrel, 1983, p.26).

The following table summarizes the main differences between acquisition and learning.

Acquisition	Learning
- similar to child first language acquisition	- formal knowledge of language
- 'picking up' a language	- 'knowing about' a language
- Subconscious	- Conscious
- Implicit knowledge	- Explicit knowledge
- Formal teaching does not help	- Formal teaching helps

Thus, 'acquisition' refers to the sub-conscious process by which a language is learnt in a natural setting whereas 'learning' refers to the conscious process by which a language is learnt in a tutored setting (Ellis, 1985, p.6).

1.1.7 Affective Variables in Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

Second language learning is a highly complex process involving infinite number of influencing variables or factors. The same influencing factors that hinder or help the learning of second language are termed as factors affecting second language learning.

There are a large number of factors affecting second language acquisition which have been grouped under different headings by different scholars. Ellis (1985, p.100) categorizes the factors affecting second language acquisition under two broad headings namely: personal factors and general factors.

1.1.7.1. Personal Factors

Personal factors are idiosyncratic features of each individual approach to learning an L2. Hence, these factors are heterogeneous. However, they can be grouped together under three headings. Each of them is described as below:

i. Group Dynamics

Group dynamics seemed to be important in classroom second language acquisition. Some classroom learners make overt comparison of themselves with other learners. They may also match how they think they are progressing against their expectations. These comparisons, often, result in emotive responses to the language learning experience. Competitiveness may be manifested in a desire to outdo other language learners by shouting out answers in class or by racing through examinations to be the first to finish.

McDonough (1978, as cited in Ellis 1985, p.101) notes that although rivalries can promote confusion, they can also serve as a stimulus for learning.

Bailey (1983 as cited in Ellis, p. 102) proposes a model of how the learner's self-image in comparison with other L2 learners can either impair or enhance Second Language Acquisition. Where the comparison results in an unsuccessful self-image, there may be debilitating or facilitating anxiety. In the case of the former, learners may reduce or abandon learning effort. In the case of the latter, learners increase their efforts in order to compare more favorably with other learners, and as a result, learning is enhanced. Where the comparison results in a successful self-image, the learner experiences positive rewards and thus continues to display effort, so learning is also enhanced. Bailey's model provides an interesting generalization about how personal responses to the group situation can influence learning.

ii. Attitudes to the Teachers and Course Materials

Students will inevitably have very different views about the kind of teacher they think is best for them. Some prefer a teacher who, in Stevick's (1980) term, creates 'space' for them to pursue their own learning paths. Others prefer a teacher who structures the learning tasks much more tightly. In general, the diarists seem to prefer the former. Bailey (1980), for instance, states a definite

preference for a democratic teaching style. She notes that student-student interaction in class rose sharply after a scene where the students had protested to the teacher about an unfair test. Schumann also expresses a desire for a personal learning agenda in language learning. He observes: 'I discovered that I like to have my own agenda in second language learning I like to do it my way. However, I found my agenda is often in conflict with my teacher's' (1978, p.246). Many of McDonough's (1978) students also comment adversely on the problems of having to abide by someone else's teaching plan. However, Pickett's (1978) study of successful language learning reveals greater diversity in attitudes towards the role of teacher. Some learners wanted the teacher to act as 'informant', but others praised teachers who were logical, clear, and systematic (i.e. who imposed a structure on the learner). The main generalization to emerge from Pickett's study is that the learners need to feel sympathy for their teacher, and also want him or her to be predictable. Learners also vary in their attitudes to teaching materials. In general, adult learners dislike having a course book imposed upon them in a rigid way. They prefer a variety of materials and the opportunity to use them in ways they choose for themselves. McDonough's students, for instance, often object to the pace and intensity of the short five-week courses they took part in. They report being unable to cope with external pressure, although some students, after closer reflection, express an appreciation of this pressure. However, all these studies dealt with the responses of teachers placed in a learning situation. Other learners may prove less critical than teacher-learners.

iii. Individual Learning Techniques

There is tremendous variety in the techniques employed by different learners. They will be dealt with in two groups: those involved in studying the second language, and those involved in obtaining second language input.

Naiman *et al.* (1978, as cited in Ellis, p.103) identify numerous study techniques. Here is a sample of those, that learners reported, they used to develop their vocabulary in the second language:

1. Preparing and memorizing vocabulary lists: Individual learners appear to have highly idiosyncratic ways of coping with this. For instance, one of Pickett's subjects kept a notebook in which he recorded first the English word, then the foreign word in phonetic transcription, and finally the orthographic version of the foreign word. He also reported having three vocabulary lists, which he kept going at the same time –one arranged chronologically, the second alphabetically, and the third either grammatically or situationally.
2. Learning words in context: Some learners made no attempt to keep lists. They relied on picking out key vocabulary items from the contexts in which they were used.
3. Practicing vocabulary: Various techniques fall under this heading- deliberately putting words into different structures in order to drill oneself, reading to reinforce vocabulary, playing games such as trying to think of words with same ending, and repeating words to oneself.

Techniques similar to these have been identified for other aspects of language learning such as grammar and pronunciation, vocabulary is the area that learners seem most conscious of.

The second group of learning techniques concerns the ways in which the learner gets into contact with the second language. Learners often seek out situations in which they can communicate with native speakers, or they make use of the radio or cinema to get maximum exposure to the second language. Some learners even arrange their holidays so they visit a country where the second language is used.

1.1.7.2. General Factors

The general factors that we shall consider are:

i. Age

Age is the variable that has been most frequently considered in the discussions of individual differences in SLA. This is doubtlessly due in part to the ease with which it can be measured- unlike all the other general factors; it can be described reliably and precisely. Another reason, however, has been the need to submit to empirical investigation the commonly held belief that children are better language learners than adults.

There were both folk beliefs and scientific arguments to support the idea that the language-learning device atrophied with age. It is a well-known fact that children pick up their L1 effortlessly, whereas adults have to struggle ineffectively with a new language. Neurophysiologic evidence seems to support such a belief. Penfield and Robert (1959) advanced the **critical period hypothesis** according to which the ability to learn a language naturally and effortlessly is linked to cerebral plasticity, which terminated around the age of ten years when puberty sets in. This occurred as a result of lateralization of the language function in the left hemisphere of the brain. Lenneberg (1967) has provided clinical evidence to support the hypothesis.

Age is an example of a fixed factor, in the sense that it is beyond external control. Like many other issues, the role of age in L2 acquisition is controversial. The controversy centers on whether there is a critical period for L2 acquisition and if so, when it ends. Long (1990) has presented evidence to suggest that the acquisition of a native like accent is not possible by learners who begin learning after six years of age. He also argues that it is very difficult for learners who begin at puberty to acquire native-like grammatical

competence. However, Shovel (1988) has presented somewhat different evidence to argue that the critical period for the native-like pronunciation is around 12 years old. He claims that the evidence in favor of a critical period for grammar is equivocal (a potential may be to a probable number). There is general agreement, however, that older learners enjoy an initial advantage in rate of acquisition. A key theoretical issue relating to the age issue and the reason why it has attracted considerable attention is whether adult L2 learners have continued access to innate knowledge of linguistic universals which guide children acquisition of their mother tongue.

ii. Intelligence and Aptitude

Learning an L2 in a classroom involves two sets of intellectual abilities. It involves what might be called ‘a general academic or reasoning ability’ (Stern 1983, p.368), often referred to as *intelligence*. This ability is involved in the learning of other school subjects as well as a L2. The other kind of ability consists of specific cognitive qualities needed for SLA, often referred to as *aptitude*.

a. Intelligence

Intelligence is the term used to refer to a hypothesized ‘general factor’ (often referred to as the ‘g’ factor), which underlies our ability to master and use a whole range of academic skills. As McDonough (1981, p.126) emphasizes, it refers to ‘capacity rather than contents of the mind’. That is, it is the underlying ability to learn, rather than the actual knowledge that is supposedly measured by intelligence tests. In practice, of course, it is extremely difficult to separate these.

Oller and Perkins (1978, p.413) have argued that ‘there exists a global language proficiency factor which accounts for the bulk of the reliable variance in a wide

variety of language proficiency measures'. They claim that the 'g' factor of language proficiency is identical with the 'g' factor of intelligence. One of the problems of this point of view is that the 'g' factor does not appear to be an essential factor in L1 acquisition. All children, except those who are severely mentally retarded, succeed in developing grammatical competence in their L1 (Lenneberg 1967). If intelligence is not a major determinant of L1 acquisition, it is possible that it is also not very important in SLA, particularly when this is acquired naturally.

Cummins (1979) provides a way of reconciling Oller's claims with the objection described above. He distinguishes two kinds of language ability. (1) cognitive academic language ability (CALP); this is the dimension of language proficiency which is strongly related to overall cognitive and academic skills and can be equated with Oller and Perkin's 'g' factor and general intelligence. (2) Basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS); these are the skills required for the oral fluency and also include sociolinguistic aspects of competence. They are 'basic' in the sense that they are developed naturally. Cummins argues that CALP and BICS are independent and that both sets of abilities are to be found in first and second language acquisition. Different measures of language proficiency are likely to tap both abilities in varying proportions.

To conclude, intelligence may influence the acquisition of some skills associated with SLA, such as those utilized in the formal study of an L2, but it is much likely to influence the acquisition of oral fluency skills.

b. Aptitude

Aptitude is not easy to define. It is usually defined in terms of the tests that have been used to measure it. The effects of aptitude on language learning have

been measured in terms of the proficiency levels achieved by different classroom learners. The usual procedure is to obtain aptitude scores using tests referred to above, and proficiency scores consisting of the results of a language test or teachers' grades. Krashen argues that aptitude relates only to learning. That is, it is only an important factor in the type of formal language study associated with classrooms. He points out that the kinds of skills tested by the Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAP) are just those associated with formal study.

In assessing the role of aptitude in SLA, it is once again useful to separate out the question of the route of acquisition from those of its rate and success. There is no evidence to suggest that aptitude has any effect on the route. Just as all children acquire their first language according to a universal pattern, so too L2 learners operate the same basic cognitive processes in SLA. Aptitude, however, can be expected to influence the rate of development, particularly where formal classroom learning is concerned. Aptitude may be age related. It may develop along with the general ability for abstract thinking. Aptitude is also likely to affect ultimate success in SLA, particularly if this is measured by formal tests of linguistic competence.

iii. Cognitive style

Cognitive style refers to the manner in which people perceive, conceptualize, organize and recall information. Each person is considered to have a more or less consistent mode of cognitive functioning. Various dimensions of cognitive styles have been identified. These are usually presented as dichotomies. The dichotomy which has received the greatest attention where SLA is concerned is that of field dependence/independence. The terms do not really represent alternatives, but poles on a continuum, with individuals varying in the extent to which they lean towards dependence or independence. It is assumed that

whereas ‘field independents’ will perform some task more effectively than ‘field dependents’, the opposite will be true for other tasks.

There are a number of hypotheses about the role of field dependence/independence in SLA. One of the most interesting is the suggestion that field dependence will prove most facilitative in naturalistic SLA, but field independence will lead to greater success in classroom learning. The following table shows the difference between these two terms:

Field dependence	Field independence
1. Personal orientation	1. Impersonal orientation
2. Holistic	2. Analytic
3. Dependent	3. Independent
4. Socially sensitive	4. Not so socially aware

iv. Attitude

Attitude is another important factor of individual difference in SLA. It refers to the learner’s attitude towards the target language and speakers of the target language. Most researches, which are carried on the adult learners of SLA, have shown that the learner’s positive attitude towards speakers of the target language resulted in success. “It may be, however, that attitudinal factors have relatively little influence on SLA by children, perhaps simply because attitudes are not fully developed in young learners” (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991)

The research on attitude is not confined to the learner’s attitude towards the speakers of the target language but goes beyond that. But, studies have been done on the parents’ attitudes towards the target language and speakers of the target language. Attitudes of the learners towards the learning situation, and the

teachers' attitude towards learners have also been studied. All these studies showed that attitudes towards different factors affect SLA.

Unlike aptitude, attitude can be changed. In fact, changing attitude is very important in L2 teaching learning. If the learners have positive attitudes towards the target language, the speakers of target language and their culture, they will certainly learn better than those who foster negative attitude towards target language. Similarly, if the teacher has negative attitude towards the target language and the learners, his teaching will never be effective.

v. Motivation

Motivation is probably the most frequently used catch-all term for explaining the success or failure of virtually any complex task. It is easy to figure that success in a task is due simply to the fact that someone is 'motivated'. It is easy in second language learning to claim that a learner will be successful with the proper motivation. Such claims are of course not erroneous, for countless studies and experiments in human learning have shown that motivation is a key to learning. Motivation is something that can, like self-esteem, be global, situational, or task-oriented. Learning a foreign language requires some of all three levels of motivation.

Motivation is an example of a factor that is clearly variable. The strength of an individual learners' motivation can change over time and is influenced by external factors. There is widespread recognition that motivation is of great importance for successful L2 acquisition, but there is less agreement about what motivation actually consists of. It is often divided into two types: **extrinsic** (i.e. derive from external sources such as material rewards) and **intrinsic** (i.e. derive from the personal, inherent interests.)

Motivation is also divided into **causative** (i.e. have an effect on learning) and **resultative** (i.e. be influenced by learning) types. Sometimes motivation is also seen as integrative and instrumental kinds. A learner is said to be integratively motivated when he wishes to identify with another ethno-linguistic group. On the other hand, if he is instrumentally motivated then he learns L2 for some utilitarian purposes (furthering a career, getting a job, etc.). The integrative and instrumental motivations are very similar to the intrinsic and extrinsic types. Learners may have both kinds of motivation. Motivation, so measured, affects the extent to which individual learners persevere in learning the L2, the kind of learning behaviors they employ (e.g. their level of participation in classroom), and their actual achievements. There is no doubt to the fact that motivation plays a very important role in SLA.

vi. Personality

Personality is broadly divided into two types: **extrovert and introvert**. One of the intuitively appealing hypotheses that have been investigated is that extroverted learners learn more rapidly and are more successful than introverted learners. It has been suggested that the extroverted learners will find it easier to make contact with other users of L2 and therefore will obtain more input. Krashen (1981a), for instance, argues that an outgoing personality may contribute to 'acquisition'. The classroom learner may also benefit from being extroverted by getting more practice in using the L2. The research results, however, lend only partial support to this hypothesis. Naiman et al. (1978) found no significant relationship between extroversion/introversion and proficiency. Likewise, Swain and Burnaby (1976) did not find the expected relationship between their measures of sociability and talkativeness on the one hand and proficiency on the other in early grade French immersion and French as second language students.

Brown (1994, p.134) gives the following factors affecting the second language acquisition under two broad headings.

i. Personality Factors

The personality factors mentioned by Brown are as follows:

a. The affective domain

What is the affective domain? How is it to be delimited and understood? Affect refers to emotion or feeling. The affective domain is the emotional side of human behavior, and it may be juxtaposed to the cognitive side. The development of affective states or feelings involves a variety of personality factors, feelings both about ourselves and about others with whom we come into contact. Benjamin Bloom and his colleagues have provided a useful extended definition of the affective domain that is still widely used today. The five levels of affective domain are: - a) receiving b) responding, committing c) valuing d) Organization e) value system. The affective domain as described by Bloom (1964) is just a bit too far removed from the essence of language, it is appropriate to recall that language is inextricably bound up in virtually every aspect of human behavior.

Pike (1967, as cited in Brown, 1994, p.136) states that language is behavior that is a phase of human activity which must not be treated in essence as structurally divorced from the structure of nonverbal human activity.

b. Self-esteem

Self-esteem is probably the most pervasive aspect of any human behavior. It could easily be claimed that no successful cognitive or affective activity can be carried out without some degree of self-esteem, self-confidence, knowledge of yourself, and belief in your own capabilities for that activity. Personality

development universally involves the growth of a person's concept of self, acceptance of self, and reflection of self as seen in the interaction between self and others.

Heyde (1979) studied the effects of the three levels of self-esteem viz global self-esteem, situational or specific self-esteem and task self-esteem on performance of an oral production task by American college students learning French as a foreign language. She found that all three levels of self-esteem correlated positively with performance on the oral production measure, with the highest correlation occurring between task self-esteem and performance on oral production measures.

c. Inhibition

Closely related to and in some cases subsumed under the notion of self-esteem is the concept of inhibition. All human beings, whether newly born babies or adults, in their understanding of themselves, build sets of defenses to protect the ego.

The human ego encompasses what Guiora (1972) called the language ego to refer to the very personal, egoistic nature of SLA. Meaningful language acquisition involves some degree of identity conflict as language learners take on a new identity with their newly acquired competence. An adaptive language ego enables learners to lower the inhibitions that may impede success. Guiora et al (1972a) produced one of the few studies on inhibition in relation to SLA. Claiming that the notion of ego boundaries is relevant to language learning. Findings, coupled with Guiora's work, have given rise to a number of steps that have been taken in foreign language practices to create techniques that reduce inhibition in the classroom. Language teaching approaches in the last quarter of the twentieth century have been characterized by the creation of contexts for

meaningful classroom communication such that the interpersonal ego barriers are lowered to pave the way for free, unfettered communication.

d. Risk taking

Risk taking is an important characteristic of successful learning of a second language. Learners have to be able to ‘gamble’ a bit, to be willing to try out hunches about the language and take the risk of being wrong. Ely (1986), as cited in Brown (1994, p.140) states that risk taking will yield positive results in second language learning, however, such is usually not the case. Rubin (1975) noted, the good language learner makes willing and accurate guesses. Risk taking variation seems to be a factor in a number of issues in SLA and pedagogy. The silent student in the classroom is the one who is unwilling to appear foolish when mistakes are made. Self-esteem seems to be closely connected to a risk taking factor: when those foolish mistakes are made, a person with high global self-esteem is not daunted by the possible consequences of being laughed at.

e. Empathy

Empathy, like so many personality variables, defines adequate definition. In common terminology, empathy is the process of “putting yourself into someone else’s shoes,” of reaching beyond the self and understanding and feeling what another person is understanding or feeling. It is probably the major factor in the harmonious coexistence of individuals in society. Language is one of the primary means of empathizing, but nonverbal communication facilitates the process of empathizing and must not be overlooked.

In more sophisticated terms, empathy is usually described as the projection of one’s own personality into the personality of another in order to understand him or her better. Empathy is not synonymous with sympathy. Empathy implies more possibility of detachment; sympathy connotes an agreement or

harmony between individuals. Communication requires a sophisticated degree of empathy. In order to communicate effectively, you need to be able to understand the other person's affective and cognitive states; communication breaks down when false presuppositions or assumptions are made about the other person's state.

Oral communication is a case in which, cognitively at least, it is easier to achieve empathic communication since there is immediate feedback from the hearer. So, in a second language learning situation, the problem of empathy becomes acute. Not only must learner-speakers correctly identify cognitive and affective sets in the hearer, but they must do so in a language in which they are insecure.

f. Anxiety

Intricately intertwined with self-esteem and inhibition and risk taking, the construct of anxiety, as it has been studied in the psychological domain, plays an important affective role in SLA. Anxiety is almost impossible to define in a simple sentence. It is associated with feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, apprehension, or worry. Scovel (1978, as cited in Brown, 1994, p.141), defined anxiety as "a state of apprehension, a vague fear....." We all know what anxiety is and we all have experienced feelings of anxiousness. How does this construct relate to second language learning? Any complex task we undertake can have elements of anxiety in it, aspects in which we doubt our own abilities and wonder if we will indeed succeed. Second language learning is no exception to a long list of complex tasks that are susceptible to our human anxieties.

Anxiety is divided into three types- trait anxiety, state anxiety and situation anxiety (Ellis, 1994). The first one is defined as 'a more permanent

predisposition to be anxious'. The second is defined as 'apprehension that is experienced at a particular moment- in the time as a response to a definite situation'. The third type is defined as 'anxiety which is aroused by a specific type of situation or event such as public speaking, examination or class participation.'

g. Extroversion

Extroversion, and its counterpart, introversion, are also potentially important factors in the acquisition of a second language. The terms are often misunderstood because of a tendency to stereotype extroversion. We are prone to think of an extroverted person as a gregarious, "life of the party" person. Introverted people, conversely, are thought of as quiet and reserved, with tendencies toward reclusiveness. Western society values the stereotypical extrovert. Nowhere is this more evident than in the classroom where teachers admire the talkative, outgoing student who participates freely in class discussions. On the other hand, introverts are sometimes thought of as not being as bright as extroverts.

Extroversion is the extent to which a person has a deep-seated need to receive ego enhancement, self-esteem and a sense of wholeness from other people as opposed to receiving that affirmation within oneself. Extroverts actually need other people in order to feel 'good'. However, extroverts are not necessarily be loud mouthed and talkative. They may be relatively shy but still need the affirmation of others. Introversion, on the other hand, is the extent to which a person derives a sense of wholeness and fulfillment apart from a reflection of the self from other people. Introverts can have an inner strength of character that extroverts do not have.

Extroversion is commonly thought to be related to empathy, but such may not be the case. The extroverted person may actually behave in an extroverted manner in order to protect his/her own ego, with extroverted behavior being symptomatic of defensive barriers and high ego boundaries. At the same time the introverted, quieter, more reserved person may show high empathy- an intuitive understanding and apprehension of others- and simply be more reserved in the outward and overt expression of empathy.

h. Motivation

Motivation is commonly thought of as an inner drive, impulse, emotion, or desire that moves one to a particular action. Or, in more technical terms, motivation refers to “the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid, and the degrees of effort they will exert in that respect.” (Keller 1983, p.389).

ii. Socio-cultural Factors

- Cultural stereotypes
- Attitudes
- Acculturation
- Culture in the classroom
- Social distance
- Pidginization
- Perceived and optimal social distance
- Sociopolitical considerations
- Language, thought and culture

(Since socio-cultural factors are not the areas of my study, they are left unexplained.)

1.1.8 Factors Affecting Students' Oral Classroom Performance

The factors described above are related to SLA in general. However, to be specific to students' oral classroom performance, the following influencing factors or variables can be identified:

1.1.8.1 Motivation

Motivation plays a vital role in teaching learning process. If students are not motivated towards the subject matter they are being taught, they are least likely to achieve the desired goal. Therefore, the language teachers should make use of various interesting or interactive activities to motivate their students. Such activities lead students to the world of real learning automatically. It not only gives fun and pleasure but also creates opportunities for interaction and socialization. However, the teacher should plan such activities related to content, situation and level of the students. Motivation is also typically examined in terms of the intrinsic and extrinsic orientation of the learner. Those who learn for their own self-perceived needs and goals are intrinsically oriented and those who pursue a goal only to receive an external reward from someone else are extrinsically motivated (Brown, 1994 p.153). Intrinsically motivated students are more interactive than extrinsically motivated ones.

1.1.8.2 Personality

Personality is broadly divided into two types: extroversion and introversion. Extrovert students are those who are outspoken, do not hesitate to speak, are not afraid of making mistakes and like to work in a group. On the contrary, introvert learners are shy, do not like to expose themselves, are afraid of making mistakes and so do not speak and like to work alone.

1.1.8.3 Risk Taking

Risk-taking shows less hesitancy. Risk takers are willing to use language and are more tolerant of errors. They are less likely to rehearse before speaking. Rubin (1975, as cited in Rai, 2005) characterized good language learners as willing to guess, willing to appear foolish in order to communicate and willing to use what knowledge they do have of the target language in order to create novel utterances.

1.1.8.4 Attitude

Attitude is another factor that influences students' performance in the classroom. Students' attitude towards the learning situation, teachers, and topic does affect their oral performance. If the learners have positive attitude towards learning situation, teachers, topic etc they are naturally more interactive. But if they harbor negative attitude, they hesitate to speak and remain passive.

1.1.8.5 Aptitude

Aptitude refers to the specific ability for language learning which learners are hypothesized to possess. Carroll (1981, as cited in Rai 2005) suggests that foreign language aptitude consists of four kinds of abilities. Phonetic coding ability which enables a learner to identify distinct sounds, to form associations between those sounds and symbols representing them, and to retain these associations; grammatical sensitivity enables him to recognize the grammatical functions of words in sentences; rote learning ability helps him to learn associations between sounds and meaning rapidly, and inductive language learning ability enables him to infer the rules governing a set of language materials given samples of language materials that permit such inferences. We can infer that students having high aptitude show good oral performance. Students having low aptitude are not as active as those having high aptitude.

1.1.8.6 Anxiety

Anxiety is also one of the factors that affect students' oral performance in the classroom. Bailey (1998, as cited in Rai, 2005, p. 90), says there might be different reasons for anxiety such as competitive nature of learners can act as a source of anxiety. Bailey (1983) found that learners became anxious when they compared themselves with the other learners in the class and found them less proficient. Tests and 'learners' perceived relationships with their teachers were to be as other sources of anxiety. They can also experience anxiety as a result of fear or experience of 'loosing oneself' in the target culture. Anxiety does not contribute to students' good oral performance in class.

1.1.8.7 Learning Strategies

It is one of the factors that affects students' oral performance in the classroom. Learning strategies are specific actions or techniques employed by learners to learn something. Oxford (1990, p. 8) notes that learning strategies are particular actions employed by learners to make their learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations. The learners who make use of appropriate learning strategies are better oral performers, learners who employ what O'Malley and Chamot (1985, as cited in Brown 1994, p.116) call socio-affective strategies like co-operation, question for clarification are obviously orally active in the classroom.

1.1.8.8 Teaching Methods

Teaching methods or techniques used by the teacher also greatly affect or influence students' oral performance in the classroom. If the techniques employed by the teacher are learner-centered, the students get maximum opportunity to interact or speak. But if the teacher chooses to use a teacher-centered technique, the students are often discouraged from speaking. For example, if the teacher is applying communicative method, he acts only as a

facilitator and the students accomplish most of the learning tasks by interacting with each other.

1.1.8.9 Use of Teaching Materials

Teaching materials brighten up the classroom and bring more variety and interest into the language lessons. The use of teaching materials makes learning enjoyable, interesting and stress-free, thereby motivating the learners towards the subject matter. It encourages all the learners to participate in the classroom interaction. It reduces the teacher talking time and increases the student talking time. Even the introvert learners are encouraged to talk. It facilitates the learning task.

1.1.8.10 Social, Cultural Background

The society the learner belongs to may also influence his or her classroom performance. The learners who come from a good family background tend to be more interactive and speak a lot. Showing the importance of culture, Brisk (1998, as cited in Dahal, 2007, p.8) states that when students are faced with two conflicting cultures, they may adjust to live without both, reject one of them or feel ambivalent about both. The interaction of all these cultural factors influences their classroom performance.

1.1.8.11 Large and Heterogeneous Class

Learning in a large classroom also affects students' oral performance. All the students may not get equal opportunity to take part in classroom discussion. As a result, they cannot improve their oral performance. Unmanageable classroom size prevents students from speaking practice. In the same way, a few bright students take most of the class times and average level students do not get a chance to participate in classroom interaction.

1.2 Review of the Related Literature

A number of research studies have been carried out on factors affecting second language learning in general, and students' oral classroom performance in particular outside Nepal. Some of them are as follows:

Oller et al. (1977, 1978) conducted researches on the relationship between attitudes and language success. They looked at the relationship of Chinese, Japanese and Mexican students' achievement in English to their attitudes toward self, the native language group, the target language group, their reasons for learning English, and their reasons for traveling to the United States. They mainly found that positive attitudes toward self, the native language group and the target language group enhanced proficiency.

Similarly, Heyde (1979) studied the effects of the three levels of self-esteem viz. global self-esteem, situational or specific self-esteem and task self-esteem, on performance of an oral production task by American college students learning French as a foreign language. She found that all three levels of self-esteem correlated positively with performance on the oral production measure, with the highest correlation occurring between task self-esteem and performance on oral production measure.

Likewise, Cullen (1998) carried out a research to find out whether brainstorming is useful in teaching conversation. The result of the study was that brainstorming before speaking task is a very useful activity that can be easily introduced into language classes. This study showed that brainstorming not only helps students to become better learners but also gives them fun.

In the same way, Mackey (1999) carried out a research to find out whether:

- Conversational interaction facilitates second language development, and

- The development outcomes are related to the nature of the conversational interaction and the level of learner involvement.

The procedure included the pre-test, treatment and post-test. It was concluded that interaction led to development. More active involvement led to greater development.

In Nepal, a number of research studies on English language skills, language achievements, oral production etc. have been carried out under the Department of English Education, TU, which are indirectly related to oral classroom performance. Some of them are as follows:

Yadav (2004) carried out a research to find out problems in teaching oral skill in English. It was found from the research that physical facilities of the classroom, time allocated for instruction, students' interest and their comprehension level are the main effective factors for oral skill development.

Similarly, Timsina (2005) carried out a research to find out the students' ability to communicate orally in English. The findings of the research were:

1. The students could perform comparatively better at narrative and descriptive skills than one to one conversation. It was also observed that students were less hesitant and nervous at the former skills than the latter one.
2. Most of the students did not make use of communicative functions and their exponents. The researcher observed a significant influence of first language interference in their speech.

Likewise, Rawal (2006) made an intensive as well as experimental study on "The Role of Input and Interaction in Learning the English Language" to find out the effectiveness of modified input and interaction based on it in learning the communicative functions of English. The finding of her study was that modified input and interaction based on it are more effective than the textbook

input and interaction based on it in learning the communicative functions of English. The two groups exposed to different inputs, were involved in interaction. Since both groups were involved in interaction and were provided with implicit-feedback, the remarkable difference was not seen in oral production.

Correspondingly, Gyawali (2007) carried out a research to find out the techniques used by English teachers. The finding of the study was that the teachers went to the class without teaching materials and started their lessons without warming up activities. It also showed that even the trained teachers did not apply language skills to facilitate students' oral performance. The primary students were deprived of exposure to English language outside the class.

Similarly, Chand (2007) carried out a research to find out students' motives and attitudes towards studying the English language. It showed that majority of the students have positive attitude towards English language, English language learners and English language teachers. Parents too have positive attitude towards English language. Students opine that there is L1 interference over L2. Classes are not interactive i.e. teacher centered and dominated by teachers and students believe that they are weak in listening and cannot speak English well. Likewise, Bhatta (2007) carried out a research to find out the effects of family background and economic status of students on their English language achievements. The finding based on the economic status of the family showed that students who were from rich family had the highest achievement scores than those of the middle class and poor class families. The finding based on students' family structure showed that students from nuclear family background were found to have higher achievement score than those from joint family background.

In the same way, Pandey (2007) carried out a research to investigate practical constraints faced by the teachers in conducting speaking activities in the classroom. The findings of the study were:

- a. Most of the teachers commonly pointed out their students to take part in speaking. Some of them allowed students' participation voluntarily.
- b. Teaching speaking was found more problematic because of less time allotment to its teaching, large classroom size, inhibition and lack of physical facilities.
- c. Teachers gave much attention to reading and writing rather than listening and speaking.
- d. Most of the classes were dominated by teachers. Student-student interaction was less emphasized than student-teacher interaction.

In addition, Pokherel (2007) carried out a research to find out the effectiveness of interaction techniques in teaching communicative functions. The finding showed that the score of the experimental group was positively high. The experimental group which was taught using interaction techniques secured high scores in comparison to the controlled group. The result showed that experimental group was benefited in all cases.

Along with this, Dahal (2007) carried out a research to find out the social factors affecting SLA. The findings of his research are as follows:

- a. Students' achievement in their proficiency test and spoken test in the final exam was very low which signifies that students were very weak in English.
- b. Some of the students were found hesitant mainly because of being lower caste. So, they were under performative than the upper caste students.
- c. Boys were better in their final exam results, but girls were better in proficiency test as well as their spoken test. The difference was not very

significant. So the sex factor can not be taken as the causative factor to influence the learning factor if equal opportunity is provided to both the sexes.

And Timilsina (2008) carried out a research to find out the strategies employed in teaching speaking skill. The finding showed that in order to arouse learners' interest towards speaking, strategies like picture demonstration, telling stories, playing recorded texts and showing films and videos were used. Students' speaking abilities were evaluated by using strategies like oral questions, problem solving exercises and asking them to discuss a given topic. Activities like role-play, discussion, information gap, question answer, describing picture, opinion gap, simulation and dramatization were more frequent to less frequent but free interview, picture differences, things in common and problem solving were never used as free communicative activities.

Though a number of research works have been carried out on different subject areas under the Department of English Education, none of the studies has yet dealt with the factors affecting students' oral classroom performance.

Therefore, the researcher felt the need to identify the factors affecting students' oral classroom performance.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- i. To identify the factors that affect students' oral classroom performance in terms of:
 - Students' Responses
 - Classroom Observation of Teachers
 - Interview from Teachers
- ii. To suggest some pedagogical implications on the basis of the findings of the study.

1.4 Significance of the Study

No research work has yet been carried out on the topic – factors affecting students' oral classroom performance. So, the finding of this study will be useful for the course designers, text book writers, language teachers/ learners and linguists as well. The research will be useful for all those involved in teaching- learning English. It will also be found to be significant by the prospective researchers. The researcher is hopeful that it will be of great significance in the field of pedagogy.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

To fulfill the objectives of the study, the following methodology was adopted:

2.1 Sources of Data

The researcher used both primary and secondary sources of data.

2.1.1 Primary Sources of Data

The students in the classroom and the subject teachers of their respective classes were the primary sources of data.

2.1.2 Secondary Sources of Data

The researcher used different books, theses, articles, journals and some others as the secondary sources of data. Some of them were as follows: Ellis (1985), Brown (1994), Harmer (1991, 2001), Krashen & Terrell (1983), Kumar (1996), Ur (1996), etc.

2.2 Population of the Study

The students of class nine from four purposively selected public schools were the population of the study.

2.2.1 Sampling Population and Sampling Procedure

Only eighty students of grade nine from four public schools in Kathmandu district were the sampling population of the study. Twenty students from each school were selected through simple random sampling procedure. Besides, English teachers from the respective schools were also the population of the study.

2.3 Tools for Data Collection

The researcher used questionnaire, structured interview schedule and classroom observation to elicit the required information from the sampled population. A set of questionnaire was prepared to elicit the data from the students. Similarly, a set of structured interview sheet was prepared for teachers teaching English in the same class. The researcher also observed their classes to collect required data for his study.

2.4 Process of Data Collection

The researcher prepared a set of questionnaire to collect data. Then, he visited the selected schools and established rapport with the authority concerned and asked them to help him administer the prepared questionnaire to the students who were selected through simple random sampling. The students were given clear instruction before administering the questionnaire. Similarly, he asked the concerned subject teachers to help him by giving interview in order to collect data for the study. The researcher also observed six classes of each subject teacher in order to collect more reliable data.

2.5 Limitations of the Study

The study was carried out within the following limitations:

- a. The study was limited only to the students' oral performance in the classroom.
- b. The study was limited to personal factors only.
- c. The study was limited to four public schools of Kathmandu district.
- d. Only 80 students from class IX were selected as the sample population of the study.
- e. Only four teachers were interviewed and six classes of each subject teacher were observed for data collection.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the primary sources. The data are analyzed and interpreted under the following three sub-headings:

-) Students' Responses on "Factors Affecting Their Oral Classroom Performance"
-) Classroom Observation of English Teachers.
-) Teachers' Views on "Factors Affecting Students' Oral Classroom Performance"

The researcher used simple graphic tools such as pie-charts, tables, bar-diagrams and percentage to analyze and interpret the data.

The researcher administered the questionnaire to 80 students of different schools and collected their responses on factors affecting oral classroom performance through questionnaire. Their responses on the effect of different factors are given below:

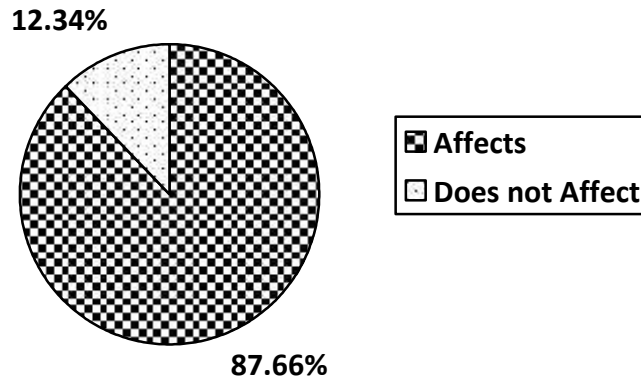
3.1 Students' Responses on Factors Affecting Their Oral Classroom Performance

The researcher administered the questionnaire to 80 students of different schools and collected their responses on factors affecting their oral classroom performance through questionnaire. Their responses on the effect of different factors are given below:

3.1.1 Motivation

The distribution of students' responses on motivation as a factor affecting their oral classroom performance is presented in the pie-chart below:

Figure 1
Motivation

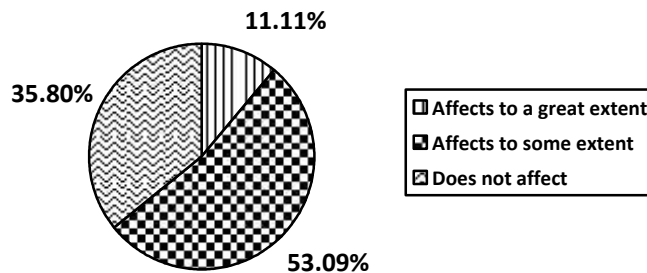


The pie chart above shows that 87.65 % of the students responded that motivation affects their oral classroom performance. However, 12.34% of the students said that motivation does not affect their oral classroom performance.

3.1.2 Personality

The distribution of the responses made by the students about the affects of personality on their oral classroom performance is presented in the pie- chart below:

Figure 2
Personality



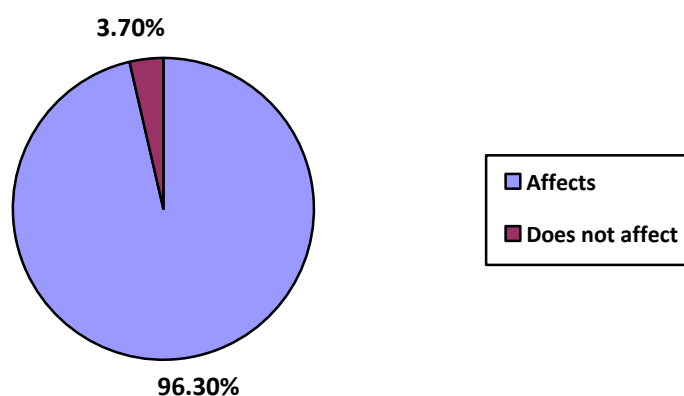
As the pie chart above exhibits, only 11.11% of the students stated that personality affects their oral classroom performance to a great extent. However,

53.08% of the students replied that personality affects their oral performance only to some extent while 35.80% of the students answered that personality does not affect their oral classroom performance at all.

3.1.3 Risk Taking

The distribution of students' responses on whether or not risk taking affects their oral classroom performance in the class is shown below:

Figure 3
Risk taking

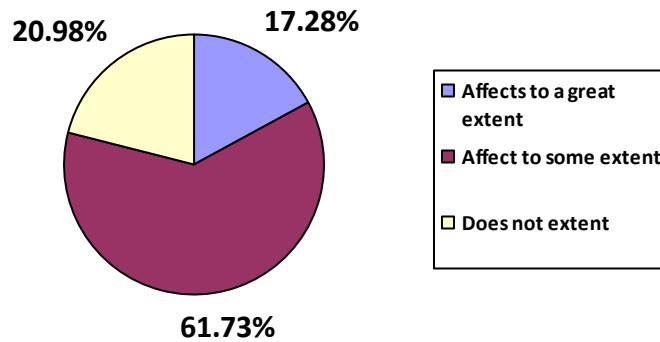


According to the pie chart above, almost all of the students i.e. 96.30% of them said that risk taking does affect their oral classroom performance whereas only 3.70% of them responded that risk taking does not affect their oral performance.

3.1.4 Attitude towards the Teacher

The distribution of students' responses about the effect of their attitude towards their teachers is presented below:

Figure 4
Attitude towards the teacher

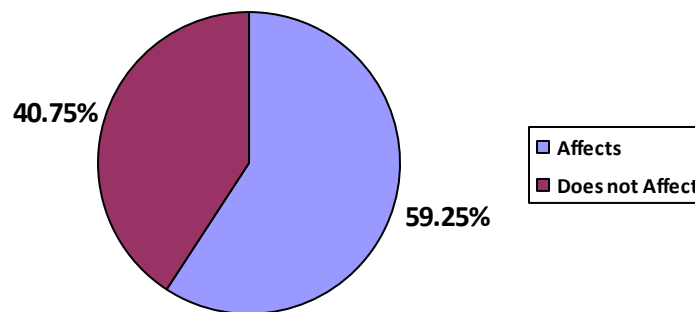


The above pie chart reveals that 17.28% of the students stated that attitude towards teachers affects their oral classroom performance to a great extent; whereas 61.72% of them replied that attitude towards teachers affects their performance to some extent. However, 20.98% of them answered that attitude towards teachers does not affect their oral classroom performance at all.

Anxiety

The distribution of students' responses about the effect of anxiety on their oral performance is presented below:

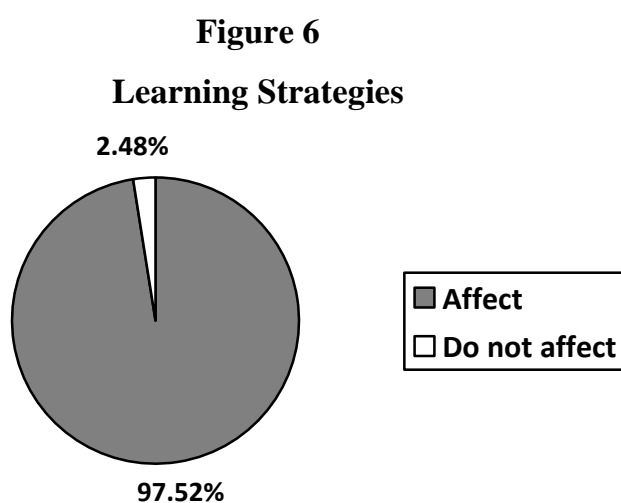
Figure5
Anxiety



From the above pie chart, it is obvious that the majority of the students i.e. 59.25% of them responded that anxiety affects their oral classroom performance. On the other hand, 40.75% of them said that anxiety does not affect their oral classroom performance.

3.1.6 Learning Strategies

The distribution of students' responses about the effect of their learning strategies on their oral classroom performance is shown below:

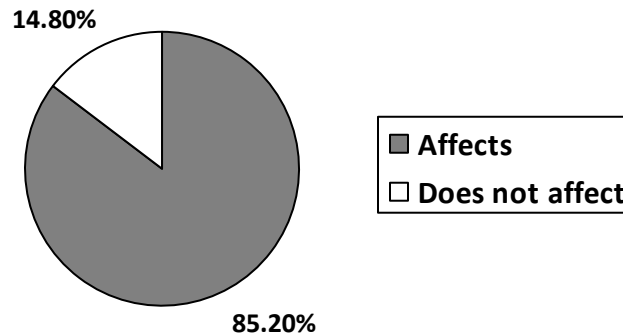


The pie chart above shows that almost all of the students i.e. 97.52% of them responded that learning strategies affect their oral classroom performance, whereas only 2.48% of them replied that learning strategies do not affect their oral classroom performance.

3.1.7 Teaching Methods

The distribution of students' responses about the effect of teaching methods on their oral classroom performance is presented below:

Figure 7
Teaching methods

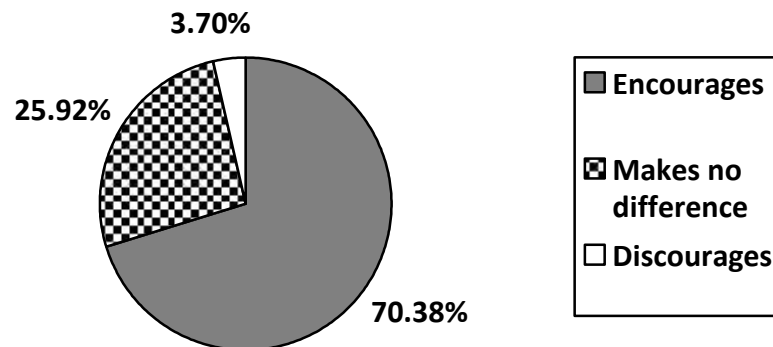


The pie chart above demonstrates that 85.20% of the students answered that teaching method the teachers adopt affects their oral classroom performance. On the contrary, 14.80% of them stated that teaching method does not affect their oral classroom performance.

3.1.8 Use of Teaching Materials

The distribution of students' responses about the effect of teaching materials on their oral classroom performance is as follows:

Figure 8
Use of teaching materials

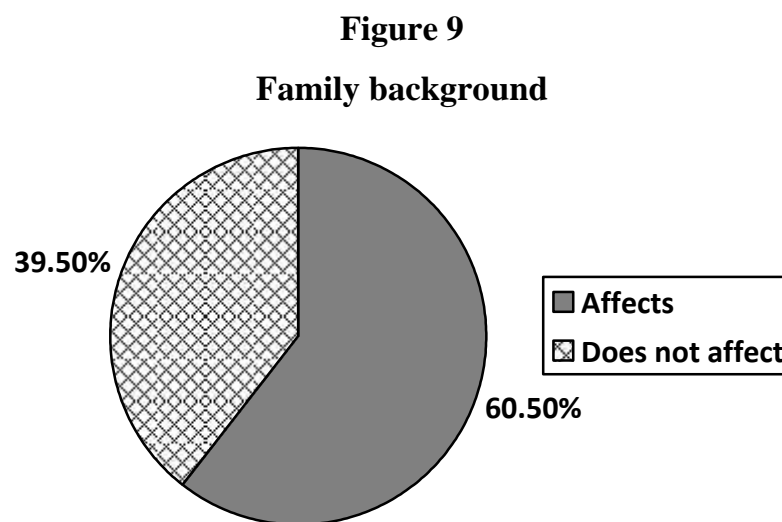


The above pie chart shows that a considerable number of students i.e. 70.37% of them replied that the use of teaching materials encourages their oral

classroom performance whereas 25.92% of them responded that the use of teaching materials makes no difference in their oral classroom performance. However, a very few students i.e. 3.70% of them said that the use of teaching materials discourages their oral classroom performance.

3.1.9 Family Background

The distribution of students' responses about the effects of family background on their oral classroom performance is displayed below:

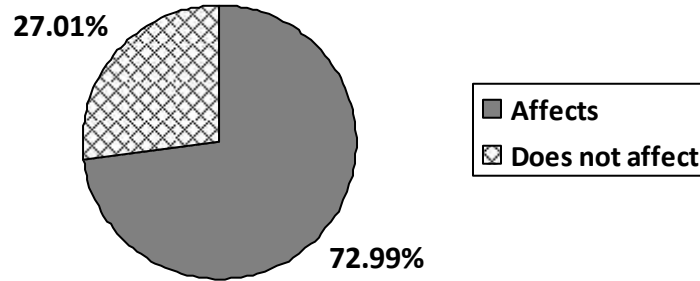


The above pie chart reveals that the majority of the students i.e. 60.50% of them stated that their family background affects their oral classroom performance whereas 39.50% of them were of the opinion that their family background does not affect their oral classroom performance.

3.1.10 Classroom Size

The distribution of students' responses about the effect of classroom size on their oral classroom performance is presented below:

Figure 10
Classroom size

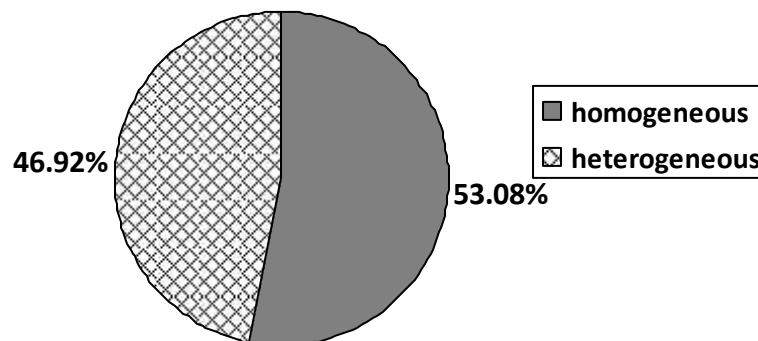


The pie chart above exhibits that 74.07% of the students answered that classroom size does affect their oral classroom performance. On the other hand, 25.93% of them stated that classroom size does not affect their oral classroom performance.

3.1.11 Heterogeneous Class

The distribution of students' responses about the effect of heterogeneous class on their oral classroom performance is as shown below:

Figure 11
Heterogeneous class



From the pie chart above, it is clear that the majority of the students i.e. 53.08% of them reacted that a homogeneous class helps them learn speaking skill

better. On the other hand, 46.92% of them opined that a heterogeneous class is beneficial for learning speaking skill better.

3.2 Classroom Observation of English Teachers

This section deals with the class observation of the English teachers of the sample schools. The researcher prepared an observation form and observed six classes of each teacher teaching English in their respective classes in the particular schools. The data collected from the classroom observation are tabulated and analyzed using percentage.

3.2.1 Motivation

The effect of motivation on students' oral classroom performance is presented below under different rating scales:

Table No. 1
Motivation

Rating	No. of classes	Percentage
Excellent	-	-
V. Good	15	62.5
Good	9	37.5
Fair	-	-
Poor	-	-

The table above shows that 62.5% of the total classes observed was found to be very good in terms of students' motivation. Similarly, 37.5% of the classes were found to be good. The students actively participated in interaction and listened to the teacher attentively. They were found to be highly interested and curious. Their motivational level was very good. This clarifies that majority of the teachers were found to be very good at motivating students and creating

interest among them. It was judged from the observation that motivation did have its effect on students' oral classroom performance to a great extent.

3.2.2 Use of Teaching Materials

The effect of the use of teaching materials on students' oral classroom performance is presented below:

Table No. 2
Use of teaching materials

Rating	No. of classes	Percentage
Excellent	-	-
V. Good	2	8.33
Good	2	8.33
Fair	9	37.5
Poor	11	45.83

The table above reveals that in 45.83% of the classes observed, the use of teaching materials by the teachers was found to be poor. Similarly, in 37.5% of the classes observed, the use of teaching materials by the teachers was fair. Likewise, in 8.33% of the classes observed, the use of teaching materials by teachers was found to be good and it was very good in 8.33% of the classes. The researcher found that the classes where there was proper use of teaching materials, the students were active, interactive and very often involved in oral classroom activities whereas the classes where there was poor or no use of teaching materials, the students were found to be less interactive, less motivated and did not participate in oral activities. So, the researcher came to the conclusion that the use of teaching materials in the classroom did have effect on students' oral classroom performance to a great extent.

3.2.3 Classroom Size

The effect of classroom size on students' oral classroom performance is presented below:

Table No. 3
Classroom size

Rating	No. of classes	Percentage
Excellent	-	-
V. Good	-	-
Good	-	-
Fair	24	100
Poor	-	-

The table above indicates that in all the classes observed, the students' performance was found to be fair in terms of size. The students' number was large in each observed class. So, the students could not get equal time to engage in oral classroom performance. Therefore, he came to the conclusion that classroom size affected students' oral classroom performance to a great extent.

3.2.4 Attitude Towards the Teacher

The effect of students' attitude towards their teachers on oral classroom performance is presented in the table below:

Table No. 4
Attitude towards the teacher

Rating	No. of classes	Percentage
V. Positive	1	4.17
Positive	13	54.166
Neutral	10	41.666
Negative	-	-

The table above demonstrates that in 54.17% of the classes observed, the students' attitude towards the teacher was found to be positive. Like wise, in 41.66% of the classes observed, the students' attitude towards the teacher was found to be neutral. Similarly, in 4.17% of the classes, their attitude towards the teacher was found to be very positive. The researcher found that the students having positive attitude towards their teachers were found to be highly interested and motivated and also involved actively in the oral classroom performance. Therefore, the researcher came to the conclusion that the students' attitude towards their teacher greatly affects their oral classroom performance.

3.2.5 Teacher's Focus on Speaking Skill

The effect of teacher's focus on speaking skill on students' oral classroom performance is presented below:

Table No. 5
Teacher's focus on speaking skill

Rating	No. of classes	Percentage
Excellent	-	-
V. Good	9	37.5
Good	13	54.166
Fair	2	8.33
Poor	-	-

As the above table shows, in 37.5% of the classes observed, the teacher's focus on speaking skill was found to be very good. Similarly, in 54.17% of the classes observed, the teacher's focus on speaking skill was found to be good and in 8.33% of the classes, the teacher's focus on speaking skill was found to

be fair. This shows that teacher's focus on speaking skill affects students' oral classroom performance to a great extent.

3.2.6 Risk Taking

The effect of risk taking on students' oral classroom performance is presented below:

Table No. 6
Risk taking

Rating	No. of classes	Percentage
Excellent	-	-
V. Good	8	33.34
Good	16	66.66
Fair	-	-
Poor	-	-

The table above reveals that in 66.66% of the classes observed, risk taking was found to be good whereas in 33.34% of the classes, risk taking was very good. Those students who often took risk had better oral classroom performance than those who feared to take risk in involving in oral classroom performance. Therefore, the researcher concluded from the observation that risk taking affects students' oral classroom performance.

3.2.7 Learning Strategies

The effect of the learning strategies used by the students' on their oral classroom performance is presented below:

Table No. 7
Learning Strategies

Learning strategies	No. of classes	Percentage
Repetition	14	58.34
Memorization	6	25
Appeal for assistance	4	16.66

The above table displays that in 58.34% of the classes observed, the students mostly employed repetition strategy. Similarly, in 25% of the classes observed, the students used memorization strategy and in 16.66% of the classes, the students used appeal for assistance strategy. This clarifies that learning strategies affect students' oral classroom performance.

3.2.8 Nature of Class

The effect of nature of class on students' oral classroom performance is presented below:

Table No. 8
Nature of class

Nature of class	No. of classes	Percentage
Homogeneous	-	-
Heterogeneous	24	100

The table above reflects that all the classes observed were found to be heterogeneous in nature like language, sex, ethnicity, socio-cultural and economic background, religion etc. The researcher observed that these different groups had varied classroom performance. Therefore, nature of class can also be considered to be one of the major factors affecting students' oral classroom performance.

3.2.9 Nature of Students

The effect of personality of the students on their oral classroom performance is presented below:

Table No. 9
Nature of students

Nature of the students	No. of classes	Percentage
Shy	2	9
Sensitive	6	25
Outspoken	16	66

The above table depicts that in 9% of the classes observed, the students were found to be shy. Similarly, the students were found to be sensitive in 25% of the classes observed and the students were found to be outspoken in the rest of the remaining 66% of the classes. In all the classes observed, extrovert students were found to have taken benefit by engaging in oral classroom performance than the rest. This hinted that personality of the students greatly affected their oral classroom performance.

3.2.10 Methodology

The effect of methodology adopted on students' oral classroom performance is given below:

Table No. 10
Methodology

Method	No. of classes	Percentage
Student-centered	22	91.67
Teacher-centered	2	8.33

According to the table, in 91.67% of the classes observed, the teachers adopted student-centered method whereas in 8.33% of the classes observed, teachers adopted teacher-centered method. It was observed that the students' oral performance in the classes taught with student-centered method, was found far better than that of teacher-centered one. This proved that methodology adopted affected students' oral classroom performance to a great extent

3.2.11 Focus on Activities

In order to promote the speaking skill of the students, different activities are applied in the classrooms. The researcher listed 18 activities in his observation form and went to the classroom to observe the frequency of use of the activities by the teacher. The speaking activities conducted by the teachers in their speaking class are presented below under different rating scales:

Table No. 11
Focus on activities

Rating scales

S.N	Activities	Excellent	V. Good	Good	Fair	Poor
1.	Picture description	2	5	15	-	2
2.	Role playing	-	2	8	10	4
3.	Pair work	3	2	4	13	2
4.	Story telling	-	3	5	10	6
5.	Debate	-	-	3	12	9
6.	Discussion	3	13	8	-	-
7.	Read and write	-	10	13	1	-
8.	Listen and answer	-	12	10	2	-
9.	Interviewing	-	2	7	15	-
10.	Reporting	-	3	4	16	1
11.	Tell summary	-	1	8	10	5

12.	Drama	-	2	3	12	7
13.	Language games	-	-	4	8	12
14.	Drills	-	4	8	12	-
15.	Group work	-	4	7	13	-
16.	Singing songs	-	-	1	5	18
17.	Chanting poems	-	-	-	4	20
18.	Watching movies	-	-	-	-	24

From the above table, it is clear that a very few activities were conducted in an excellent way by the teachers in their classes. For instance, picture description, pair work and discussion were found to be conducted in an excellent way in the oral classroom whereas the activities like singing songs, chanting poems and watching movies were very rarely used. However, most of the remaining activities were found to be conducted well.

3.3 Teachers' Views on Factors Affecting Students' Oral Classroom Performance

So as to testify the credibility of the responses made by the students, the researcher also interviewed the English teachers of the respective schools. He asked them some questions regarding factors affecting students' oral classroom performance. Most of the responses made by the teachers were very similar to the students' responses.

All the teachers interviewed stated that motivation affects students' oral classroom performance to a great extent. When asked whether or not their students had the feeling of anxiety while speaking, all of them replied that the students often had the feeling of anxiety.

In response to the question to what extent the students' attitude towards their teacher affects their oral classroom performance, 50% of the teachers gave their view that attitude affects their oral classroom performance to a great extent whereas 50% of them said that attitude affects oral classroom performance only to some extent.

So far as the effect of learning strategies on oral classroom performance is considered, all of the teachers responded that learning strategies affect students' oral classroom performance to a great extent.

When asked about the effect of the teaching method adopted by them on students' oral classroom performance, they opined that the teaching method greatly affects students' oral classroom performance.

As regards the role of teaching materials in enhancing students' oral classroom performance, all the teachers were agreed that the use of teaching materials encourages students' oral classroom performance.

In response to a question regarding the effect of family background on students' oral classroom performance, most of the teachers responded that family background affects the students' oral classroom performance to some extent.

Regarding the role of classroom size on students' oral classroom performance, all of them were of the opinion that it affects students' oral classroom performance to a great extent.

When asked if the nature of class had anything to do with students' oral classroom performance, all of them replied that nature of class affects students' oral classroom performance to some extent.

In response to the question whether or not risk taking affects oral classroom performance, most of the teachers stated that risk taking affects students' oral classroom performance to some extent.

Similarly, all the teachers unanimously said that personality greatly affects students' oral classroom performance, when they were asked whether or not it affected students' oral classroom performance.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Findings

The findings drawn from the analysis and interpretation of the data received from the various informants are listed below:

4.1.1 Findings Based on Students' Responses

The findings drawn from the students' responses are as follows:

- i. More than two third of the students responded that motivation is one of the major factors affecting their oral classroom performance.
- ii. Majority of the students answered personality as a factor affecting their oral classroom performance.
- iii. The researcher found that over 95% students considered risk taking to be a major factor affecting their oral classroom performance.
- iv. Majority of the students stated that attitude towards their teacher affects their oral classroom performance to some extent; whereas a very few of them stated that their attitude towards teacher affects their oral classroom performance to a great extent. However, a few of them were found to have stated that it does not.
- v. Majority of the students responded that anxiety affects their oral classroom performance while the rest did not think so.
- vi. Almost all of the students thought that learning strategies affect their oral classroom performance.
- vii. More than two third of the student informants thought that the method the teacher adopts affects their oral classroom performance.
- viii. Majority of the students responded that the use of teaching materials encourages their classroom performance.

- ix. Majority of the students replied that their family background affects their oral classroom performance.
- x. About two third of the students considered that classroom size affects their oral classroom performance.
- xi. Majority of the students said that homogeneous class helps them learn speaking skill better.

4.1.2 Findings Based on Researcher's Classroom Observation

The findings drawn from the classroom observation of the teachers are as follows:

- i. Majority of the students' motivational level in observed classes was found to be very good.
- ii. The use of teaching materials in observed classes was found to be poor.
- iii. The researcher found that all the students did not get equal opportunity to participate in oral classroom performance since all the classes so far observed were large in terms of students' number.
- iv. The students' attitude towards the teacher was found to be very positive.
- v. The state of teachers' focus on speaking skill encouraging students' participation in oral performance was found good.
- vi. The researcher found that the students were found to have been adventurous in the use of language orally.
- vii. Majority of the students were found to have used repetition as a major strategy while speaking.
- viii. The researcher found variations in oral classroom performance of the students in terms of their native language, sex, ethnicity, socio-cultural background, religion etc.
- ix. The researcher found that outspoken students were better in their oral classroom performance than the shy and the sensitive ones.

- x. The researcher found that almost all the classes observed were conducted through student-centered approach.
- xi. The overall use of activities in the classroom which are likely to support the students' oral classroom performance was found to be satisfactory.

4.1.3 Findings Based on Teachers' Interview.

The findings derived from the interview of different teachers are as follows:

- i. The researcher found that all the teachers interviewed stated that motivation affects students' oral classroom performance to a great extent.
- ii. All of the teacher respondents said that the students often had the feeling of anxiety.
- iii. Regarding the students' attitude towards their teacher, 50% of them answered that it affects the oral classroom performance of the students to a great extent whereas 50% of them thought that it did so to some extent.
- iv. The researcher found that all the teachers responded that learning strategies of the students and methods adopted by the teacher greatly affects the students' oral classroom performance.
- v. All the teachers agreed that the use of teaching materials encourages students' oral classroom performance.
- vi. Most of the teachers stated that the family background of the students affects their oral classroom performance to some extent.
- vii. The researcher found that the students' oral performance is affected due to classroom size to a great extent.
- viii. The researcher found that the nature of class and risk taking also affect the students' oral classroom performance to some extent.

- ix. The researcher found all the teachers responded that personality of the students greatly affects their oral classroom performance.

4.2 Recommendations

On the basis of the findings from the analysis and interpretation, the researcher has made the following recommendations.

1. Since motivation was found to affect students' oral classroom performance greatly, the teachers should put a lot of efforts in creating students' motivation towards the subject matter in the class.
2. The teachers should always encourage students to take risk in using the target language (TL).
3. The teachers should teach language in such a way that their way of teaching induces the students to develop their positive attitude towards them.
4. The teachers should always try to create such a learning environment in the classroom in which students have low anxiety.
5. The students should be made familiar with the ideas of using better learning strategies.
6. The teachers should always give priority to adopt student-centered techniques in order to make the class livelier.
7. Since the use of teaching materials in the observed classes was found to be poor, the teachers are strongly recommended to try to make maximum use of suitable teaching materials in their class.
8. The classroom size should be smaller to make teaching learning activities more effective.
9. The teachers should try to make the classroom homogeneous as far as possible.

10. Every student in the class should be given equal opportunity to participate in classroom discussion.
11. The teachers should use varieties of activities that enhance students' speaking skill.
12. As the shy and introvert students were found to be less benefited, they should be encouraged to speak in the class.
13. Classroom learning should be based on communicative approach in a language class.
14. The concerned authorities should pay their due attention to the selection of the activities that facilitate students' oral classroom performance while designing the textbook.
15. The teachers themselves should also be well prepared about the topic going to be taught.

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APPENDIX I

Questionnaire for Students

This questionnaire is prepared to conduct research on “Factors Affecting Students’ Oral Classroom Performance” in partial fulfillment of thesis writing of M.Ed. English program.

[You are requested to provide answers to the questions as clearly as possible. I assure you of the secrecy of the answers.]

Personal Details

- a. Name :
 - b. Class :
 - c. School :
 - d. Age :
 - e. Sex :
1. How does your English teacher start his lesson?
 - a. Revising the previous lesson
 - b. Telling jokes
 - c. Showing pictures
 2. Do you tend to be more interactive if you are motivated towards what is being taught?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 3. Which of the following best describes your personality?
 - a. Shy
 - b. Sensitive
 - c. Outspoken
 4. Does your personality affect your oral performance in the classroom?
 - a. No
 - b. To some extent
 - c. To a great extent

5. Do you speak even if you are not confident about what you are going to say?
 - a. Never
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Often
6. Do you care about your mistakes while speaking in the class?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
7. Do you rehearse (practise) before speaking in the class?
 - a. No
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Often
8. Does your English teacher's behaviour in the class affect your oral performance?
 - a. No
 - b. To some extent
 - c. To a great extent
9. How do you find your speaking class?
 - a. Not interactive
 - b. Interactive
 - c. Very interactive
10. What kind of topic encourages you to speak more in the class?
 - a. Topic of my interest
 - b. Any kind of topic
 - c. Totally new topic
11. Do you agree your prior/existing knowledge about the topic being taught affects your oral performance?
 - a. Agree
 - b. Disagree
12. Do you have the feeling of anxiety in your speaking class?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
13. Does this (anxiety) affect your speaking performance?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

14. Which of the following learning strategies do you use while learning speaking?
 - a. Repetition
 - b. Memorization
 - c. Appeal for assistance
 - d. All of the above
15. Do you think the strategies you use help you in learning speaking?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
16. Which of the following methods does your teacher apply while teaching speaking?
 - a. Teacher-centered
 - b. Student-centered
17. How often does your English teacher provide you opportunity to interact or speak in your English class?
 - a. Very often
 - b. Never
 - c. Sometimes
18. The use of teaching materials
 - a. Encourages students' oral classroom performance
 - b. Discourages students' oral classroom performance
 - c. Makes no difference in oral classroom performance
19. Do you agree the use of teaching materials is beneficial for learning speaking?
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Disagree
20. Do you think your family background affects your speaking performance?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

21. Do you agree your culture makes any difference in your oral classroom performance?
 - a. Agree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Strongly agree
22. Large classroom size affects students' oral performance. Do you agree with this statement?
 - a. Yes, I agree
 - b. No, I don't agree
23. Which of the following classes helps you learn speaking skill better?
 - a. Homogeneous
 - b. Heterogeneous

Thank you

APPENDIX II

Class Observation Form

Teacher's Name:
 Name of the School:
 Type of the School: Private/ Public

Date:
 No. of students:
 Gender: Male/ Female

S.N	Aspects	Excellent	V. Good	Good	Fair	Poor
1.	Classroom management					
2.	Student's motivation					
2.1	Student's interest					
2.2	Listen attentively					
2.3	Student's curiosity					
3.	Use of teaching materials					
4.	Classroom size					
5.	Student's attitude towards the teacher					
6.	Focus on language skills					
6.1	Listening					
6.2	Reading					
6.3	Writing					
6.4	Speaking					
7.	Student's involvement					
7.1	Ask question relevantly					
7.2	Answer questions					
7.3	Take part in discussion					
7.4	Follow direction					
8.	Focus on activities					
8.1	Picture description					
8.2	Role playing					
8.3	Pair work					
8.4	Story telling					
8.5	Debate					
8.6	Discussion					
8.7	Read and answer					
8.8	Listen and answer					
8.9	Interviewing					
8.10	Reporting					
8.11	Tell summary					
8.12	Drama					

8.13	Language games					
8.14	Drills					
8.15	Group work					
9	Brain storming					
9.1	Singing songs					
9.2	Chanting poems					
9.3	Watching movies					
10	Suitability of activities to the level of students					
11	Time management for teaching speaking					

S.N.	Aspect	Repetition	Memorization	Appeal for Assistance
12	Learning strategy			

S.N.	Aspect	Homogeneous	Heterogeneous
13	Nature of Class		

S.N.	Aspect	Shy	Sensitive	Outspoken
14	Nature of student			

S.N.	Aspect	Teacher-centered	Student-centered
15	Methodology Adopted		

Any other activities observed

.....
.....
.....

Any problem observed

.....
.....
.....

Researcher
Prem Prasad Kandel

APPENDIX III

Interview sheet for Teachers

Dear Sir/Madam,

The following questions are part of my research study entitled “Factors Affecting Students’ Oral Classroom Performance” under the supervision of Ms. Hima Rawal, lecturer, Department of English Language Education, Faculty of Education, Kathmandu Shiksha Campus, Ramshahpath, Kathmandu. The major objective of this study is to identify the factors that affect students’ oral classroom performance.

Your co-operation in responding to the questions will be of great value to me. Please feel free to put your responses required in questions. Be assured that the responses you make will be completely anonymous and will have no harmful effects to you as well as the others.

Teacher’s Name:

Name of the School:

Type of School: Private/ Public

Gender: Male/ Female

1. Do you agree motivation affects students’ oral classroom performance?

.....
.....

2. Which of the following activities do you apply to motivate students to speak in the class?

- a. Revising the previous lesson
- b. Telling jokes
- c. Showing pictures

3. Do your students speak confidently while you are teaching speaking?
 - a. Never
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Often
4. Do students care about the mistakes while they are speaking with you?

.....

.....
5. How do you find your speaking class?
 - a. Interactive
 - b. Not interactive
 - c. Very interactive
6. Does students' attitude affect their oral classroom performance?
 - a. No
 - b. To some extent
 - c. To great extent
7. Are your students anxious in your speaking class?

.....

.....
8. Do you think students' anxiety in the class affects their oral performance?

.....

.....
9. Which of the following strategies do you think your students mostly employ in learning speaking?
 - a. Repetition
 - b. Memorization
 - c. Appeal for assistance
 - d. All of the above

10. Do you think students' learning strategy helps their oral classroom performance?

11. Which of the following methods do you apply while teaching speaking?
 a. Teacher-centered b. Student-centered
12. How often do you provide your students opportunity to interact in your speaking class?
 a. Very often b. Never c. Sometimes
13. The use of teaching materials
 a. Encourages students' oral classroom performance
 b. Discourages students' oral classroom performance
 c. Makes no difference
14. Do you agree the use of teaching materials is beneficial for teaching speaking?
 a. Agree b. Disagree c. strongly agree
15. Do you think students' prior knowledge about the topic being taught affects their oral classroom performance?
 a. Yes b. No c. To some extent
16. Do you agree learner's family background affects their oral classroom performance?

17. Does students' culture make any difference in teaching speaking?
 a. Yes b. No c. Sometimes
18. Do you think large classroom size affects students' oral classroom performance?

19. Which of the following classes, in your opinion, helps you teach speaking skill better?
- a. Homogeneous
 - b. Heterogeneous
20. Mention any three activities you often conduct that benefit students' oral classroom performance.
- a.
 - b.
 - c.

Thank you very much for your kind co-operation and invaluable time.

APPENDIX IV

(Respondents)

1. Nepal Rastriya Higher Secondary School, Nepaltar, Kathmandu

S.N	Names of the Students	S.N	Names of the Students
1.	Sumitra Tamang	11.	Pem Maya Pakhrin
2.	Mukunda Pyakurel	12.	Sunita Ghimire
3.	Dipendra Tamang	13.	Sapana ojha
4.	Binit Upadhyaya	14.	Sirjana Thapa
5.	Sanjay Rai	15.	Goma Bhandari
6.	Tara Lama	16.	Ram Basnet
7.	Punam Lama	17.	Yubaraj Shrestha
8.	Sharmila Pandey	18.	Rajaram Karki
9.	Ambika Pokherel	19.	Basanta Rawat
10.	Pemba Tamang	20.	Basanta Rokka

2. Tarun Madhyamik Vidyalaya, Balaju, Kathmandu

S.N	Names of the Students	S.N	Names of the Students
1.	Jagadish Poudel	11.	Bidur Mudbadi
2.	Saroj Lamichhane	12.	Gaurav Acharya
3.	Sudip Adhikari	13.	Deepesh Pandit
4.	Ashish Pudasaini	14.	Bijaya Chhinal
5.	Sujata Khadka	15.	Deepak Adhikari
6.	Sandhya Rimal	16.	Amit Guni
7.	Lila Dhungana	17.	Sushma Neupane
8.	Ashma Dahal	18.	Anita K.C
9.	Kalpana Tamang	19.	Aakankshya Pariyar
10.	Shristi Ranjit	20.	Sangita Poudel

3. Mansingh Dharma Madhyamik Vidyalaya, Manamiju, Kathmandu

S.N	Names of the Students	S.N	Names of the Students
1.	Nanu Thapa	11.	Suman Maharjan
2.	Nabina Baniya	12.	Niraj Baniya
3.	Prakash Dhakal	13.	Priya Gurung
4.	Sabina Karki	14.	Linu Thapa Chhetri
5.	Kiran Shresths	15.	Rita Lamichhane
6.	Sharada Adhikari	16.	Gita Bhandari
7.	Samjhana Shrestha	17.	Manish Khadka
8.	Sanjita Sapkota	18.	Deepesh Chandra Duwadi
9.	Prakash Mahat	19.	Kripa Gurung
10.	Bibek Rai	20.	Pradip Ghimire

4. Manamaiju Madhyamik Vidyalaya, Manamaiju, Kathmandu

S.N	Names of the Students	S.N	Names of the Students
1.	Bikranta Maharjan	11.	Maiya Maharjan
2.	Sabina Nepali	12.	Rasila Maharjan
3.	Nabin Maharjan	13.	Mina Maharjan
4.	Umesh Thapa	14.	Birendra Shrestha
5.	Sushmita Maharjan	15.	Ashish Kahdka
6.	Neelam Adhikari	16.	Raj Kaji Maharjan
7.	Sita Chamling Rai	17.	Muna Gurung
8.	Divya Pandey	18.	Sanam Lama
9.	Ramkrishna Shrestha	19.	Sanjaya Maharjan
10.	Sanu Kaji Maharjan	20.	Kumar Bahadur Budha

APPENDIX V
(Selected Schools and Teachers)

S.N	Names of Schools	English Teachers
1.	Nepal Rastriya Higher Secondary School, Nepaltar, Kathmandu	Mr. Basanta Raj Dhakal
2.	Tarun Madhyamik Vidyalaya, Balaju , Kathmandu	Mr. Lal Kaji Shrestha
3.	Mansingh Dharma Madhyamik Vidyalaya, Manamaiju Kathmandu	Mr. Narayan Prasad Chapagai
4.	Manamaiju Madhyamik Vidyalaya, Manamaiju, Kathmandu	Mr. Prem Prasad Rai