

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This is the study entitled “Autonomous Learning Activities of IELTS Candidates for Developing Speaking Skill”. This chapter consists of background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study and operational definition of the key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Language teaching and learning is a purposeful activity. It is intended to bring changes in the learners. In this regard, Long (2009, p.1) says, “hundreds of millions of people voluntarily attempt to learn language each year”. They include adult and children who learn the language for various purposes like official, personal, social and others. Richards and Rodgers (2001, p.1) argue that the field of English language teaching has witnessed the paradigm shift from teacher centeredness to learner centeredness, which keeps learners’ interest and need in the center of learning process, and prepare them as an active learning agent in this present situation. Many movements, approaches, techniques and the concept of learner autonomy, learner training, and learner strategies have emerged in language teaching throughout the time. Along with the changing situation, there is wide acceptance of learner centered method and approaches to the language learning. In the learner centered methods learners are not viewed as passive listener rather they are the active participants for their own learning, which is focused on learner autonomy. Learner autonomy is the learners’ ability to learn independently by their own effort and speed. Library study, peer-coaching and group studies are the good examples of autonomous learning.

Cotterall (1995, p.195) defines learner autonomy as “the extent to which learners demonstrate the ability to use a set of tactic for taking control of their learning”. She

argues that in learner autonomy, learners use the tactful way to control over their learning process. Similarly, for Trim (1976), “autonomy is an adaptive ability allowing learners to develop supportive structures within themselves rather than to have them erected around them” (as cited in Esch, 1996, p.37). This means autonomy allows learners an ability to develop suitable structures and strategies for learning which helps them to adjust in any learning situations rather than being dependent on others. Similarly, to define autonomy, we might quote Holec (1981, p.3 as cited in Benson and Voller, 1997, p.1) who described it as “the ability to take charge of one’s learning”. He argues that autonomous learners are capable enough to take the charge of their own learning process. Thus, from those arguments above can be concluded that learner autonomy is the learners’ ability to take responsibility of their own learning process without being controlled by anyone else.

If the learners desired to be autonomous and independent, they would learn the language skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing as much as they can. Among these language skills, speaking skill is the productive skill in oral mode, it refers to the ability to express our emotions, feelings, ideas and experience through oral medium. Chaney (1998, p.13) argues that speaking as the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols in a variety of context. This means speaking is the process of exchanging information, messages or ideas through spoken words, sign and symbols, gestures and; negotiating meaning in different situation. Speaking skill can be nurtured effectively through getting involved in different kinds of autonomous learning activities. Developing speaking skill depends on some activities and strategies. Different resources of autonomous learning and speaking activities like computer assisted learning, library study, listening cassettes, brainstorming, discussion, simulation etc. will be beneficial for the students who want to take charge of their own learning. Hence, proficiency in speaking can be build up through the various autonomous and interactive activities.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

All individuals want to be free from restriction, take risk and responsibility of their own learning and determines his or her objectives to learn new language and language related skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing. Among these four language skills, speaking is one of the most significant and complicated skills in the acquisition of new language. In this regard, Ur (1996, p.120) argues, “among the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), speaking seems intuitively the most important.” This means speaking skill is the most crucial skill among all other four language skills. Similarly, Khaniya (2005, p.189) says, “Speaking is productive skill like writing; speaking is a very complex activity in the sense that it is difficult to describe how utterances are processed and how they come out while speaking”. He argues that speaking is complicated task and is not something that everyone can master easily. So that, to develop the proficiency in speaking skill learners should cultivate the habit of learning autonomously by involving in various activities like discussion, role-play, brainstorming, using library, Computer, audio- visual materials, using language related games and so many others. So, it is needed to explore different autonomous learning activities used by learners to develop speaking skill. According to Sharle & Szabo (2000), learners who enjoy high degree of autonomy in their learning environment would have more opportunities to develop their communication ability as compared to those who do not. This means those learners who are autonomous in their learning are better in communication skill than those who are not autonomous in their learning. That’s why it is highly essential that each and every student should involve in different autonomous learning situations in order to develop their speaking skill. Although autonomous learning enhances language learning of students, it’s use and practice is not satisfactory in our context.

Many research works have been carried out in foreign countries in the area of autonomous learning. However, in our Nepalese context it is less selected area of the

research study. Similarly, the previous research studies carried out in this area also explored different autonomous learning activities, but they are not sufficient and it lacks to explore why do they use those autonomous learning activities and how those activities are selected by learners to develop speaking skills. In this regard, I was quiet interested to find out what could be the autonomous activities for IELTS candidates and why and how do they use and select those activities respectively. That's why, in my study I raised the issue of different learning autonomous activities used by IELTS candidates along with purpose and the different ways of selecting autonomous learning activities to develop their speaking skill as the research problem.

There might be different reasons behind IELTS candidates' failure in speaking ability such as lack of responsibility and accountability of students in their own action, lack of motivation, lack of exposure, learners 'over reliance on teachers, textbooks and bazar notes, selection of inappropriate strategies, less culture of using and practicing autonomous learning strategies and activities. Because of these above-mentioned situations, I have chosen this research topic originally of my personal interest to study and investigate the various autonomous learning activities of the IELTS candidates. Hence, the findings of this study provided some insights to the IELTS candidates as well as other stakeholders to be familiar with different autonomous learning activities and apply them to develop their speaking skill.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were stated as follows:

- To explore the autonomous learning activities of IELTS candidates for developing speaking skill.
- To find the purpose of using autonomous learning activities.
- To explore the ways of selecting autonomous learning activities.
- To suggest some pedagogical implications.

1.4 Research Questions

The present research study addressed the following research questions:

- What are the autonomous activities of IELTS candidates for developing their speaking skill?
- Why do they use different autonomous learning activities?
- How do they select autonomous learning activities to develop their speaking skill?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study seems to be significant to all the learners who are directly and indirectly involved in IELTS course in the sense that they will find out the ways of being autonomous using various autonomous resources and activities to get high level scores in speaking test. Similarly, this study can serve as a reference tool for the language trainers because they will be highly motivated and encouraged to design and conduct various trainings on learner autonomy. This research is expected to be equally beneficial to curriculum experts, textbook writers and those who are working in the field of learner autonomy in the sense that they can utilize the findings of this research work while designing curriculum, syllabus and writing textbook conveniently. Educational planners can modify their approaches, strategies and techniques in the light of information provided by this study. Similarly, I hope that the benefit from this research work will be also gained by the teachers in a sense that they are the core of study and they will be conscious of their own weakness and bring some necessary changes in their teaching and promoting learner autonomy for developing students' speaking skill. And finally, this study is expected to be significant for those who have dare interest to undertake researches in the similar field and those who want and feel the need of information in the field of language learning to be independent, autonomous and self-governed in their own effort.

1.6 Delimitations of Study

In research, delimitation refers the limitations of the study in terms of area. It bounds the researchers not to go beyond the limit area of the study. Similarly, it provides the information of research design, population, sample, sampling strategies, study area and data collection tools. This study was specific to the study of autonomous learning activities of IELTS candidates for developing speaking skill. This study was based on mixed- method research design. The sample included 40 candidates who were preparing for IELTS examination in Kathmandu Valley, thus, the area of the study was only limited to the Kathmandu Valley. Moreover, the study was based on convenience sampling procedure and the data required for the study was collected through survey questionnaire with Likert scale and interview guidelines.

1.7 Operational Definition of the Key Terms

The key terms used in this research study have been operationally defined in the following ways:

Autonomous Learning Activities:	In my study, autonomous learning activities refers to the various tasks done independently by IELTS candidates to develop their speaking skill.
IELTS Candidates:	In my study, I have used this term to refer to the students who are preparing for IELTS examinations.
Learner Autonomy:	In my study, learner autonomy refers to the situation in which IELTS candidates learn everything freely without being controlled by anyone else. For example, by using ICT tools, using library, involving in discussion, group/pair work and so on.

Speaking efficiency:

In my study, I have used the term speaking efficiency to mean the spoken ability of IELTS candidates to transfer the message or information through oral medium.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter includes the review of related theoretical literature on learner autonomy and speaking efficiency, review of related empirical literature, implications of the reviewed literature and conceptual framework of the study.

2.1 Review of Related Theoretical Literatures

Any research work is based on certain theoretical assumptions or the principles. Theories are formulated to explain, predict and understand the phenomena and extend the existing knowledge within the limits of the critical bounding assumptions. This section includes theoretical insights on learner autonomy, characteristics of autonomous learners, importance of autonomous learning, speaking skill, autonomous learning resources and activities, components of speaking skill, sub-skills of speaking, activities to develop speaking skill, introduction to IELTS, IELTS test format and IELTS speaking component.

2.1.1 Learner Autonomy

The present era is the time of exploring multiple activities, techniques and strategies to enhance language learning. Language learners want to be independent learners and take responsibility of their own learning by employing various techniques, strategies and activities individually. This leads to the development of the concept of learner autonomy in the field of language learning. Learner autonomy has been defined in multiple ways by different scholars; Thanasoulas (2009) defines autonomy in terms of the learners' willingness and capacity to control or oversee his/her own learning. More specially, he said that someone qualifies as an autonomous learner when he/she independently chooses

aim, purposes, sets goals, choose materials, methods and tasks; exercise, choice and purpose in organizing and carrying out the chooses tasks; and chooses criteria for evaluation. In other definitions of learner autonomy, the words ‘ability’ and ‘take charge of’ have often been replaced by ‘capacity’ and ‘take responsibility for’ respectively (Dang, 2012). Similarly, in the words of Hedge (2017, p.410), it is “the ability of the learner to take responsibility for his or her own learning and to plan, organize and monitor the learning process independently of the teacher”. From this definition, what we can say is that the learners are involved in their own learning process and they can learn the subject matter according to their effort thus reaches beyond a social context.

Hsieh (2010, p.12) states, “an autonomous learner participates in classroom as well self-directed learning modes”. This means, autonomous learners participate both in the classroom and beyond the classroom context for learning. Likewise, Prabhu (1987, p.24) argues that second language teaching must promote in the learner the complex and unconscious knowledge that allows the automatic use of everyday language as in the first language. Learner autonomy in the choice of texts in the classroom is a feasible and desirable way provided a guided space for individual learning. It allows for authenticity in learning materials as against more (geniuses). Similarly, Pennycook (1997, p.39) claims learner autonomy as “the struggle to become the author of one’s own word, to be able to create own meaning, to pursue cultural alternatives amid the cultural politics of everyday life”. Regarding the autonomy, (Dickinson, 1987, p.11) defines it as “the situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all of the decisions concerned with his learning and the implementation of those decisions.” This means in learner autonomy, learners are entirely responsible for their own learning.

The opinions from different scholars show that learner autonomy is the ability that learners develop to work independently without anyone’s inferences and the complete responsibility of own learning process. Thus, autonomous learning is independent and self-directed learning in which learners have control over the learning process.

2.1.2 Characteristics of Autonomous Learners

Autonomous learners are ones who take active role in the learning process, by finding learning opportunity for themselves, rather than being the complete pursuer of the teachers. Dam (2000) specifies that a learner qualifies as an autonomous learner when he independently chooses aims and purposes and sets goals; chooses materials, methods and tasks; exercises choice and purpose in organizing and carrying out the chosen tasks and chooses criteria for evaluation. He argues that autonomous learner as one who has capacity to make, carry out independent choices, and take the complete responsibility of own learning process without the investment of a teacher or pedagogic materials. Moreover, autonomous learners are those learners who have specific ability to organize their tasks consciously, select and implement appropriate learning strategies, methods, resources and monitor the effectiveness of their use of methods and strategies.

Similarly, Betts (2003) states that an autonomous learner by definition, is one who solves problems through a combination of divergent and convergent thinking, and functions with minimal extent guidance in selected areas of endeavor. This argument focuses on learner autonomy as having the characteristics of being able to cope with various challenges and problems which occurs in their lives using both convergent and divergent mode of thinking. Likewise, Chan (2001, as cited in Kocak, 2003) identifies the following characteristic qualities of autonomous learners: highly motivated, goal oriented, well organized, hardworking, initiative, enthusiastic about learning, flexible, active willing to ask questions, making use of every opportunity to improve their learning. From the characteristics discussed above what we can come to the point is that motivation, enthusiasm, hard labor, flexibility, willingness, curiosity is inevitable for autonomous learners to engage actively in the learning process and take control of their learning.

In the same way, Hedge (2017, p.82) also provides a comprehensive list of self- directive learners' characteristics that include confident in his/her ability to learn, self-reliant,

motivated and enthusiastic, aware of why he/she wants to learn, un-afraid of making mistakes, good risk taker, and willing to assume certain responsibility for his/her own learning. These ideas show that autonomous learners have the capacity to carry out the choices which govern their action independently. They have critical reflection and consciousness about what is to be learnt, how to learn and use the resources available in order to take control of their learning. To be more precise, those learners who have interest to take risk, are un- afraid of making any mistakes, are entirely responsible for their own learning process and are very much excited and eager towards their learning are autonomous learners.

Likewise, Omaggio (1978) has identified seven main attributes of autonomous learners within the context of education which include: take an active approach to the learning task at hand; are willing to take risks; are good guessers; attend to form as well as to context; that is, place importance on accuracy as well as appropriacy; develop the target language into a separate reference system; are willing to revise and reject hypothesis and rules that do not apply and have an outgoing approach to the target language. This means autonomous learners are more concerned with their own strategies, methods and techniques. They are always eager to take risk, make a good attempt to speculate about something even if they are not sure, highly enthusiastic and active about taking responsibility for their learning. Similarly, autonomous learners always give due importance to both accuracy and appropriateness it means that they are competent in both linguistic competence and communicative competence. Moreover, autonomous learners have an extrovert way to deal with the target language and they are always eager to modify and refuse any theories or rules which are not applicable in the appropriate context. As well as they learn and use their knowledge in any learning situation they encounter at any stage of their life.

2.1.3 Importance of Autonomous Learning

Autonomous learning or self- directed learning is more concerned with learner's the ability to self- manage his/ her learning, willingness and taking responsibilities of own learning. To be specific, autonomous learning help learners to learn by their speed and potentiality. So, autonomous learning can be very useful and important for those who have desire to be autonomous and self- motivated in learning process. It means autonomous learning has great importance in developing an autonomous or independent learner.

There is a well-known Chinese proverb "Give me a fish and I eat for a day. Teach me how to fish and I eat for a life time". This proverb marks the significance of learner autonomy within the context of education. If the learners themselves involve in their own action they should not be dependent on others. So, we can say that autonomous learning is based on the theory of learning by doing. Regarding the importance of learner autonomy, Joshi (2010, p.60) writes, "In this world where the significance of autonomy is growing day by day, it's significance cannot be limited through some words". It means the importance of learner autonomy has been increasing for every learner in this present world.

Regarding the significance of learner autonomy, McGarry (1995, p.1) concludes that students who are encouraged to take responsibility for their own work, by being given some control over what, how and when they learn are more likely to be able to set realistic goals, plan programmes of work, develop strategies for coping with new and unforeseen situations, evaluate and assess their own work and generally, to learn how to learn from their own successes and failure in ways which will help them to be more efficient learners in the future (as cited in Phyak, 2007, p.15-16). Now we can develop the idea that the learners who take charge of their own learning, seeks the relationship between how and what is to be learnt and monitor their learning process, learn from their own achievement and formulate effective strategies to dealt with the various practical

problems which occur in their lives will help them to be more potential learners in the days to come.

Likewise, Little (1995) mentions two reasons as to why it is important: if learners are themselves reflectively engaged in planning, monitoring and evaluating their learning, it should follow that their learning will be more successful than other because it is more focused; and the same reflective engagement should help to make what they learn a fully integrated part of what they are, so they can use the knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom and beyond. These ideas show that the learners who actively involved in critical reflection, planning, implementation and also monitor the effectiveness of their own learning process are comparatively better and successful learners than those who do not involve in such tasks. More importantly, self -reflection helps to make the learners aware to apply and assimilate the knowledge and skills in practicality which are learnt from different learning context.

2.1.4 Autonomous Learning Resources

There are various resources for autonomous learning that provide learners with the opportunity to work independently. Hedge (2017, p.97) has discussed that using Computer-Assisted Language Learning, using written texts, using library, using radio and television, using language game, using listening cassettes, using grammar bank and using exam materials are the resources for autonomous learning. On the ground of this, I have elaborated some of those resources which can be helpful for developing speaking skill of IELTS candidates in an autonomous way.

Using Computer- Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

CALL is defined as the search for and study of applications of the computer in teaching and learning (Levy, 1997, p.1). This means CALL involves the use of computer and internet in language teaching and learning process. According to Phuyal (2015, p.11), “CALL has created enormous opportunities for learners to enhance communicative abilities”. CALL provides learners with ample opportunities to use varieties of internet-based resources such as they can watch different software tutorials, listen recorded materials, download pdf files, read online journals, use social media and use electronic dictionary etc. on their own time, speed, level and interest which will directly or indirectly help to develop their language skills including speaking skill independently. So, we can say that using CALL, the students become more autonomous in their learning.

Using library

Library is one of the resources for autonomous learning that may encourage the learners to become a self-motivated in their learning. Karki (2010, p.8) says, “A Library can be defined as a building or room in which collection of books, magazines, newspapers, tapes etc. are kept for people to study or borrow. This means library provides learners with different materials like authentic books, magazines, journals, tapes, CDs, DVDs, internet facilities etc. which can help them to practice speaking skill. In libraries learners use these materials according to their nature, time and places with or without the teacher’s guidance.

Using Radio and Television

Using radio and television broadcasts in target language can be used directly or by recording them and playing to the students that may help them directly and indirectly to be autonomous learner. Radio and television provide opportunity to the learner to learn in their own efforts and speed. Gowan (2009, p.103) says, “TV and radio can enhance some English language learning skills especially the spoken expressions”. This means the

learners can watch and listen different programmes through TV and radio which will be helpful for developing their speaking skill.

Using Language Games

Language games are equally beneficial in learning all the aspects and skill of languages which can be used to practice many times to become an autonomous learner. Wright et al. (2000) state that games can be found to give practice in all the skills, in all the stages of teaching and learning and for many types of communication. It means games can be used to practice and develop all the skills and aspects of language.

Using Listening Cassettes

Students can use different audio materials such as audio reels, audio clips, compact discs, CDs, cassettes players etc. to practice listening as well as speaking skills. Among these audio materials, using listening cassette is one of the resources of autonomous learning as suggested by Hedge. Using listening cassettes is often more convenient way which offers learners a lot of exposures to practice and improve their speaking accents.

Using Grammar Bank

Grammar practice books on English can also be the best way for enhancing autonomous learning in developing the students speaking skill. They include different exercises about grammar topic to practice and learn.

Furthermore, Harmer (2008) also presents a range of activities for training learners to be autonomous, some of which I elaborate upon below.

Thinking About Learning

Learners are provided with the lists of ‘can do’ statements in-terms of which they think about their learning. Some examples of can do activities are given below:

- *I can use ‘can’ to express ability.*
- *I can use ‘used to’ to describe past habits.*
- *Students can also be asked to complete the statements like the following about their learning during the last week:*
- *The things that I could not understand despite my efforts was/were.....*
- *The things that I enjoyed most in last week lesson was/were.....*

These activities help the learners to reflect on their own learning. Reflection makes their learning long lasting since they are likely to memorize the things they have learned.

Taking Over

Gradually, learners can take over the responsibility for their own learning. Harmer suggests various activities for this. Such activities include asking students to use a dictionary which help them to learn a meaning of new words independently and asking learners to develop their own questionnaire for a survey they want carry out. Such activities provide learners with a sense of achievement as well as they boost up their confidence.

Learning Journals

Learning journals help learners to be autonomous, they also help them to express their feelings, help the teacher to better understand their learners, provide an opportunity for learners to think both about what they are learning and how they are learning. They enhance their memory of the things they have learned.

Forcing Agency

Some learners do not just want to take responsibility for their own learning. They feel secure when teachers provide them with the solution to their all problems. There is an old English proverb, “You can lead a horse to water but you cannot make it drink”. In addition, if it does not want or need to drink, you should not make it do so anyway. Some students, like horses at the water edge, just do not get it, for them their teachers, parents can help them or force them for their learning. Activities like the story, article writing and jigsaw reading activity make learning more structured for students and help them to contribute something to somewhat independently.

The Self- access centers

Self- access centers are the centers where learners can choose reading materials according to their own interests. They can visit such centers on regular basis or in their own spare time. Jones (1995) says, “these days, self- access center referred to be an individual or independent learning center along other variants often provides computers and videos in addition to standard display of books, kits, worksheet, audio- equipment and so on”. He argues that SAC offers learners an opportunity to work with various resources independently.

The above- mentioned autonomous learning resources and activities encourage them to learn according to their desire. Using computer assisted language learning, using radio and television, using library, using listening cassettes, using CALL, using library, reading journals, thinking about learning, using self- access centers, taking owns responsibility etc. are the supported activities which are highly essential in developing speaking skill.

2.1.5 Speaking Skill

Language is one of the most remarkable characteristics that humans have been endowed with, which sets us apart from other species. We are the only species who can share our messages through speaking. Language is the medium of communication by the help of

which human beings are able to communicate, interact, share and interchange their ideas, opinions, thoughts and emotions to each other.

Without language, the world would not be like this as it is now. “Our development of everything from music to warfare, from literature to technology could never have come about in the absence of language” (Farrokhi, 2015, p.1). It is still the matter on how people started to use the language and how they started the particular code has, too been the matter of unknown fact. People of different societies have their own styles, system and way of using language.

There are four language skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing that can be integrated not only in teaching and learning a language but also in real life situation while we are using it for various purposes. Without the proper knowledge of language skills, language cannot be learnt. They all have equal importance. They are interrelated to each other as in the absence of one another is incomplete. According to Harmer (2008, p.265), the four skills of language are divided into two types. Receptive skill is a term used for reading and listening, where meaning is extracted from the discourse. A productive skill is the term for speaking and writing skill. Generally, we can say that receptive skills are somehow passive where as productive skills seem to be comparatively more active.

Among four language skills, speaking is one of the most significant skills in the acquisition of new language. Speaking is the ability to express oneself fluently in a language. However, the ability to speak fluently presupposes not only knowledge of language features but also the ability to process information and language on the spot. Speaking is not only pronouncing utterance correctly but also, expressing ideas and emotions contextually and appropriately in social interaction. Thus, in the light of this discussion, it can be said that speaking skill is a skill of pronouncing, comprehending, being fluent and contextual in the actual communication. It is the most complicated and complex linguistic skill that involves thinking of what is to be said. “Speaking involves interaction with one or more participants” (Harmer, 2001, p.271). This means that

effective speaking involves a good deal of listening. Speaking takes place everywhere and has become parts of our daily activities. People speak when they want to express their ideas, opinions, desires and establish social relationship and friendship. Speaking is a crucial part of foreign language learning and teaching. The primary function of language is to make the learners able to interact and communicate.

Nunan (2003, p.39) says, “mastering the art of speaking is the most important reason for teaching speaking to develop oral fluency that the ability to express oneself intelligibly, reasonably, accurately and without undue hesitation”. From this above definition, what we can infer the meaning is; speaking is an art and ability to express oneself intelligibly, reasonably, accurately and without undue hesitation for better communication. Today’s world requires that the goal of speaking skill should improve student’s communicative skills because only in that way, students can express themselves and learn how to follow the social and cultural rules appropriately in each communicative circumstance. So, speaking is one of the important skills to be focused. Producing spoken language has often meant a difficulty and an obstacle for English learners, thus, learners themselves should create autonomous environment, which provides them the best situation for language learning.

According to Ur (1996, p.126), learners talk a lot, participation is even, motivation is high and language is an acceptable level are the characteristics of a successful speaking activity. These ideas show that speaking is not something which is achieved by the learners at once rather the proficiency in speaking can be achieved slowly and steadily by getting involved in a lots of talk activity. It can be assumed that the more the learners involve in talk activity the better they speak. For this purpose, teachers’ talk time should be reduced and learners’ talk time should be increased. Similarly, all learners should get equal chance to speak fairly. Moreover, learners will be eager and highly motivated to learn and share if they find something new which can really increase their interest. And finally, learners express themselves in utterances which are accurate, acceptable,

contextual and are easily comprehensible to each other for successful and authentic communication.

2.1.6 The Components of Speaking Skills

Speaking is the ability of sharing ideas, feelings, knowledge, interest, attitude, opinion and to use or be able to use given language in the actual communication. Speaking is primary and basic skill of language. Speaking is often associated with complex skill for second language learners. To mastery over speaking and become proficient speakers of English students will be familiar with the different components of speaking. Brown (1994, p.4) has listed the five components of speaking skill which are described below in detail.

Pronunciation: Pronunciation is very important in speaking. If students do not pronounce the word appropriately it can influence meaning of word. According to Hornby (1995, p.928), “Pronunciation is the way in which a language is spoken, the way in which a word is pronounced, the way a person speaks the word of language.

Pronunciation does not mean to mastery of a list sounds or isolated words. Instead, it includes all those aspects to learning and practicing the specifically English way of making a speaker thought easy to follow. Moreover, pronunciation includes all those aspects of speech, which make for an easily intelligible flow of speech, including segmental articulation, rhythm, intonation, and phrasing and more peripherally even gesture, body language and contact (Fraser, 2001 p.6). This statement shows that pronunciation includes many aspects that include articulation, rhythm, information and phrasing and more peripherally even gesture, body language and eye contact.

Grammar: Grammar is essential for the students to arrange correct sentences in conversation. In this regards, Heaton (1978, p.5) defines grammar as the students’ ability to manipulate structure and to distinguish appropriate grammatical form in appropriate ones. This means grammar is more concerned with students’ ability to use and distinguish

appropriate grammatical form according to the context. Similarly, Nelson (2001, p.1) states that grammar is the study of how words combine to form sentences. He argues that grammar is the rule that helps students to combine correct sentences in conversation both in written and oral forms. Moreover, Harmer (2001, p.12) argues that the grammar of a language is the description of the ways in which words can change their forms and can be combined into sentences in that language.

Thus, from the statements above can be concluded that the function of grammar is to arrange the correct meaning of sentences based on the context; in addition, it is used to avoid the misunderstanding in each communicator.

Vocabulary: Vocabulary is essential for the successful second language use because without an extensive vocabulary, we will be unable to use the structure and function we may have learnt for comprehensible communication. It can be said that one key the success in communication in the power of words. Vocabulary means the appropriate diction of the most important thing in a language especially in speaking; furthermore, knowing many vocabularies it will be easier to express our ideas, feelings and thoughts both in oral or written form. It means that in spoken language of speaking, the vocabulary used must be very familiar and it is used in everyday conversation in order to understand the spoken discourse. Vocabulary is a basic building block of language learning. Students need to know words, their meanings, how they are spelt and pronounced. Moreover, vocabulary is a set of lexemes including single words; compound words and idioms (Richard and Schmidt, 2002, p.580).

Fluency: Fluency is an ability to speak communicatively, fluently and accurately. Fluency usually refers to express oral language freely without interruption. In teaching and learning process, if the teacher wants to check students' fluency, the teacher allows students to express themselves freely without interruption. Hughes (2002) defines fluency as the ability to express oneself in an intelligible, reasonable and accurate way without too much hesitation; otherwise the communication will break down because the listeners

will lose their interest. This argument shows that fluency means expressing oneself freely without interruption so that listener will be motivated to listen. Moreover, it is the state of being comprehensible, rational and accurate in the target language while speaking.

Comprehension: Comprehension is an ability to perceive and process stretches of discourse, to formulate representations the meaning of sentences. Comprehension of a second language is more difficult to study since it is not; directly observable and must be inferred from overt verbal and non-verbal responses, by artificial instruments, or by the institution of the teacher or researcher. Comprehension refers to the fact that participants fully understand the nature of the research project, even when procedures are complicated and entail risks (Cohen et al, 2010). Therefore, in speaking the comprehension refers to the speakers' understanding about what they are saying to the listeners in order to avoid misunderstanding information; in addition, its function is to make the listeners easily catch the information from the speakers.

2.1.7 Sub Skills of Speaking

Speaking is not merely a single skill. It is the combination of several sub skills. It includes pronunciation, fluency, stress, pitch, intonation, grammar and so on. To be a fluent speaker of a language, we need to get the mastery of those skills related to speaking. Munby (1979, as cited in Sharma and Phyak, 2009, p.120) 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.*

The above-mentioned sub-skills of speaking skill are very much important in order to become an efficient and fluent speakers of English, so that that each and every student should be familiar with these skills of speaking. To get mastery over these sub skills of speaking, students need sound knowledge of grammatical and semantic rule, knowledge of supra-segmental features such as pitch, stress, intonation and the knowledge of non-linguistic elements like gesture, body language/posture, facial expression and so on.

Similarly, Lackman (2010) has also discussed the following sub skills of speaking:

Fluency

Fluency can be defined as the ability to express oral language without too many hesitation and pauses. Fluency in speaking is the main aim of many language learners. According to Brown (1997, as cited in Harmer 2007), sign of fluency includes a reasonably fast speed of speaking and only a small number of pauses and “ums” or “ers”. This signs indicate that the speaker does not have to spend a lot of time in searching for the language items needed to express the message.

Accuracy with the words and pronunciation

Accuracy in speaking refers to the correct use of the language system, including their grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. Accuracy helps the learners to get correctness and speed in language. Students need to be able to use and pronounce words and structures correctly in order to be understood.

Using function

Language functions are the purposes which human beings speak or write. The main aim of language can be developed when we learn to use language in different context. Language function is the way to develop communication among the learners.

Appropriacy

Appropriacy refers to whether a word is suitable for the context is being used in i.e. suitable words of the languages. Appropriacy can help us in spoken language. If all words are suitable as a grammar system and use the correct sentences appropriately in languages, it makes us proper use of language.

Turn taking skill

Turn taking occurs in conversation when one person listens while the other speaks. Turn taking is an important skill for learners in order to effectively participate in social communication. Many students with language delays will have poor conversation skills. They may shift rapidly from topic to topic. They should learn to take a turn through gesture, eye contact, vocabularies and approximations.

Responding and listening

In order to be success in speaking, students need to respond to others and to initiate interactions on his or her own. Interaction occurs when the students initiate the conversation and response to one another.

Repair and repetition

Students use repair and repetition strategy when there is misunderstanding. Students can practice repairing when they suspect they haven't been understood or as listeners they can repeat to seek clarification or correction from the speaker.

Range of words or grammar

Students need to know a range of vocabularies and grammar for the improvement of speaking skill. They need to have the ability to choose most appropriate words and structure for a specific context and to use them appropriately.

Discourse makers

Discourse makers have a number of uses in speaking. They are used to order and sequence what we say to start and end conversations and to change or manage a topic. In this way we help our listeners to follow what we are saying more clearly.

To sum up, all the above mentioned sub-skills of speaking have their own importance; as fluency helps the students to convey the meaning smoothly in any situation. Similarly, appropriacy and pronunciation help the students to choose suitable words and pronounce them correctly. Turn taking skill in conversation is also an important for learners to communicate with others. Thus, all the learners should highly emphasize these sub-skills of speaking in order to make their speaking effective.

2.1.8 Autonomous Activities for Developing Speaking Skill

Students can develop their speaking skill by engaging in the different speaking activities autonomously. There are various autonomous activities to enhance speaking skill of the students. In this regard, Kayi (2006) has presented some activities which can also be useful for IELTS candidates to develop their speaking skill independently.

i. Discussions

Students can share their ideas about an event or find solutions in their discussion group. The discussion should be relevant to the purpose, so that students do not spend their time chatting with each other about irrelevant things. In discussion, the students form group, preferably 4/5 in each group will be provided controversial sentences like "people learn best when they read vs. people learn best when they travel". Then each group works on their topic for a given period of time and presents their ideas to the class. Killen (2003, p.91) defines discussion is an orderly process of face to face group interaction in which people exchange ideas. A discussion can be held for various reasons; to share ideas for an event, to find solution of a problem in a group, to arrive at a conclusion.

ii. Role Play

Another way of getting students to speak is role-playing. Students pretend; they are in various social contexts and have a variety of social roles. In role-play activities, students can play the role of doctor, patient, teacher etc. which help to improve their speaking skill. Greenbalt (1988) considers that role play is also a component or element of simulation because they are similar to each other.

iii. Simulations

Simulations are very similar to role-plays but what makes simulations different than role plays is that they are more elaborate. In simulations, students can bring items to the class to create a realistic environment. For instance, if a student is acting as a singer, she brings a microphone to sing and so on. Role plays and simulations have many advantages. First, since they are entertaining, they motivate the students. Second, as Harmer (2008) suggests, they increase the self-confidence of hesitant students, because in role play and simulation activities, they will have a different role and do not have to speak for themselves, which means they do not have to take the same responsibility.

iv. Information Gap

In this activity, students are supposed to be working in pairs. One student will have the information that other partner does not have and the partners will share their information. This type of activities serves many purposes like solving a problem, collecting information and so on. According to Defrioka (2009), “The implementation of information gap activities improves the students’ interaction in speaking class.” Information gap activities require students to communicate with each other in order to find all the necessary information to complete the activity and each partner plays an important role because the task cannot be completed if the partners do not provide the information the others need. These activities are effective because everybody has the opportunity to talk extensively in the target language.

v. Brainstorming

Brainstorming refers to the use of brain actively in order to generate ideas or develop the creative solutions of the problems. In this type of activity, students can produce ideas on a given topic in a limited time. Zayton (2001, as cited in Al- khatib, 2012) states “brainstorming was developed by Alex Osborn to produce ideas without inhibition”. This means brainstorming allows learners to generate lots of ideas quickly and freely. Depending on the context, either individual or group brainstorming is effective. The good characteristics of brainstorming is that the students are not criticized for their ideas so students will be open to sharing new ideas.

vi. Storytelling

Story telling is an effective way to provide opportunities to the students to speak. In this activity, students can briefly summarize a tale or story they heard from somebody or they may create their own stories to tell their classmates. Story telling emphasizes on creative thinking. It also helps students to express ideas in the format of beginning, development, and ending, including the characters and setting a story has to have. Bishop and Glyn (1999) mention that storytelling is an ideal teaching and learning tool, for it takes seriously the need for students to make sense of experience using their own culturally generated sense-making processes”. Story telling has the capacity to enhance the relationship between students creating new knowledge and learning from others.

vii. Interviews

Generally, an interview is a conversation where questions are asked and answers are given. According to Kvale (1996, p.174) an interview is “a conversation, whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the interviewee”. Students can conduct interviews on selected topics with various people but students should prepare their own interview questions. Conducting interviews with people gives students a chance to practice their speaking ability not only in class but also outside and helps them becoming socialized. After

interviews, each student can present his or her study to the class. Moreover, they even can interview each other and introduce his or her partner to the class.

viii. Story Completion

This is a very enjoyable and free-speaking activity for which students sit in a circle. In activity, each student starts to narrate from the point where the previous one stopped. Each student is supposed to add from four to ten sentences. Students can add new characters, events and descriptions.

ix. Reporting

Before coming to class, students are asked to read a newspaper or magazine and, in class, they report to their friends what they find as the most interesting news. Students can also talk about whether they have experienced anything worth telling their friends in their daily lives before class.

x. Card Play

This can be another activity for developing speaking efficiency. In this activity, students are divided into four groups. Each group represents a topic for example:

Diamond: Earning money

Hearts: Love and relationship

Spades: An unforgettable memory

Clubs: Best teacher

Each student in a group will choose a card. Then, each student will write 4 to 5 questions about the topic to ask other friends in group. Students are not allowed to prepare yes/no

questions because this type of question provides less time to talk about the topic. Students should be asked open ended questions to each other.

xi. Group work

Group work is a technique that gives students far more chance to use target language to communicate with each other. In a group students are involved to work collaboratively on certain task in or out of the class. Working in group is often pretended as a good way of dividing work and increasing productivity. Regarding group work, Brown (1992) states “...group work provides a context in which individuals help each other; it is a method of helping groups as well as helping individuals and it enables individuals and groups to influence and change personal, group, organizational and community problems.” He argues that group work provides learners a suitable context which encourage and enable them to help each other and solve each other’s problems. If group work is not well planned, students become confused and demand a great deal of attention (Murcia & Hills, 1988, p.74). So, group work should be well planned as well as it is important to consider students’ availability, resources necessary and expected outcomes.

xii. Picture Narrating

This activity is based on several sequential pictures. Students are asked to tell the story taking place in the sequential pictures by paying attention to the criteria provided by the teacher as a rubric which includes the vocabulary or structures they need to use while narrating.

xiii. Picture Describing

It is one of the way to make use of pictures in a speaking activity. For this activity students can form groups and each group is given a different picture. Students discuss the picture with their groups, then a spokesperson for each group describes the picture to the

whole class. This activity helps to boost the creativity and imagination of the learners as well as their public speaking skills.

xiv. Find the difference

In this activity, students can be asked to find out the differences in pictures, tables or description. For this activity students can work in pairs and each couple is given two different pictures, for e.g. picture of boys playing football and another picture of girls playing tennis. Students in pairs discuss the similarities and differences in the pictures. According to Ur (1996, p.120), picture difference is “a well- known activity which usually produces plenty of purposeful question- and-answer exchanges”. It means this activity creates such a situation for students which allow them to discuss and share a lot about the pictures in the form of question and answer exchanges.

Similarly, there are some tips for improving IELTS speaking skill which include record yourself and write down your answer, practice bit by bit, practice by describing photographs, read then speak, improve memory, practice saying I don’t know, talk to a mirror, write your own questions and improve your coherence and fluency. Retrieved from: (www.dcielts.com/ielts-speaking/improve-your-ielts-speaking-skills-10-tips).

These tips show that to improve speaking skill, IELTS candidates can record their own voice to find out their strengths and weakness, describe pictures, read passage, magazines etc. and also practice speaking in front of a mirror and speak to themselves, by doing this, they can develop their confidence level which is extremely important in IELTS speaking test. Moreover, they can start practicing speaking the different questions about the important event that happened in their lives, important person they met in their life and should answer those questions which help to refresh their memory and improve fluency.

2.1.9 IELTS Test

IELTS is the International English Language Testing System; the world’s proven English language test. It is one of the pioneers of four skills English language testing over

21 years and continue to set the standard for English language testing today. Over 6000 organizations and more than 1.5 million test takers around the world trust and recognize IELTS as a secure, valid and reliable indicator of life ability to communicate in English for education, migration and professional accreditation.

It is widely recognized as a reliable indicator of life ability of candidates who need to study and work where English is the language of communication. These practice tests are designed to give future IELTS candidates whether their English is at required level or not. IELTS is owned by three partners: The University of Cambridge ESOL Examination, the British Council and IDP Education Australia.

In particular, IELTS was influenced by growth of ‘communicative’ language learning and ‘English for specific purpose’. The test tasks were based on an analysis of the ways in which language was used in academic contexts and intended to reflect the use of language in the ‘real world’.

2.1.10 IELTS Test Format

IELTS consists of six components. All candidates take the same listening and speaking tests. But there is a choice of reading and writing tests according to whether a candidate is taking the academic module or general training module. A sample test format given by IELTS preparation text by Cambridge University Press is given below:

The two modules of IELTS are presented below:

Academic	General Training
The academic module is for candidates wishing to study at undergraduate and graduate levels and for those seeking professional registration, certification	The general training module is for candidates wishing to immigrate to an English-speaking country (Australia, Canada, New Zealand and UK) and for

and licensure.	those wishing to train or study.
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The test components are taken in the following order:

Listening	
4 sections, 40 items	
Approximately 30 minutes	
Academic Reading	General Training Reading
3 sections, 40 items	3 sections, 40 items
60 minutes	60 minutes
Academic Writing	General Training Writing
2 tasks	2 tasks
60 minutes	60 minutes
Speaking	
11 to 14 minutes	
Total Test Time	
2 hours 44 minutes	

2.1.11 IELTS Speaking Test

IELTS measures four language skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. Among these four language skills, the major concern of this research study is on IELTS speaking component. IELTS speaking assesses whether candidates can communicate effectively in English or not. The speaking component takes between 11 and 14 minutes to complete. Every IELTS candidates have a face-to-face oral interview with an examiner. The speaking test is recorded. There are three parts in the speaking component; introduction, topic and conclusion. As it has been presented in IELTS preparation text by Cambridge University Press, the three parts of IELTS speaking component are as follows:

Part 1

The candidate and the examiner introduce themselves. Candidates then answer general questions about themselves, their home/family, their job/studies, their interests and a wide range of similar familiar topic areas. This part lasts between four and five minutes.

Part 2

The candidate is given a task card with prompts and asked to talk on a particular topic. The candidate has one minute to prepare, and they can make some notes if they wish, before speaking for between one and two minutes. The examiner then asks one or two questions on the same topic.

Part 3

The examiner and the candidate engage in a discussion of more abstract issues, which are thematically linked to the topic in Part 2. The discussion lasts between four and five minutes.

In this way, IELTS candidates are assessed on their actual performance in an interview that should not last any longer than 14 minutes. The IELTS speaking test takes in to account fluency, coherence, lexical resource, grammatical range, accuracy and pronunciation.

2.2 Review of Related Empirical Literature

The literature review is an integral part of the entire process and makes valuable contribution to almost every personal steps. Any study requires the knowledge of previous research works to obtain the targeted objectives, deepen the study and more importantly to validate the present study. So, an empirical review of literature is the effective evaluation of selected documents on a research topic. A number of research studies have been carried out in various aspects of the learner autonomy in foreign countries and in the Department of English Education, faculty of Education, T.U. Thus, some related literature from both inside and outside the country have been here with their major findings.

Joshi (2010) carried out a research entitled “Learner autonomy: A case of M.Ed. students”. His quantitative case analysis of M.Ed. students aims to investigate the autonomous activities of students in learning English. He used questionnaire for students of M.Ed. and interviews for teachers who taught them as the tools for data collection. He found that more than 80% of the learners were aware of their learning goals and learning in English and around 70% of the learners do a lot of self- effort to improve and enhance their learning. Learners used other activities rather than class room learning to promote their learning English. Majority of the learners used reference books and few learners used modern technology while enhancing their learning in English.

In the same way, Okazaki (2011) carried out a longitudinal case study on “An investigation into the relationship between learner autonomy support and student motivation”. The main objective of this study was to explore how students can be helped by learner autonomy focused instruction to develop motivation in learning English in a Japanese university. He selected 35 university students for study population as the sample and the sample has been selected through the use of purposive non-random sampling. He used the survey research design and also the questionnaire for research tools. The conclusion was that the instruction model including learner autonomy, support was demonstrated to be beneficial in learning student’s motivation and performance in English.

Tok (2011) studied on “Autonomous language learning: Turkish tertiary students’ behaviors”. The primary aim of this study was to investigate autonomous English language learning activities among the students in an English Preparatory program at Zirve University, Turkey. Questionnaire was used as a research tool in his study. Two hundred and eighteen students and thirty teachers were selected in order to accomplish the research. The results of the study revealed that the majority of participants were engaged in autonomous language activities inside and outside the classroom. There was no significant difference between the autonomous learning activities of men and women;

however, women engaged more in autonomous activities than men. Additionally, research found that students with the high proficiency in English engaged more in autonomous activities. It also found that the students who were highly motivated participated frequently in autonomous activities.

Sapkota (2014) carried out a research on “Use of self-access centers for developing learners’ autonomy”. The aim of the study was to investigate the impact of self-access centers in the students’ autonomous activities. He conducted a survey research with sample of 8 teachers and 80 students using questionnaire and interview as data collection tools. He had used purposive non-random sampling strategy as a data collection procedure. The findings of this research showed that the use of SAC plays the significant role to develop learner autonomy. The study also reflected that majority of the students i.e. 85% are aware of learning English and they are succeeded through the use of SAC. Similarly, it was found that 80% of the learners made use of reference materials and 75% of them used electronic devices in their English language learning process.

Khanal (2015) conducted a research on “Activities used for promoting learner autonomy”. This research aimed to find out the students’ strategies for promoting autonomy in their language learning. It was the qualitative case study design conducted by using autonomous activities scale and observation as the main data collection tools. He had selected the purposive non-random sampling procedure and collected data by observing a class of 30 students and a teacher at Reliance International Academy grade XII. This study found out that, there were various ways; self-practice, pair work, group work, discussion, interaction in different skills via listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary to be autonomous in language learning. Moreover, the study found that all the students did not select the same techniques, strategies and activities to learn language for promoting their autonomy.

Li and Du (2015) carried out research on “Teachers’ perspectives on their role and student autonomy in the problem-based learning (PBL) context in China”. This research

aimed to find out teachers' perception of how they act in real classroom situation. This was a qualitative research carried out among two Chinese universities' teachers by using semi-structured interview and observation as a main tool to collect data. They found that to build up a student-centered learning approach as PBL educational practitioners do not only need to transfer teachers' perception of their role and student learning autonomy but also need to confront cultural issues in China.

Subedi (2015) carried out the research entitled "Strategies used by students for promoting communicative competence". The aim of this research was to find out the communicative strategies employed by the class XII learners for promoting their communicative competence. In order to fulfill the objective of the study, forty higher secondary level students were selected through purposive non-random sampling procedure. The researcher used questionnaire as a tool of data collection. The major findings of the research were that students used different strategies such as repetition strategies, memories strategies, reduction strategies, collaborative strategies and cooperative strategies to promote the communicative competence.

Mirzaei, Hashemian, and Farsani (2016) wrote an article based on their research work entitled "Lexis-based instruction and IELTS candidates' development of L2 speaking ability: Use of formulaicity in monologic versus dialogic task". The aim of this study was to explore the effectiveness of different lexis-based instructional frameworks (i.e. intensive vs extensive) in improving Iranian IELTS candidates' speaking performance. This study was quasi-experimental. The participants of this study comprised 40 males and female IELTS candidates in the forms of three intact classes from a language center in Tehran. Both pre-test and post-test was used as data collection tools. It was found that both lexis groups outperformed the control group pointing to the effectiveness of both intensive and extensive lexis-based instructions to the learners' development of speaking proficiency. Moreover, the results showed no significant difference between the effects of

intensive and extensive types of lexis instructions upon IELTS candidates' development of speaking performance.

Similarly, Xu (2016) wrote an article based on the research work entitled "The relationship between the use of speaking strategies and performance on IELTS speaking test: A study on Chinese college students". This research aims to explore such a relationship between the application of speaking strategies and IELTS speaking test performance, thereby, improving strategy oral English performance through appropriate strategy choosing and training. This study was based on co-relational research design. The population of this study was 93 Chinese postgraduate students who have taken IELTS at their undergraduate years. The main instrument used in this research was questionnaire. This research study found a positive relationship between participants' application of speaking strategies and their performance on IELTS speaking test. It was also found that memory and compensation-speaking strategies are the most influential on IELTS.

Dhakal (2017) carried out "Autonomous activities of the students for developing their speaking skill". This study was based on survey research design. The aim of this research was to find out the autonomous learning activities of the M.Ed. students for developing their speaking skill. The sampled of the study consisted of thirty M.Ed. First semester students of department of English education of Tribhuvan University and five teachers who had been teaching them. The researcher used both the close-ended and open-ended questionnaire as data collection tools. He used close -ended questionnaire for students as well as open- ended questionnaire for teachers. This study found that most of the teachers and students supported the autonomous learning activities for developing speaking skill. It was also found that autonomous learning activities plays crucial role in developing autonomy for improving students' speaking skill throughout the help of group interaction, presentation, role play, simulation, interview and storytelling techniques.

The above mentioned research works are to some extent related to my study. After reviewing all these researches I got to know that no research works have been conducted on “Autonomous learning activities of the IELTS candidates for developing speaking skill” in the Department of English Education T.U. So, this is only my attempt to explore the autonomous learning activities of IELTS candidates for developing speaking skill. That is why; this study is different from other studies.

2.3 Implications of the Review for the Study

Literature review is “an obligatory part of all research studies to find out what has already been done in research area to avoid investigating problems that have definitely been answered” (Wolf and Pant, 2005, p.39). The literature can be made up of different kinds of materials, including books, articles, journals and thesis. It helps to find the gap in the knowledge and provides justification for the necessity of the research question. In my study, I reviewed different previous research work, articles, journals and books and read them critically. The literature review has helped me to integrate my study with existing body of knowledge. It helped me to develop the theoretical roots, conceptual framework and develop methodology. From these reviewed works I have got different insights and knowledge on the subject matter that will be beneficial to my research work to some extent.

From the review of Joshi (2010), I got theoretical knowledge and methodological steps on the study of autonomous strategies, which has helped me to extend the theory on learner autonomy providing the related information about learner autonomy in relation to the M.Ed. students. Moreover, I come to know about the tools of questionnaire and interview. Similarly, from the study of Tok (2011), I got the idea for formulating objectives and constructing research questions.

The study of Okazaksi (2011), Khanal (2014) and Li and Du (2015) helped me to collect theoretical knowledge and information about the learner autonomy. In the same way, the

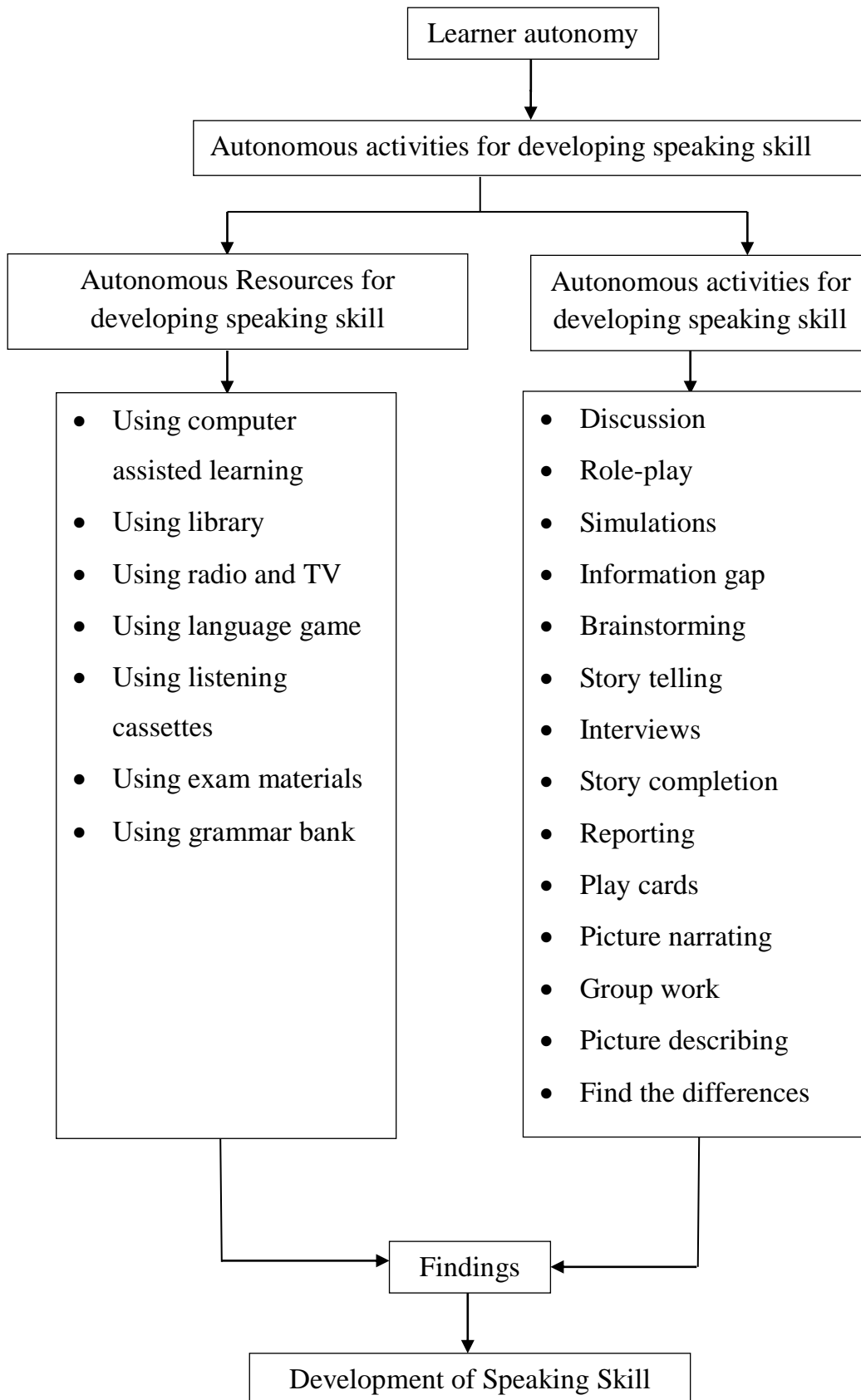
work of Sapkota (2014) helped me to understand that the learners themselves are primary source to develop learner autonomy. From the study of Dhakal (2017), I got significant information on the autonomous learning strategies and activities in relation to speaking skill. From the study of Subedi (2015), I become able to be familiar with the theoretical insight on speaking skill as well as got a lot of ideas of objectives, research questions, methodology, and finding to conduct the research. And finally, the study of Mirzaei, Hashemian, and Farshani (2016) and Xu (2016) helped me to understand about IELTS and speaking skill.

Through the detailed review of the related literatures, I got insights on learner autonomy, speaking skill and I also learnt some crucial guidelines and insight for conducting a mix method research, to apply the research tools to meet the target goals, how to write academically, how to analyze and interpret qualitative and quantitative data. As I have used data collection tools (questionnaire and interview) in my study, these all reviewed literatures have direct and indirect role to play throughout the study. Hence, the researches carried out by these researchers are the prime source and basis of this research. As a whole, the reviewed literatures have significant value to make research scientific, systematic, relevant and consistent.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

Research is a systematic, rigorous and scientific activity, which is carried out in planned and stepwise way. So, every researcher must have the conceptual framework about their study while conducting the research. Otherwise the study cannot get the desired achievement and reach the conclusion.

The conceptual framework for my study is presented below:



CHAPTER THREE

METHOD AND PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

Methodological procedures are the vital elements of research study. If any research work follows appropriate methodology and adequate procedures, it will obtain its objective.

This section has incorporated the design of the study, population and sample, sampling procedures, research tools, sources of data, data collection procedures, data analysis and interpretation procedures and ethical considerations.

3.1 Design of the Study

Research design refers the research method which includes procedures or the ways of carrying out the study in order to achieve the objectives efficiently within the fixed time frame. To be specific, the research design shows the overall outline of how an investigation takes place. In order to achieve the objectives of this research study, I adopted mixed method research design to carry out this study. Creswell (2014) argues that mixed method involves the collection and integration of both quantitative and qualitative data in a study. This means mixed method research design is an approach for collecting, merging and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative forms of data in a single study.

Similarly, Khanal (2073, p.203) says that the purpose of mixed methods research is to build on the synergy and strength that exist between quantitative and qualitative methods in order to more fully understand a given research phenomenon. In a mixed method research design, qualitative method provides in depth analysis of the experiences of relatively small numbers of respondents. Similarly, qualitative information provides descriptive detail that sets quantitative results in their human context (Creswell, 2014). On the other hand, quantitative method summarizes large number of data based on

statics. Thus, mixing both qualitative and quantitative methods is likely to provide a comprehensive account of the phenomenon under investigation.

Mixed methods research helps to answer the questions that cannot be answered by quantitative or qualitative approach alone. As quantitative method alone is not sufficient to ensure the depth of data, in this sense, I also used qualitative method to get rich and in-depth information from respondents. There are three types of approaches under mixed method. As Khanal (2016, p.191) says mixed method includes concurrent design, sequential design and embedded design. Out of them, my study was based on sequential design. Sequential design further divided into two types viz. explanatory sequential design and exploratory sequential design. Among these two sequential designs, I had adopted explanatory sequential design. According to Creswell (2011, p.211) sequential explanatory strategy is characterized by the collection and analysis of quantitative data in a first phase of research followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data in a second phase that builds on the results of the initial quantitative results. Similarly, in my research study, at first I had collected and analyzed quantitative data and it was followed by qualitative one.

In this way, in my research study, I blend both quantitative and qualitative approaches for better understanding of a research problem. I used survey questionnaire as a quantitative research tool and interview guidelines as a qualitative research tool and collected the opinion of the respondents. The data from questionnaire were quantified and the data obtained through interview were descriptively discussed.

3.2 Population, Sample and Sampling Procedure

The population of this study included all the IELTS candidates who were preparing for IELTS examination. In total 40 IELTS candidates were selected as the sample. Out of them, 5 voluntarily interested candidates were interviewed to elicit data. The sample of this study was selected using convenience sampling procedure.

3.3 Research Tools

Tools are the major elements of any research study. In this study, questionnaire with Likert scale and interview guidelines were used as the tools for data collection. The questionnaire and interview focused on exploring the autonomous activities of the IELTS candidates for developing speaking skill.

3.4 Sources of Data

In this study, I used both the primary and secondary sources of data collection.

3.4.1 Primary Sources of Data

The primary sources of this study included the responses of 40 candidates who were preparing for IELTS examination in Kathmandu valley.

3.4.2 Secondary Sources of Data

Similarly, I consulted related books, articles, journals, websites and unpublished thesis. Mainly I consulted Joshi (2010), Khanal (2014), Sapkota (2014), Li and Du (2015), Subedi (2015), Khadka (2017), Okazaksi (2011), Tok (2011), Dhakal (2017), Mirzaei, Hashemian and Farsani (2016) and Xu (2016) as the part of secondary sources of data.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

As a researcher I tried my best to negotiate my role as a researcher with my participants. As mentioned earlier, I used survey questionnaire and interview guidelines to elicit data for this research. For that I adopted the following procedures to collect data from the primary sources:

In order to carry out this study, first of all I prepared survey questionnaire with Likert scale and guidelines for interview. Then, I took permission from concerned candidates

who were preparing for IELTS examination. After getting the permission, I built good rapport with those IELTS candidates and briefly explained the background and purpose of my research study. Then after, I distributed the survey questionnaire to the candidates as per my convenience. After collecting the distributed questionnaire, I invited 5 voluntarily interested candidates from 40 selected respondents to participate in interview. Then, I continued interview until saturation of data. With the permission of interviewees, I audio-recorded each interview and latter scripted carefully.

3.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation Procedures

After the collection of data, I systematically organized and analyzed them to come to the conclusion. I tabulated and presented the quantitative data obtained through questionnaire using statistical tools such as percentile and frequency. Similarly, the qualitative data obtained through interview were analyzed and discussed descriptively in qualitative manner.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are the ethical principles or standards which should be taken in to consideration while conducting a research work. Ethical considerations help to determine the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. Ethical considerations embrace an environment of trust, accountability and accuracy in researching. According to American Psychological Association (2010), it deals giving attention to the benefits of and not harming those who are involved in the study, being aware of professional and scientific responsibility, seeking to promote accuracy, honesty, truthfulness in research, giving the priority to fairness and justice and respecting people's rights and dignity. Hence, for the disciplinary awareness, in my research study, I had also considered all these aspects and followed sound ethical code of conduct to make research as research. To fulfill my research study, I took informed consent with respondents and disclosed objectives of my study honestly and clearly. I did not make manipulation in collected

data and did not do any harm to informants while collecting data. While analyzing the data, I was totally objective and straightforward as well as I avoided plagiarism by giving proper citation of cited text while processing the data for my study. Similarly, I maintained confidentiality regarding the information of respondents for that I did not use the data for any of the cases except for my study without permission of respondents and avoided the information that would harm the respondents. And finally, I paid attention on accuracy, honesty, truthfulness of data in myself. Being based on the above mentioned points, I had highly considered the ethical values and norms to carry out this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

This chapter mainly deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the respondents. The data was collected with the help of questionnaire and interview schedule. The data obtained through the questionnaire has been tabulated and analyzed using statistical tools such as percentile and frequency. Similarly, the data obtained from interview were analyzed descriptively in a qualitative manner. In this way data were analyzed, interpreted, organized, summarized and synthesized to reach to the conclusion.

4.1 Analysis of Data and Interpretation of Results

The detail information obtained from questionnaire and interview have been presented analyzed and interpreted below:

4.1.1 Autonomous Learning Activities of IELTS Candidates for Developing Speaking Skill

In the first phase, the data for the study were collected by the use of survey questionnaire with Likert scale. The questionnaire incorporated 24 items. The Likert scale included strongly agree, agree, disagree, neutral and strongly disagree as the response scale to find out the data under the IELTS candidates autonomous learning activities. All the responses made by the IELTS candidates after each statement were presented in the table with their respective frequency and percentage.

4.1.1.1 Participating in Discussion, Conversation and Debate Competition

Discussion, conversation and debate competition can be effective activities for developing speaking skill. The first item for the respondents was, *I participate in*

discussion, conversation and debate competition to develop speaking skill. The responses obtained from them are presented below in table 1:

Table 1

Participating in Discussion, Conversation and Debate Competition

Item	Responses											
	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I participate in discussion, conversation and debate competition to develop my speaking skill.	19	47.5	19	47.5	2	5	-	-	-	-	40	100

Note: SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, N= Neutral, D= Disagree, SD =Strongly Disagree and %= Percentage

Participating in discussion, conversation and debate competition item in table 1 presents that out of 40 respondents, same number of respondents having the same percentage i.e. (19) 47.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed while only (2) 5% of them stay neutral and no one said that they strongly disagree and disagree on this item. It shows that a vast majority of the respondents i.e. 95 % agreed to take part in discussion, conversation and debate competition as autonomous learning activities to develop their speaking skill. Thus, participating in discussion, conversation and debate competition were the most frequently used autonomous activities for IELTS candidates.

4.1.1.2 Brainstorming

Simply, brainstorming is an effective strategy for generating ideas. It involves thinking quickly without inhibition to produce as many ideas as possible in a given topic or problem. The main purpose of brainstorming activity is to enhance communication skill and help to promote decision making power as well as foster different viewpoints and

opinion. So, it is one of the common and effective activity to develop speaking skill which encourages both the individual or group of the learners to produce lots of ideas freely and quickly and come up with a list of possible solutions to a certain problem. The second item for the respondents was, *Brainstorming helps to generate lots of ideas on a particular topic for successful speaking*. The responses obtained from them are presented below in table 2:

Table 2

Brainstorming

Item	Responses											
	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Brainstorming helps me to generate lots of ideas on a particular topic for successful speaking.	10	25	26	65	3	7.5	1	2.5	-	-	40	100

Table 2 shows that out of 40 respondents, (10) 25% of them strongly agreed and most of them i.e. (26) 65% of them agreed. On the other hand, only (1) 2.5% of them disagreed with the item. Likewise, rest of the respondents i.e. (3) 7.5% were neutral and no one said they strongly disagree that the brainstorming helps them to generate lots of ideas on particular topic for successful speaking. As majority of the respondents i.e. 90% agreed on the item, it can be concluded that brainstorming is another most frequently used autonomous activity for IELTS candidates.

4.1.1.3 Simulation

In this activity, the practice of speaking skill is very realistic because students can bring item to the class to create a realistic environment. For instance, if a student is acting as a singer, she brings a microphone to sing and so on. Thus, we can say that simulation is

enjoyable activity which can create motivation and interest among the students for practicing speaking skill. The third item for the respondents was; *I use simulation technique in a group to imitate the different real life like situations for developing my speaking skill.* The responses obtained from them are presented below in table 3:

Table 3

Simulation

Item	Responses											
	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I use simulation technique in a group to imitate the different real life like situations for developing my speaking skill.	13	32.5	20	50	2	5	5	12.5	-	-	40	100

Table 3 shows that out of 40 respondents, (13) 32.5% respondents strongly agreed and (20) 50% respondents agreed. On the other hand, (5) 12.5% respondents disagreed on the item whereas (2) 5% were neutral and no one said they strongly disagree to use simulation technique for developing speaking skill. So it can be interpreted that most of the respondents i.e. 82.5% agreed to use simulation as autonomous learning activity for developing speaking skill. Thus, as like other activities, simulation was also an important and frequently used autonomous activity for IELTS candidates.

4.1.1.4 Interview

Interview is one of the good activities to promote speaking skill of students. We are not aware of the fact that we knowingly or unknowingly are taking and giving interview in our real life situations. Conducting interviews with different people or playing the role of

interviewee and interviewer on selected topic provides the students an opportunity to practice speaking ability not only in class but also outside and helps them to be socialized. The fourth item was, *I play the role of interview and interviewer on selected topics for speaking practice*. The responses obtained from them are presented below in table 4.

Table 4

Interview

Item	Responses											
	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I play the role of interviewee and interviewer on selected topics for speaking practice.	9	22.5	22	55	6	15	3	7.5	-	-	40	100

Table 4 presents that out of 40 respondents, (9) 22.5% strongly agreed and (22) 55% of them said they agreed. In contrast, only (3) 7.5% of the respondents said they disagree whereas (6) 15% respondents said nothing and no one said that they strongly disagree on this item. As majority of the respondents i.e. 77.5% agreed on the item, it can be concluded that playing the role of interviewee and interviewer on selected topics is an autonomous learning activity for IELTS candidates.

4.1.1.5 Story Telling

Story telling activity is one of the important and enjoyable way to provide opportunities to the students to speak. In this activity, students can briefly summarize a tale or story they heard from somebody beforehand or they may create their own stories to their counterparts. Story telling activity boosts up students’ creative thinking. It also helps

students to express their known stories in the format of beginning, development, and ending. Including the characters and setting of the story. The fifth item for the respondents was, *I love to create short stories based on my own life experiences and share with friends for developing my speaking skill.* The responses obtained from them are tabulated below in table 5.

Table 5

Story Telling

Item	Responses											
	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I love to create short stories based on my own life experiences and share with friends for developing my speaking skill.	14	35	20	50	4	10	2	5	-	-	40	100

Table 5 presents that out of 40 respondents, (14) 35% of them strongly agreed, half of the respondents i.e. (20) 50% of them agreed while only (2) 5% of them disagreed with this item. Similarly, rest of the respondents i.e. (4) 10 % were neutral and no one said that they strongly disagreed with the very item. As a large number of the respondents i.e. 85% of them agreed to create short stories based on their own life experience and share with friends, now, it can be concluded that IELTS candidates use story telling as one of the autonomous activity for developing their speaking skill.

4.1.1.6 Reporting

Students can report the interesting news which they read in newspaper or magazine to their friends. Similarly, they can also report to their counterparts about whether they have experienced anything worth or any memorable event that happened in their lives. In this

way, reporting the different news, events, places, people and memorable experiences in a very casual manner can really enhance speaking ability of the students. The 6th item for the respondents was, *reporting the different events really enhance my speaking skill*. The responses obtained from them are tabulated below in table 6.

Table 6

Reporting

Item	Responses											
	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I think reporting the different events really enhance my speaking power.	15	37.5	22	55	2	5	1	2.5	-	-	40	100

Table 6 shows that out of 40 respondents, (15) 37.5% respondents strongly agreed where (22) 55% of them agreed. Similarly, (2) 5% of the respondents were neutral and remaining (1) 2.5% of them disagreed the item but no one said that they strongly disagreed on the item. As majority of the respondents, i.e. 92.5% of them agreed with the very item, now, it can be concluded that reporting the different events is autonomous learning activity for IELTS candidates.

4.1.1.7 Pair work and Find the Difference

It is often said that two heads are better than one head. In this sense, pair work and find the difference can be the best way for those who want to flourish their English speaking skill and these activities encourage collaborative learning and tolerance of each other. In this activity, students can work in pairs and discuss the similarities and differences between the pictures which help to boost up their creativity and imagination as well as their public speaking skill. The 7th item for the respondents was, *I work in pairs and*

discuss the differences and similarities between pictures to improve my speaking skill.

The responses obtained from them are presented below in table 7.

Table 7

Pair Work and Find the Difference

Item	Responses											
	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I work in pairs and discuss the differences and similarities between pictures to improve my speaking skill.	12	30	22	55	3	7.5	3	7.5	-	-	40	100

Table 7 shows that out of 40 respondents, (12) 30% of them were strongly agreed. On the other hand, (22) 55% of them agreed. However, only a few respondents, i.e. (3) 7.5% of them said they were neutral and disagreed respectively and no one said that they strongly disagree on the item. As the maximum number of the respondents i.e. 85% of them agreed to work in pairs and discuss the differences and similarities between the pictures to improve their speaking skill, it can be concluded that for them, working in pairs discussing the differences and similarities between the pictures is also an autonomous learning activity for them.

4.1.1.8 Play Cards

Play cards is also one of the speaking activities which provides ample opportunity for students to practice speaking skill. For this activity, students should be divided in four groups and each groups represent a topic for example: Diamond: Earning money, Hearts: Love and relationship, Spades: An unforgettable memory, Clubs: Best teacher. Each student in a group will choose a card. Then, each student will write 4 to 5 questions about the topic to ask other friends in group. Students are not allowed to prepare yes/no questions because this type of question provides less time to talk about the topic. Students should be asked open ended questions to each other. The 8th item for the respondent was,

I play cards with my friends for practicing speaking skill. The responses obtained from them are presented below in table 8.

Table 8

Play Cards

Item	Responses											
	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I play cards with my friends for practicing speaking skill.	10	25	17	42.5	6	15	7	17.5	-	-	40	100

Table 8 shows that out of 40 respondents, (10) 25% of them strongly agreed where (17) 42.5% of them agreed with the very statement. Similarly, (6) 15% of them were neutral and rest of the respondents i.e. (7) 17.5% disagreed on the item. As more than half of the respondents i.e. 67.5 % agreed and 17.5% disagreed on the item, it can be said that card play is also an autonomous learning activity for IELTS candidates to practice and develop their speaking skill.

4.1.1.9 Information Gap

In this activity, students are supposed to be working in pairs. One student has the information that the other partner will share their information. Information gap activities serve many purposes such as solving a problem or collecting information. Information gap activities are effective because everybody has the opportunity to talk extensively in the target language. The 9th item for the respondents was, *I use information gap activity to develop my speaking skill.* The responses obtained from them are tabulated below in table 9.

Table 9

Information Gap

Item	Responses											
	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I use information gap activity to develop my speaking skill.	13	32.5	18	45	3	7.5	6	15	-	-	40	100

Information gap activity in the table 9 presents that out of 40 respondents, (13) 32.5% of them strongly agreed and (18) 45% of them agreed. However only a few respondents i.e. (6) 15% disagreed. Similarly, rest of them i.e. (3) 7.5% were neutral and no one said that they strongly disagreed on the very item. As great majority of the respondents i.e. 77.5% agreed on the item and only a few i.e. (6) 15% disagreed, now, it can be concluded that information gap activity as autonomous learning activity to them.

4.1.1.10 Integration of Speaking Skill while Practicing Other Skills

Language is the combination of four skills. They are listening, speaking, reading and writing. If the students incorporate all the four language skills, they will progress in all the areas of language learning. Among them speaking is the very basic skill of language. Integrating speaking skill while practicing other skills allow learners a lot of exposures through which they can enrich their speaking skill. The 10th item for the respondents was, *I integrate speaking skill while practicing other skills*. The responses obtained from them are tabulated below in table 10.

Table 10

Integration of Speaking Skill while Practicing Other Skills

Item	Responses											
	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I integrate speaking skill while practicing other skill like: listening, writing and reading so that I can develop my speaking skill	26	65	10	25	2	5	2	5	-	-	40	100

The data in the table above shows that out of the 40 respondents, (26) 65% of them strongly agreed with the statement. On the other hand, (10) 25% of them said that they agree with it. However, only (2) 5% of them were neutral and disagreed with the statement respectively and no one said that they strongly disagreed with the statement, *I integrate speaking skill while practicing other skills like: listening, writing and reading so that I can develop my speaking skill*. As a high number of the respondents i.e. 90% agreed to integrate speaking skill while practicing other skills, it can be concluded that integration of speaking skill while practicing other skill is also one of the autonomous learning activities used by IELTS candidates for developing their speaking skill.

4.1.1.11 Group Work and Role Play

Group work and role play are useful activities for practicing speaking skill. Group work is such an activity that provokes the involvement and participation of students in a small group (generally 4/5) to carry out certain language task. In group work activity, students learn and cooperate each other. Moreover, in a group, when a strong student works with weaker students, the students can be a source of knowledge in the group.

Similarly, the another way of getting students to speak is role play where students pretend; they are in various social contexts and have a variety of social roles. In this activity, students can play the role of doctor, patient, teacher etc. which help to improve their speaking skill. In this way, role play and group work provide learners the opportunity to practice speaking skill in a cooperative and collaborative way. The 11th item for the respondents was, *I try to catch a good chance of taking part in activities such as group work and role play to enhance speaking skill.* The responses obtained from them are presented below in table 11.

Table 11

Group Work and Role Play

Item	Responses											
	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I try to catch a good chance of taking part in activities such as group work and role play to enhance my speaking skill.	10	25	25	62.5	4	10	1	2.5	-	-	40	100

From the data given in table 11, it has been found that out of 40 respondents, (10) 25% of them strongly agreed while (25) 62.5% of them agreed, however, only (1) 2.5% of them were disagreed and remaining (4) 10% were neutral with the item, *I try to catch a good chance of taking part in activities such as group work and role play to enhance my speaking skill.* From the above- mentioned data, I came to conclude that great number of the respondents i.e. 87.5% agreed to take part in activities like group work and role play as autonomous learning activities to enhance their speaking skill.

4.1.1.12 Talk to a Mirror

Speaking in- front of mirror is one of the interesting and enjoyable activity which will help learners to develop autonomous learning habit. Students sometimes can talk themselves in English in front of mirror at a times when they feel alone at home or when they do not have a speaking partner. For this activity students can choose any topic, set a timer and start speaking. Speaking in front of mirror may help students to improve their fluency as well as to boost- up self -esteem. The 12th item for the respondents was, *I talk to myself in front of mirror so that I can develop confidence level while speaking.* The responses obtained from them are presented below in table 12.

Table 12

Talk to a Mirror

Item	Responses											
	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I talk to myself in front of mirror so that I can develop confidence level while speaking.	9	22.5	16	40	3	7.5	10	25	2	5	40	100

Table 12 depicts that out of 40 respondents, (9) 22.5% of them strongly agreed and (16) 40% of respondents were agreed with this item. In contrast, (10) 25% of them disagreed and only (2) 5% of them strongly disagreed. Similarly, rest of them i.e. (3) 7.5% of them remained neutral on the very item. The above data shows that majority of the respondents i.e. 62.5% of them agreed and only 30 % of them disagreed to talk themselves in English in front of mirror as autonomous learning activity. Now, it can be concluded that talking

in-front of mirror is also one of the autonomous learning activities of the IELTS candidates for developing confidence while speaking.

4.1.1.13 Use of Internet and Computer

The use of computer and internet are growing day by day. Computer with internet is a valuable and convenient tool which can be used to develop learner autonomy in many ways. Access to the Computer and internet offers learners lots of learning materials and opportunities like they can watch videos, English movies, listen English news and songs as well as they can have a chat with other people across the globe etc. which can directly or indirectly help them to develop their speaking skill in an autonomous way. The 13th item for the respondents was, *I use internet and computer to develop speaking skill*. The responses obtained from them are presented below in table 13.

Table 13

Use of Internet and Computer

Item	Responses											
	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I use internet and computer to develop my speaking skill.	30	75	10	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	100

The table 13 shows that out of the 40 respondents, (30) 75% of them strongly agreed and (10) 25% of them agreed to use internet and computer to develop their speaking skill. As all the respondents i.e. (40) 100% agreed on the item, it can be concluded that using internet and computer is also an autonomous learning activity for them to develop their speaking skill.

4.1.1.14 Using Language Related Games

Language games are very much beneficial in learning all the aspects and skills of languages which can be used to practice many times to become autonomous learners. Phyak and Sharma (2006) state “language games can supply a reasonably realistic environment for communication and they can give plenty of practice in speaking”. This means language games provides learners an opportunity to practice speaking skill in realistic situation. The 14th item for the respondents was, *I prefer to play language related games like puzzles and scrambles to develop vocabulary for better speaking*. The responses obtained from them are presented below in table 14.

Table 14

Playing Language Related Games

Item	Responses											
	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I prefer to play language related games like puzzle and scrambles to develop vocabulary for better speaking.	10	25	19	47.5	3	7.5	8	20	-	-	40	100

Table 14 shows that out of 40 respondents, (10) 25% of them strongly agreed and nearly half of the respondents i.e. (19) 47.5% of them agreed. However, only (3) 7.5% respondents were neutral and rest of them i.e. (8) 20% of them disagreed and no one said that they strongly disagreed with the item, *I prefer to play language related games like puzzles and scrambles to develop vocabulary for better speaking*. As majority of them i.e. 72.5% agreed and only 20% of them disagreed on this item, now, it can be concluded that playing language related games like puzzles and scrambles is also one of the autonomous learning activities of IELTS candidates for developing their speaking skill.

4.1.1.15 Using Cassette Recorder

Cassette recorder is an electronic device which can be used for listening the recorded materials. It is often more convenient and cheap to use cassette recorder. So students can use cassette recorder to practice their autonomous learning activities. The 15th item for the participants was, *I use cassette recorder for listening recorded materials of native speakers*. The responses obtained from them are tabulated below in table 15.

Table 15

Using Cassette Recorder

Item	Responses											
	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I use cassette recorder for listening the recorded materials of the native speakers of English for improving my speaking accents.	27	67.5	8	20	3	7.5	2	5	-	-	40	100

The data presented in the table above shows that out of 40 respondents, (27) 67.5% of them strongly agreed, (8) 20% of them agreed, only (3) 7.5 % of them were neutral and remaining (2) 5% of them said that they disagree with the statement. From the above-mentioned discussion, it can be concluded that a good number of respondents i.e. 87.5% agreed to use cassette recorder to listen the recorded materials of native speakers of English as autonomous learning activity for improving their speaking accents.

4.1.1.16 Using Library

Library is a place where learners are engaged in various learning activities and tasks. In library students can work on their own with a wide range of materials. They can work with the books, magazines, poems, novels, CDs, DVDs and other internet based

resources which may help them to practice their speaking skill in an autonomous way. The 16th item for the participants was, *I make good use of my free time in library by reading several authentic books, essays and poems etc. to learn speaking better.* The responses obtained from them are presented below in table 16.

Table 16

Use of Library

Item No. 16	Responses											
	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I make good use of my free time in library by reading several authentic books, essays and poems to learn speaking better.	21	52.5	19	47.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	100

The table 16 indicates that out of 40 respondents, more than half of the respondents (21) 52.5% strongly agreed and nearly half of the respondents i.e. (19) 47.5% of them agreed and no one said that they were neutral, disagreed and strongly disagreed with this item. Now, I can conclude that all the respondents i.e. 100% agreed to use library as a part of their autonomous learning activity for developing speaking skill.

4.1.1.17 Speaking in English with Friends and Native Speakers

It is very important to speak English with friends and native speakers for practicing speaking skill. Having a very casual or informal talk with friends and native speakers is the fastest way to improve fluency of the students. Many non-native speakers may get nervous to talk with native speakers at first, but the more they talk with them, the more confident they will become. Thus, speaking English or having just general conversation with friends and native speakers is the very easiest and fastest way for all the non- native

students to develop their speaking skill in a friendly manner. The 17th item for the respondents was, *I speak in English with friends and native speaker to enhance my speaking skill*. The responses obtained from them are presented below in table 17.

Table 17

Speaking in English with Friends and Native Speakers

Item	Responses											
	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I speak in English with my friends and native speaker to enhance my speaking skill	19	47.5	19	47.5	-	-	2	5	-	-	40	100

The table 17 vividly shows that out of 40 respondents, equal number of respondents i.e. (19) 47.5 % respondents were strongly agreed and agreed with this statement respectively. In contrast, only (2) 5% of them were disagreed on the item. As a large number of respondents, i.e. 95% agreed and only (2) 5% respondents disagreed on the item, now, it can be concluded that speaking in English with friends and native speakers is also one of the autonomous learning activities of IELTS candidates for enhancing their speaking skill.

4.1.1.18 Watching English Movies with Subtitles

Watching English movies are always excellent and more enjoyable way for learning and improving speaking accents. English movies motivates students and provide opportunities to boost up their confidence to enhance speaking skill as well as make them to be more autonomous. The 18th item for the respondents was, *I watch English movies*

with subtitles to boost up my speaking skill. The responses obtained from them are presented below in table 18.

Table 18

Watching English Movies with subtitles

Item	Responses											
	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I watch English movies with subtitles to boost up my speaking skill.	11	27.5	26	65	2	5	1	2.5	-	-	40	100

The table 18 explicitly shows that among the 40 respondents, (11) 27.5% of them strongly agreed and majority of the respondents i.e. (26) 65% of them agreed with this item. Likewise, (2) 5% of them were neutral and only (1) 2.5% of them disagreed on the item. As a vast majority of the respondents i.e. 92.5% agreed to watch English movies with subtitles to boost up their speaking skill, now, it can be concluded that watching English movies with subtitles is also an autonomous learning activity for IELTS candidates.

4.1.1.19 Listening English News and Songs

Listening English news and songs are the best way of developing vocabulary and improving pronunciation for making speaking better. Nowadays, Students can easily listen English news and songs wherever they are and whenever they want in a relaxing

way, for example; while walking on the street, having snacks in the canteen, while in the work place and in the bed time as well. Thus, listening English news and songs can also directly or indirectly encourage students to be independent/autonomous learners and improve their speaking skill. The 19th item for the respondents was, *I listen to the English news and songs for developing my speaking skill*. The responses obtained from them are presented below in table 19.

Table19

Listening English News and Songs

Item	Responses											
	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I listen to the English news and songs for developing my speaking skill.	18	45	22	55	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	100

Table 19 explicitly indicates that out of 40 respondents, nearly half of the respondents i.e. (18) 45% strongly agreed and more than half of the respondents i.e. (22) 55% agreed on this item and no one said that they were neutral, disagreed and strongly disagreed on this item. To analyze the above data, it can be concluded that all or 100% respondents agreed to listen to the English news and songs as autonomous activity for developing their speaking skill.

4.1.1.20 Use of Social Networking Sites

Social networking sites these days have made revolution in every field. The social networking sites can be the powerful tool for every learner to develop their

communicative skills along with the social rapport. Social networking sites such as Facebook, twiter, skype, viber, messenger, imo etc. are very popular nowadays as they offer learners an opportunity to stay in touch and maintain a good relationship with the people around the world and learn from each other. For that they can create a discussion page, make a chat group for learning, make audio and video call and share their feelings, interest and they can even exchange notes, study related problems, knowledge, skills and experiences with their family members, friends, teachers, native speakers, colleagues and their relatives especially who live far way. So in this way using different social networking sites provides learners an extensive exposure to practice oral communication in a sociable environment. The 20th item for the respondents was, *I use social networking sites to boost up my speaking skill*. The responses obtained from them are presented below in table 20.

Table 20

Use of Social Networking Sites

Item	Responses											
	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I use social networking sites to enhance my speaking skill.	22	55	14	35	1	2.5	3	7.5	-	-	40	100

The table 20 reveals that out of 40 respondents, more than half of the respondents i.e. (22) 55% of them strongly agreed and (14) 35% of them agreed to use social networking sites. On the other hand, (3) 7.5% of them disagreed and remaining (1) 2.5% of them were neutral. Similarly, no one said that they strongly disagree with this item. As great majority of the respondents i.e. 90% of them agree and only minority of them i.e. (1) 2.5% disagreed on this item, now, it can be concluded that using social networking sites is also autonomous learning activity of the IELTS candidates for developing their speaking skill.

4.1.1.21 Self -study and Taking owns Responsibility

Self- study and taking responsibility are very much necessary for those who want to be independent/ autonomous learners. Self- study and taking responsibility help students to make decisions and take actions of their own learning, so if they make decisions, take responsibility of their learning process and practice their speaking skill accordingly, they will surely enhance their proficiency in speaking. The 21st item for the respondent was, *I like self -study and take responsibility of my own learning for developing speaking skill.* The responses obtained from them are presented below in table 21.

Table 21

Self -study and Taking owns Responsibility

Item	Responses											
	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I like self-study and take responsibility of my own learning to improve my speaking skill.	30	75	10	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	100

The table 21 indicates that out of 40 respondents, (30) 75% of them strongly agreed and remaining (10) 25% of them agreed with this item. After analyzing the data above, now, it can be concluded that all the respondents or 100% agreed that they like self-study and taking responsibility of their own learning as a part of their autonomous learning activities for developing their speaking skill.

4.1.1.22 Mock Test

Mock test is quiet popular among IELTS candidates. Generally, mock exams are taken as a practice test which is conducted before the actual test. Mock test can be important for those who are preparing for IELTS as it can really give them a clear idea about the type

and pattern in which the questions are going to be asked in real IELTS test. More importantly, mock test highlights the area that the candidates really need more hard work for the further improvement as well as help them to boost up their confidence level. The 22nd item for the respondents was, *I involve in mock test to enhance proficiency in speaking skill*. The responses obtained from them are presented below in table 22.

Table 22

Mock Test

Item	Responses											
	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I involve in mock test to enhance proficiency in speaking skill.	24	60	16	40	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	100

Table 22 shows that out of 40 respondents, most of them i.e. (24) 60% of them strongly agreed and (16) 40% of them agreed with the very item and no one said that they were neutral, disagree and strongly disagree with this item. As all the respondents or 100% agreed to involve in mock test, now, it can be concluded that involving in mock test is also one of the autonomous learning activities of IELTS candidates for developing their speaking skill.

4.1.1.23 Recording own Voice

Recording own voice can also be taken as an autonomous learning activity which creates learners more opportunities to enhance and practice their speaking skill. Nowadays students can easily record their voices using varieties of devices, i.e. they can use their own smart phone to record their voices. If the students record and listen their voices, they will be more familiar with their strengths and weakness which will encourage them to focus more on the areas of their weakness. Moreover, recording and listening owns voice may also provide learners with a greater degree of confidence. The 23rd item for the respondent was, *I record my own voices so that I can point out my own strengths and weakness for improving speaking skill.* The responses obtained from them are presented below in table 23.

Table 23

Recording own Voice

Item	Responses											
	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I record my own voices so that I can point out my own strengths and weakness for improving speaking skill.	17	42.5	18	45	3	7.5	2	5	-	-	40	100

Table 23 shows that out of 40 respondents, (17) 42.5% of them strongly agreed and (18) 45% of them agreed with this statement. Similarly, (3) 7.5% of them were neutral and only (2) 5% of them were disagreed and no one said that they were strongly disagreed with this item. Now, we can conclude that maximum number of the respondents i.e. 87.5 % of them agreed and only (2) 5% disagreed to record their voice and point out their strengths and weakness for improving their speaking skill. So, recording own voice is also one of the autonomous activities of the IELTS candidates for developing speaking skill.

4.1.1.24 Practice the Speaking Exercises of IELTS Books

Every student who are preparing for IELTS should use and practice different exercises from the different series of Cambridge books for IELTS and other practice books of IELTS, it is because IELTS practice books allow them to familiar with the IELTS test format, guidelines and examination techniques. So, it is always good to use and practice books on IELTS to get good scores in all the four bands skills namely; reading, writing, speaking, and listening. And especially, those who felt themselves a little bit weaker in speaking skill among the four language skills, they can practice all the difficult topics of speaking from the practice books of IELTS, which will promote their speaking skill as

well as autonomous learning habit. The final item for the respondents was, *I practice all the speaking exercises from IELTS practice books to develop my speaking skill*. The responses obtained from them are presented below:

Table 24
Practice the Speaking Exercises of IELTS Books

Item	Responses											
	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I practice all the speaking exercises from IELTS practice books to improve my speaking skill.	22	55	18	45	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	100

Table 24 shows that out of 40 candidates, more than half of the respondents i.e. (22) 55% of them strongly agreed and nearly half of the respondents i.e. (18) 45% of them agreed and no one said that they were neutral, disagreed and strongly disagreed on this item. As all the respondents or 100% agreed to practice speaking exercises from IELTS book, now, it can be concluded that practicing speaking exercises from IELTS book is also an autonomous activity for them to improve their speaking skill.

4.1.2 Autonomous Activities in the Eyes of IELTS Candidates

To support the data obtained through questionnaire, five IELTS candidates were interviewed in order to get their perceptions on the autonomous learning activities for developing speaking skill. The obtained information from the candidates about autonomous activities is analyzed under the following themes.

4.1.2.1 IELTS Candidates' Use of Autonomous Activities

Language learning cannot be sustained unless the adequate activities are not performed so that students need to use and practice varieties of autonomous learning activities for

developing their speaking skill. In this regard, the very first question I had asked them was “Do you use autonomous learning activities to develop your speaking skill?” The common information obtained from them is presented as: “*Yes, we use autonomous learning activities to develop our speaking skill*”. This line makes a sense that all the candidates use autonomous learning activities to develop their speaking skill.

Similarly, in order to find out the autonomous learning activities used by IELTS candidates, I asked them, “What kinds of autonomous learning activities do you use to develop your speaking skill?” In a response to this question one of the candidates said:

Well, generally I prefer to use very common ways of developing my speaking skill that is having conversation with my friends, family members, relatives and native speakers in facebook, imo, viber and messenger. In that way it helps a lot like we can have a very casual talk with them and that very casual talk also enhance my speaking skill. Similarly, I always practice books on IELTS and listen to the BBC news, lyrics of English songs. And apart from that, I opt to take mock exam of speaking every week so that I can know my actual level of speaking and also opt to use library and learn many more things with the resources available over there in that way I can develop my speaking skill.

Similarly, another candidate added his views on the use of autonomous learning activities in this way:

I prefer to practice my speaking skill autonomously. I prefer to watch and listen news and events which are broadcasted through different T.V channels like CNN and BBC as well as listen English songs in my mobile phone. I think listening

English news and songs also help a lot in improving our speaking accents.

Similarly, I prefer to communicate in English with my colleagues, relatives, and family members especially with my cousin who is studying in abroad via email, phone and face-book. Besides these, I discuss and solve the difficult exercises of speaking with my friends from Cambridge books for IELTS, take mock exam once in a week and sometimes I also visit library and use different materials according to my choice.

In the same way, rest of the other candidates reported that they directly or indirectly get involved in different kinds of autonomous activities for instance, most often they preferred to listen English news and songs, watch English movies, different reality shows, documentaries and also watch motivational speech like ted talks. Besides this, they preferred to involve in group/pair discussion and share different ideas, their own stories and memorable experiences with each other. Similarly, they said they do not miss the opportunity to take every Saturday's mock exam conducted by their institution and also preferred to visit the library of British council regularly where they can practice different series of IELTS books, read several other books, listen CDs, DVDs and even watch You tube videos of speaking. In this regard one of the respondents argued, "*one of the most frequent activity that I prefer is, I watch lots of sample videos of speaking test on You tube so that I will be knowingly or unknowingly familiar with the way the native speakers speak, the way they carry their body language and the kinds of accents they use which can have positive impact in my speaking*".

From the evidences above, it can be concluded that all the IELTS candidates used wide range of autonomous learning activities to develop their speaking skill such as they preferred to practice books on IELTS, have a casual conversation with their friends, family, relatives and native speakers using social networking sites, involve in mock test,

use library, listen English news and songs, watch English movies, You-tube videos, different reality shows, documentaries and motivational speech like ted talks. Among these activities; using library, involving in mock test, practicing IELTS book and listening English news and songs were found to be the most common autonomous activities of IELTS candidates.

4.1.2.2 Purpose of Using Autonomous Activities

IELTS candidates may use autonomous learning activities for various purposes, in this regard, I had asked them “Why do you use the autonomous learning activities?” In the responses to this question the candidates put forward different views and opinions regarding the purpose of using autonomous learning activities. In this regard, one of the candidates said that:

Well, the purpose of using autonomous learning activities is clear. using autonomous learning activities creates positive feelings in us towards language learning and if we are really positive, our learning becomes much easier and effective.

This excerpt shows that learners use autonomous learning activities because it creates positive feeling in them towards learning which make their language learning easier and effective.

Likewise, another candidate said, “*the main purpose of using autonomous learning activity is to develop our competencies in the use of four language skills*”. He further added:

If we do not opt for autonomous learning, we are not developing our language skills. Thus I use and rely on various autonomous learning activities to be an extraordinary learner and very good user of English Language.

This shows that learners use and rely on different autonomous learning activities in order to be an extra-ordinary learner as well as very good and competent user of four language skills of English.

To analyze all the excerpts above, it is concluded that IELTS candidates use autonomous learning activities for various purposes. They said that using autonomous learning activities creates positive feelings in them towards language learning which indeed help to make their language learning much easier and effective. More importantly, they reported that using and relying on various autonomous learning activities make them to become an extra-ordinary learner as well as very good and competent user of four language skills of English.

Besides this, regarding the purpose of autonomous learning activities, rest of the other candidates said that using autonomous learning activities help to enhance their English language proficiency. They further reported that autonomous learning not only enhance their language proficiency but also help them to learn other lifelong learning skills which will be useful for them in other areas of both learning and life. Similarly, they said using various autonomous learning activities make them confident, responsible, motivated as well as help to take decision of their learning. In the same way, Cakici (2015) who cited that the learner autonomy aims at providing language learners with the ability to take on more responsibility for their own learning. In addition, it helps them to make decision by themselves about what and how they should learn.

4.1.2.3 Ways of Selecting Autonomous Activities

In order to find out the ways of selecting autonomous learning activities, I had asked them, “How do you select autonomous learning activities for developing your speaking skill?” In a response to this question, all the candidates revealed that there is not any particular way of selecting autonomous learning activities. In this regard, one of the candidates stated that:

Frankly speaking, regarding the selection of autonomous activities, I don't set out any criteria such and there is nothing like universal rule that you should follow this and shouldn't follow that. It just goes with flow. And to be more specific, it depends upon my need, level, preference and convenience.

This excerpt shows that he does not set out any criteria or there are not any universal rules for the selection of autonomous activities rather he highly prioritizes his need, level, preference and convenience.

In the same concern, another candidate continuously said that there are not any ways to be followed when it comes to the selection of autonomous activities. He further added:

As I already mentioned there are not such a specific ways or steps to select autonomous activities. I rather follow my interest and select those activities accordingly. Along with the interest, I think whatever I am familiar with, whatever I am comfortable with I prioritize those things more. For example, instead of studying in group or having conversation with others, I feel more comfortable to learn alone by listening news, music, watching movies and you tube videos.

Likewise, another candidate articulated his views regarding the ways of selecting autonomous activities in this way:

Well, I don't think there is hard and fast rule for selecting autonomous learning activities. I think it's differ from one individual to another individual. In my case, I select those activities which I am interested at and which I feel ease to learn.

The above statements clearly indicate that the candidates did not follow any particular ways or they did not have any specific criteria for the selection of autonomous learning activities rather they emphasized their need, level, interest, convenience and comfort level when it comes to practice their speaking skill.

4.1.2.4 Use of ICT Tools

ICT is an umbrella term which includes computer, internet, and electronic delivery system such as radio, television and projector and so on. ICT plays an increasingly important role in the way we communicate, learn and live. The use of ICT tool in learning process has become the demand of 21st century as it allows learners in the use of wide range of resources to develop their language learning. Dudeney & Hockly (2007, p.8) state “using a range of ICT tools can give learners exposure to and practice in all of the four main language skills autonomously such as speaking, listening, writing and reading”. This means ICT tools offer learners an access to a more flexible opportunities and exposures that are very necessary for them to practice and develop all the four language skills autonomously.

In order to find out whether the IELTS candidates use ICT tools or not, the first question I had asked them was, “Do you use ICT tools to develop your speaking skill?” In a response to this question all the candidates reported the common answer that they use ICT tools to develop their speaking skill. In this regard, one of the candidates articulated:

I am totally in to ICT tools regarding the practice of my IELTS examination especially the practice of speaking skill.

His opinion indicates that he uses ICT tools for the preparation of IELTS examination. More importantly, he said that he uses those ICT tools for practicing speaking skill. Regarding the use of ICT tools, he further added that:

As you know that in previous time people didn't have access to all these technological inventions so they had to practice with only their teacher or facilitator. But, now we have facilities of ICT and we have very easy access to it and you know we can just get every kinds of knowledge, every kinds of materials or the methods from ICT that we need for enriching our speaking skill. So, it is more efficient to practice speaking skill with ICT tools. That's why I heavily use ICT tools for the enhancement of my speaking skill.

In the same light, another candidate said:

Yes, I use. I use a ICT tools a lot. As you know that in this world of technology, everyone is depending on technology and.....You know technology is so friendly for us and we can get everything that we needed with the help of ICT tools when it comes to practice of our speaking skill.

Similarly, rest of the other candidates also emphasized the use of ICT tools for the practice of speaking skill. They said that ICT tools have made the things easier. They also said ICT tools help in a quick search for the knowledge and information so that they don't have to buy a bulky books and spend lots of money. Similarly, they said that ICT

tools provide them access to a wide range of online resources like they can just click a link or cite and watch different tutorials of speaking and even download and use any kind of applications in their smart phone, so that they can practice speaking skill whenever and wherever they want as per their own ability.

The above mentioned evidences show that all the of IELTS candidates appreciated the use of ICT tools to practice and develop their speaking skill. Moreover, they also revealed that they can have very easy access to those ICT tools which also saves their time, money so that they can get everything they needed easily and quickly as per their own time and desire and ability. The study is also in agreement with Benmeddah (2017) who mentioned that applying ICT in teaching learning process is not only important but also essential in order to enhance learners' speaking skill. She further mentioned that ICT enables students to gather data that would be otherwise be time-consuming or, costly or both. For example; students can use internet to get up to the minute information.

Similarly, to find out the types of ICT tools used by IELTS candidates, the next question I had asked them was, "What types of ICT tools do you use to develop your speaking skill?" In a response to this question, most of the candidates provide nearly the same answers that they use common types of ICT tools. Among them one of the candidates added by saying:

Ummm..... ICT tools like yes, the very common one is my smartphone, I use my smart phone and record the voices and do the stuff like that as well as I use computer, internet and my personal laptop for developing my speaking skill.

Similarly, another candidate also added by saying:

Well, the ICT tools that I use are: firstly, my computer because most of things are available in the internet and I can download everything and then I also use laptop,

CDs, DVDs, VCDs, cassette recorder, smart phones etc. which are very helpful for us to develop our speaking skill.

Furthermore, another candidate added his views regarding the ICT tools in this way:

Normally, I use ICT tools that are easily accessible like computer, mobile phone, laptop. And apart from that, I also opt to use radio and T.V.

And rest of the other candidates also said that they use common ICT tools as computer and internet, smart phone, laptop, tablet, CDs, DVDs, cassette player, radio and television for developing their speaking skill.

Now it is apparent from the above discussion that IELTS candidates used the ICT tools like computer and internet, laptop, smart mobile phone, tablet, radio, television, CDs, DVDs, VCDs, cassette player/ recorder e.tc to develop their speaking skill. Moreover, from the evidences above it can be said that smart mobile phone, computer, internet and laptop are the most common types of ICT tools used by the IELTS candidates to develop their speaking skill.

4.1.2.5 Use of Materials

Materials help students to motivate in their learning process. Without materials students may lose their interest in the learning process. So students should use various supplementary materials to make their learning much more realistic and effective. In the contexts of IELTS, the candidates may also use different materials to develop their language learning skills. In order to find out the materials used by IELTS candidates, I had asked them “What are the materials do you use to develop your speaking skill?” During the interview it was found that all the candidates used wide range of supportive materials to develop their speaking skill. In this regard, one of the candidates added by saying:

Ummm.....If you have talked about the very concrete materials then it would be Cambridge books on IELTS, flash cards, pictures and I also go for novels, English newspaper and many other internet- based resources.

In the same way another candidate stated that, *“In my case, I have been using various materials like IELTS practice books, other English textbooks, grammar books, magazines, audio clips and video clips for developing my speaking skill.”* He continuously added that these supportive materials are very useful and effective for the IELTS candidates in developing speaking skill.

Likewise, another candidate said:

Normally, I use the varieties of supportive materials like practice books for IELTS, newspaper, Journals, articles, pictures, play card, CDs, DVDs, VCDs, etc.

Through these materials we can definitely practice our speaking skill in an easiest way.

And rest of the other candidates also stated that they prefer to use the materials both in the soft copy form like CDs, DVDs, pdf files, You- tube videos and hard copy form of the materials like IELTS books, English dictionary, journals, English newspapers like Himalayan Times and Kathmandu Post for improving their speaking skill. Moreover, they replied that using varieties of materials help them to practice and develop their speaking skill effectively.

Thus, from the above statements, it can be concluded that IELTS candidates use both the hard copy and soft copy forms of materials for developing their speaking skill. Generally, the materials include Cambridge books for IELTS, English dictionary, grammar book, novels, Journals, English newspapers, flash cards, play cards, puzzle games, pictures,

CDs, DVDs, VCDs, internet based resources like pdf files, audio and video clips of speaking. Thus from the evidences above it can be concluded that IELTS candidates used varieties of supportive materials and using those materials has really helped them to practice and develop their speaking in an easier and effective way.

4.1.2.6 Studying in Library

Studying in library is also one of the strategies of autonomous learning strategies which makes learners self-motivated towards their learning. Library provides learners open and easy access to the several materials, so the learners may study in library and use various resources available over there to develop their speaking skill. In this regard, I had asked them was, “Do you study in library for developing your speaking skill?” And how is the library study useful for developing your speaking skill? In response to this question all the candidates replied the common answer that they prefer to study in library in their leisure time and studying in library is quiet useful for developing their speaking skill. In this regard, one of the female candidates added that:

Yeah! I study in library whenever I am free. I study in library available in this institution where I am taking IELTS classes and apart from this I also frequently visit British library and American library where I can find variety of reading materials, I can even use internet and watch different videos of IELTS speaking on You-tube and also listen recorded materials available over there in our own time and convenience. So, in this way library study is very useful for me to practice and develop speaking skill in an autonomous way.

Her opinion indicates that studying in library is useful in a sense that varieties of reading materials and recorded materials are available in library, similarly, library provides an

access of internet facilities so with the help of these facilities she can independently practice and develop speaking skill in her own time management and convenience.

Similar sound was expressed in the interview from another candidate. To the support, he exclaimed:

Definitely, I prefer to study in library in my free time for enhancing my speaking skill. In my case library study has become quite effective and useful because it offers an opportunity to use various resources and facilities in a peaceful environment and you know, I can use these kinds of resources in library according to my own time, desire and pace. In this way library study is quiet useful to practice and improve our language skills. Thus, I fully use these resources and facilities available in library to learn speaking in better way.

His opinion indicates that studying in library has become quite effective to develop speaking skill because it offers an opportunity to use various materials and facilities in a quiet environment according to his own time, desire and pace.

Similarly, next candidate stated:

Yes, of-course, I opt to study in library. I always prefer to learn in peaceful environment where I can fully concentrate and learn more. And nowadays, in library varieties materials and options are available such as such as we can either read books, articles, magazines, listen CDs, DVDs or we can watch different instructions of speaking on You-tube and with which practicing speaking is much easier and faster. That's why library study is very much important and useful.

The above statements clearly indicate IELTS candidates prefer to study in library and studying in library has become quiet useful for them in a sense that library provides them an opportunity where they can freely use varieties of resources and facilities in a peaceful environment which leads them to learn themselves as per their own time, wish and pace. The study is also in agreement with Bhatta (2018), who found out that library is very useful for self- learning and it helps to develop autonomy on learner by providing various learning materials.

4.1.2.7 Need of Autonomous Learning

Similarly, in order to find out perception of IELTS candidates about the need of autonomous learning, I had asked them, “Do you think autonomous learning is really needed to develop your speaking skill?” All of the candidates replied that they realized the need of autonomous learning for developing their speaking skill. One of the candidates added:

Well, it is within us who have zeal to practice, to enhance, to get to know and to explore and everything. So autonomous learning enables us to find our true ability to explore, to work on our own interest, to learn and develop our speaking skill. Moreover, what I personally believe is, it is very essential to have an independent way of learning, to have an independent way of thinking, to have an active participation in learning, for us as an individual, for us as a student we need to have the habit of autonomous learning. And you know speaking is something that comes from our own instinct so if we do not opt for autonomous learning then we are not developing our speaking, so, autonomous learning is really needed to develop speaking skill.

More interestingly, one of the candidates responded regarding the need of autonomous learning in this way:

Oh my god, It's very common question, you can just answer it, because it's really needed. Personally what I feel is autonomous learning is the need of the day. As you know that it is a quiet new concept and now it is high time that every learner should adopt this concept because it allows learners to expose with various learning activities and opportunities. Moreover, it also allows learners to learn actively on their own interest. So.... yeah, if we are exposed with various learning activities and learn actively by following our own interest, we will really get motivated towards learning so that it becomes easier for us to develop our speaking skill. That's why autonomous learning has become the necessity for every learner in this present world for increasing our speaking skill.

And rest of the other candidates also realized the need of autonomous learning in this 21st century for developing speaking skill. They reported that autonomous learning makes them motivated by creating a kind of passion in them to learn and practice speaking skill in an efficient manner. They further added that autonomous learning increases awareness, creativity, confidence level and self-reflection toward learning which are very necessary for the development of speaking skill. In this regard, one of the candidates argued, “*Well, what I believe is, autonomous learning is highly essential as it enhances our creativity, awareness, motivation and confidence level. And the more we become creative, aware, motivated and confident through autonomous learning, the better we are in our speaking skill.*”

After analyzing the above excerpts, it was found that all the respondents strongly realized the need of autonomous learning for every learner in this present situation.

Similarly, they viewed that autonomous learning is needed as it helps to learn actively, increase awareness, creates motivation or a kind of passion in them as well as make them reflective towards learning. They also revealed that autonomous learning provides them various learning opportunities which help to boost-up their creativity and confidence level and also enable them to find their true ability to explore and learn speaking in an efficient manner. In this respect, their views seem in the line of Balcikanli (2008) who cited learner autonomy is pre-requisite for effective language learning which enable the learners to develop a sense of responsibility, awareness and self- reflection where they can manage to study on their own more efficiently.

4.1.2.8 Differences between Dependent and Independent Learners

Similarly, another question I had asked them was “What differences do you find between dependent learner and independent learner?” Almost all the candidates replied nearly same way. Regarding the differences between dependent learners and independent learners one of the candidates added his views in this way:

I find dependent learners are more like passive learners and they do limit themselves within the boundaries for getting knowledge however I find independent learners are just opposite of dependent learners. They want to go beyond the boundaries of the classroom moreover they do not feel afraid of trying something new which they have not tried before. So all in all, I found that independent learners are more creative and active learners than the dependent ones.

Similarly, another candidate also added the same kind of responses in this way:

Ummm, I found a huge difference between dependent learners and independent learners because the word dependent and independent itself sounds totally different. Independent learners are always seeking to learn more and think out of the box whereas dependent learners are confined with the knowledge of the one to whom he or she is dependent with. Moreover, Independent learners have a kind of passion to learn and explore new things. They also find out their own mistakes and correct themselves while dependent learners learn whatever their teachers taught them and they cannot explore the new things so learning becomes monotonous for them.

Similarly, in the words of the next candidate:

They do have. They do have lots of differences. For dependent learners everything is ready for them. They don't explore the things but for independent learners everything is under their responsibility so they explore and learn more and more. While for dependent learners learning is more like parrot rotting. They just rote the things so that they do not learn what they should actually learn.

Beside this, some other candidates also said that autonomous learners and non-autonomous learners have much differences. They said that autonomous learners do not heavily depend on their teachers, friends and others rather they learn and explore new things independently and also find out their own mistakes and learn from them while dependent learners are more likely to rely on their teachers, colleagues and others for getting the things done as well as they can't explore the new things and do not even try to find out their mistakes and learn from them.

In conclusion, all the candidates had given nearly the same ideas in different ways which helps me to reach in the conclusion. Most of the candidates viewed that dependent learners depend on their colleagues, friends, mentors and others for getting knowledge and getting the things done therefore for them learning is more like a parrot rotting. Moreover, they opined that dependent learners confined themselves with in the box and do not attempt to explore the new things and do not even attempt to learn from their mistakes so that they are more like passive learners.

In contrast, they viewed independent learners are just opposite of dependent learners in a sense that independent learners do not overly reliant on their mentors, colleagues, and their friends for getting knowledge rather they explore and learn more and more and are more creative and active learners. Moreover, they also opined that independent learners always think out of the box and go beyond the boundaries of classroom and find out their own mistakes and take their mistakes as opportunities to learn.

4.1.2.9 Suggestions to Dependent Learners

At the end of interview, the candidates were asked to point out the ideas and suggestion to those learners who heavily depend on teachers' notebook and instruction. Different candidates present different suggestions in their own way for that very questions. Some of the excerpts are below.

Regarding the suggestions to those learners who heavily depend on teachers' notebook and instructions, one of the candidates argued:

Well, I am not in that level for suggesting other. But you know it is well known fact that you can take suggestions from anyone and in anytime. So if you asked me I would like to suggest them please do not depend heavily on your mentors, teachers, and anyone else it is because depending heavily on others means you are

hampering your study in one way or another way and whatever your teachers provided you that is not sufficient so, please go beyond the limit and the knowledge provided by your teachers in order to be more active and creative learners.

Likewise, another female candidate added:

You know in this present situation, everything is changing and becoming so competitive, so, if you are depending only upon your teachers' notebook and instructions you are not going beyond the box and you are not thinking out of the box. It limits you, it limits your understanding and limits the way you think how actually the things work in the world so, if you confined yourself, if you rely only on your teachers' notebook then you are just getting only the half of the things that you need to get.

Furthermore, she added:

Moreover, what I personally feel is, depending on teachers for getting knowledge may have negative impact in your learning so, stop getting spoon feed by your teachers and be the person of your own.

In the same regard, next candidate responded:

I want to suggest all the learners please be independent learners, always keep your mind open, you should take instructions from every one possible. Go around asking for suggestions like what kinds of mistakes you are making or what kinds of improvement you need, so it's always good to take instructions and advice from your teachers but when it comes to practice do own your own.

He further added:

And you know..... if you really want to be different, if you want to achieve something different in your life, and if you want to enhance your creativity, it's very important to go beyond the four walls of the classroom context and do not limit your knowledge and with just the notes provided by your teachers. So, please go beyond the limit of classroom in-order to be able to cope up with every problem and challenges which you face in any kind of situation and find out the solutions to those problem yourself.

In this way, most of the candidates suggest that learners should opt to be autonomous learners. Similarly, they also suggest that every learner should take their teachers' instructions, help even the notes in case of any difficulties however they should not overly reliant on them because depending heavily on them may have negative impact in students' learning in one way or another way, thus they should not limit their knowledge and understanding with only the notebook and instructions provided by their teachers which is not sufficient for them. Furthermore, they are also suggested that in this present time, everything is becoming changing and so competitive so they should think out of the box or go beyond the context of classroom in order to be different learners and achieve something different in their lives as well as they are also suggested to be more creative

and explorative in order to cope with the problems and challenges which occurs in their lives and find out solutions to those problems. Thus, these suggestions given by IELTS candidates to those learners who heavily rely on teachers' notebook and instructions might help them to pave better and concrete ways in their learning.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This is the final chapter of the study. This chapter includes the findings derived from the analysis and interpretation of the data. It also includes the conclusion of the study along with some points of recommendations to the policy makers, practitioners and researchers.

5.1 Findings of the study

The major objective of this study was to find out the autonomous learning activities of IELTS candidates. On the basis of analysis and interpretations of data, the following some major findings have been drawn:

A. Autonomous Learning Activities of IELTS Candidates for Developing Speaking Skill

- A vast majority of the respondents i.e. 95% agreed to participate in discussion, conversation and debate competition as autonomous learning activities for developing speaking skill.
- Similarly, a good number of the respondents i.e. 90% agreed that brainstorming as one of their important autonomous activities to develop their speaking skill.
- From the analysis and interpretation of the data, it has been pointed that most of the respondents i.e. 82.5% agreed to use simulation as autonomous learning activity for developing speaking skill.
- Similarly, a large number of the respondents i.e. 85% agreed to create short stories based on their live experiences and share with friends as autonomous activity for developing speaking skill.
- In terms of reporting the different events, it has been found that a great majority of the respondents i.e. 92.5% agreed to report the different events as one of the autonomous learning activities for developing speaking skill.

- The maximum number of the respondents i.e. 85% agreed to work in pairs and discuss the similarities and differences between the pictures as autonomous learning activity for developing speaking skill
- The study also revealed that a high number of respondents i.e. 90% agreed to integrate speaking skill while practicing other skills as autonomous learning activity for developing their speaking skill.
- It has been found that a great number of the respondents i.e. 87.5% agreed to take part in activities like group work and role play as autonomous learning activities for developing their speaking skill.
- Another striking findings of the study were all the respondents or 100% agreed to use internet and computer, take responsibility of their own learning, listen English news and English songs, involve in mock test, use library and practice speaking exercises from IELTS book as autonomous learning activities to develop their speaking skill.
- From the analysis and interpretation of data, it has been found that a good number of the respondents i.e. 87.5% agreed to use cassette recorder to listen recorded materials of native speakers of English as autonomous learning activity for improving their speaking accents
- Regarding watching English movies with subtitles, it has been pointed that a vast majority of the respondents i.e. 92.5% agreed to watch English movies with subtitles as autonomous learning activity to boost up their speaking skill.
- Likewise, the study has revealed that great majority of the respondents i.e. 90% agreed to use social networking sites as autonomous learning activity for developing their speaking skill.
- It has been found a large number of the respondents i.e. 95% agreed to speak English with their friends and native speakers as a part of their autonomous learning activities.

- In case of recording own voice, it has been found that maximum number of the respondents i.e. 87% agreed to record their own voice and point out their strengths and weakness for improving their speaking skill as autonomous learning activities.
- From the interview with IELTS candidates, it has been found that IELTS candidates preferred to use a wide range of autonomous learning activities. Their activities include; practice books on IELTS, have a casual conversation with their family members, friends and relatives using social networking sites, watch YouTube videos, library study, take mock exam, listen English songs, news, watch English movies, documentaries, reality shows, motivational speech like ted talks as well as involve in pair/ group discussion. Among those all activities; studying in library, listening English news and songs, practicing IELTS book and involving in mock test were found to be the most common autonomous activities of the IELTS candidates.
- As the purpose of autonomous learning activities, they viewed that using and relying on various autonomous learning activities creates positive feeling in them towards learning and also make them very good and competent user of four language skills. Similarly, they opined that autonomous learning activities make them confident, responsible and motivated as well as help to take decision of their learning.
- Regarding the ways of selecting autonomous learning activities, the candidates viewed that they do not follow any particular ways or any specific criteria for the selection of autonomous learning activities rather they emphasized their need, level, interest, convenience and comfort level when it comes to practice their speaking skill.
- In relation to the use of ICT tools, it has been found that all the candidates appreciated the use of ICT tools, because with the help of the ICT, they get everything they needed for practicing their speaking very easily and quickly as per their own time, desire and ability. Similarly, regarding the types of ICT tools, they used different ICT tools such as computer, internet, laptop, smart phone, tablet,

radio, television, CDs, DVDs, cassette player/ recorder. Among these ICT tools, computer, laptop and smart mobile phones were found to be the most common ICT tools used for developing their speaking skill.

- In the context of IELTS, it has been found that candidates used both in the soft copy and hard copy forms of materials which include Cambridge book for IELTS, English dictionary, grammar book, novels, journals, articles, English newspaper, flash cards, play cards, puzzle games, pictures, CDs, DVDs, VCDs and internet based resources like pdf files, you-tube videos etc. Similarly, they said that using various supplementary materials helped them to practice and develop their speaking skill in an easiest and effective manner.
- With regard to the need of autonomous learning, all the candidates strongly realized the need of autonomous learning in this present situation to develop their speaking skill. Moreover, they also opined that autonomous learning is needed since it helps them to learn actively, increase awareness, motivation, make them reflective towards learning, boost-up their creativity and confidence level which encourage them to explore their true ability to learn speaking skill in an efficient manner.
- In case of library study, the interview revealed that all the candidates prefer to study in library and studying in library is quiet useful for them to develop their speaking skill in a sense that library provides them opportunity where they can freely use varieties of resources and facilities in a peaceful environment which leads them to learn themselves as per their own time, wish and pace.
- As the part of the differences between dependent and independent learners, they opined that dependent learners heavily depend on their teachers, friends and others for getting knowledge and confined themselves with in the box and do not attempt to explore anything new and do not learn from their mistakes therefore, they are more like passive learners. In contrast, they viewed that independent learners do not overly reliant on others rather they always go beyond the box or the

boundaries of classroom and explore their mistakes as well as take their mistakes as opportunities to learn, therefore, they are more creative and active learners.

- Regarding the suggestions to the dependent learners, they suggest that every learner should opt to be independent, to be more creative and explorative learners as well as they should always go beyond the boundaries of the classroom in order to cope with the problems and challenges which occurs in their lives and find out the solutions to those problems.

5.2 Conclusion

In the present scenario of the world every individual wants to learn freely without being imposed from others and there are numerous ways and activities for those learners who want to be independent learners. This present study was mainly concerned with finding the autonomous learning activities of the IELTS candidates for developing their speaking skill. This study revealed the reality that all the IELTS candidates made use of wide range of autonomous learning activities independently to enhance speaking skill. More importantly, after the study of major findings, I come to conclude that taking responsibility of own learning, library study, using internet and computer, practicing IELTS book, involving in mock test, listening English news and songs, participating in discussion, conversation and debate competition, brainstorming, integrating speaking while practicing other language skills, watching English movies, reporting the events, speaking English with friends and native speakers and using social networking sites were the most dominant autonomous activities of the IELTS candidates. Similarly, from the study it becomes clear that respondents did not use any criteria or ways for the selection of different autonomous activities they rather emphasize their interest, desire, convenience, comfort level when it comes to develop their speaking skill.

As this 21st century is considered as the age of information communication and technology, all the respondents appreciated the use of common ICT tools as computer with internet, smartphone and laptop to practice and develop their speaking skill in an

autonomous way. Furthermore, the access to the different modern ICT tools helps them to get everything they needed easily and quickly as per their own time, desire and ability. So that, in my opinion, every learner should highly focus on using different modern ICT tools to practice and develop speaking skill as autonomous learning activities. Likewise, in the context of IELTS, candidates were found to be used varieties of supportive materials to develop their speaking skill and using different supportive materials has helped them to practice their speaking skill in an easier and effective manner. In the same way, I found that library study has also become quiet useful for them to develop speaking skill in a sense that library provides them varieties of resources and facilities where students can freely use those resources and facilities in a peaceful environment which leads them to learn themselves according to their time, desire and pace.

Similarly, the respondents strongly realized the need of autonomous learning for developing their speaking skill. It is the autonomous learning which makes them creative, reflective, motivated, responsible, aware and confident which are very much necessary to develop their speaking skill. Since autonomous learning creates positive feeling in the learners towards their learning and also help them to become an extraordinary learners and competent user of four language skills, more attention should be given on these activities and no output in speaking could be measured until and unless the students engaged in various autonomous activities. In this regard, every learner should opt to be autonomous, try to be more creative, explorative learners and should always go beyond the boundaries of the classroom and let themselves involved in different autonomous learning situations even outside the classroom as well. So, what I think being based upon the findings drawn from the study is that autonomous learning activities have become the cry of the day, it is because by getting involved in different kinds of autonomous learning activities, students can develop their speaking skill.

5.3 Recommendations

Every research study should have its recommendations in one way or another. So, this research work has also some recommendations. It is hoped that the findings of the study will have implications at different levels. The recommendations in those levels have been presented separately below:

5.3.1 Policy Related

Policy is a plan of action agreed or chosen by a certain organization, business, state etc. Every nation has its own policy in different sectors. Since policy is a higher level action, it works as a catalyst for the development of the country. The recommendations of this research related to the policy are mentioned below:

- Since the findings of the study depict the need of learner autonomy to develop language skills, the policy makers should give attention to include such activities in the curriculum and syllabuses.
- The findings show that all the respondents appreciated the use of ICT tools to develop their speaking skill autonomously. That's why MoE, NCED, IELTS institutions and Department of Education should focus more on ICT based teaching and learning approach to involve students in self-directed learning.
- As the findings indicate that respondents use varieties of supportive materials to enhance their speaking skill, the material producers should develop sufficient learning materials that involve students more in speaking activities independently.

5.3.2 Practice Related

Only making policy is not sufficient for the proper and successful implementation of any program. For the successful implementation of any program, reliable and acceptable policy should be made which can be practiced. After analyzing the findings of my study, I have drawn some practices related to policies.

- The findings show that respondents made use of various autonomous learning activities in order to develop speaking skill, that's why students should be involved in lots of speaking tasks and autonomous learning activities to get mastery over speaking skill.
- As the findings show that independent learners are more creative and active learners than dependent learners. To develop students as an independent learner, IELTS teachers should focus more on involving students in independent/autonomous learning process.
- Findings of this study depict that library provides learners lots of opportunities to use the varieties of resources and facilities in a peaceful environment as per their own desire, time and pace. So, all the universities, IELTS institutions, schools, colleges/ campuses should provide the students with well-equipped library facilities and also encourage them to use library.
- The study shows that autonomous learning is needed for learners since it boost-up creativity and confidence level of learners. That's why, teaching learning materials, techniques, strategies and activities should encourage and motivate students to involve in self-directed or independent learning.

5.3.3 Further Research Related

Each and every research has its own purpose and findings. The present research was conducted to explore the autonomous learning activities used by IELTS candidates. It is complete study according to the objectives of my research study, but, due to the delimitations of my research, I could not include some other areas in my study. There might be many more areas for further investigation and exploration. So, other researchers can go beyond this.

The findings drawn from this study may not be generalized to the whole nation as this research was limited to a narrow area. So, similar type of study can also be done in other areas as well. More participants can be included for data collection so that the data will

be very much validated. Similarly, this research is based on mixed method research design, so the other researchers may follow other research designs such as co- relational study, experimental design and case study etc. Here, I have mentioned some possible titles for the new researchers, which can be as follows:

- Exploring autonomous learning activities of TOFEL candidates for developing speaking skill.
- Exploring autonomous learning activities of IELTS candidates for developing listening/writing/reading skill.
- Independent learning strategies and activities used by students for promoting speaking skill.

And, finally, I hope that this study will be a step of ladder where other several steps are left and by stepping on this step, other researchers can reach their own destinations in the field of educational research. Therefore, this study will be highly beneficial as it will provide a valuable secondary source of data for the researchers who are interested in conducting further research.

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PARTICIPANTS INFORMATION STATEMENT

Thesis supervisor

Laxmi Prasad Ojha, Lecturer

T.U., Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal

Autonomous learning activities used by IELTS candidates for developing speaking skill

1. What is this study about?

You are invited to participate in a research entitled “Autonomous learning activities used by IELTS candidates for developing speaking skill” which aims to explore the autonomous learning activities of IELTS candidates for developing speaking skill. Up to now there has not been any research related to this topic in this department.

You have been requested to participate in this study because I am interested to explore the different autonomous learning activities you use for developing speaking skill.

This participant information statement tells you about the research study. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the research. Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything that you do not understand or want to know more about the study. Participant in this research is voluntary. So it is up to you whether you wish to take part or not.

By giving your consent to take part in this study you are telling us that you:

- ✓ Understand what you have read
- ✓ Agree to take part in research study as outlined below.
- ✓ Agree to use the personal information as described.

You will be given a copy of this participant information statement to keep.

2. Who is carrying out the study?

The study is being carried out by Ms. Sulochana Bhattarai as the student of the Master of Education in English at the Tribhuvan University of Kathmandu. This study will take place under the supervision of Laxmi Prasad Ojha lecturer of Department of English Education T.U., Kirtipur.

3. How much of my time will the study take?

It will take you about 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

4. What will the study involve for me?

This study involves completing the set of questionnaire. The questionnaire contains 24 questions where you will be asked to tick the one correct option.

5. Who can take part in the study?

All the students who are preparing for IELTS examination can participate in this study.

6. Do I have to be in the study? Can I withdraw from the study once I've started?

Participation in this study is completely voluntarily. Your decision whether to participate or not will not affect your current or future relationship with the researcher. If you decide to take part in the study and then change your mind later, you are free to withdraw from the study. Your participation in this study will not harm in your career and future rather it will help you to understand about the various autonomous learning activities for developing speaking skill. But submitting your completed questionnaire is an indication of your consent to participate in the study.

7. Are there any risks or costs with being in the study?

Besides from your time investing to response questionnaire, there will not be any risks or costs associated with taking part in this study.

8. Are there any benefits associated with being in the study?

This study will help you to improve your speaking skill.

9. What will happen to information about me that is collected during the study?

Your information will only be used for the purpose outlined in this participation information statement. Unless you consent otherwise your information will be kept securely and your identity information will be kept strictly confidential, except as required by law. Study finding may be published, but you will not be individually identifiable in these publications.

10. Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you are welcome to tell other people about the study and you will get the summary of the overall findings of the study.

11. What if I would like further information about the study?

If you would like to know more at any stage during the study, please feel free to contact Ms Sulochana Bhattarai. (email:sulochana.basaula@gmail.com).

12. Will I be told the results of the study?

You will get the summary of the overall findings of the study and whole thesis paper through the Department of English Education T.U., Kirtipur, Kathmandu.

13. What if I have a complaint or any concerns about the study?

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Tribhuvan University Department of English Education Kirtipur, Kathmandu. Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the researcher.

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Supervisor

Laxmi Prasad Ojha, Lecturer.

Autonomous Learning Activities Used by IELTS Candidates for Developing Speaking Skill

I..... agree to take part in this research study. In giving my consent I state that:

1. I understand the purpose of the study, what I will be asked to do, and risks/benefits involved.
2. I have read the participation information statement and have been able to discuss my involvement in the study with the researcher If I wished to do so.
3. I have got answers to any questions that I had about the study and I am happy with the answers.
4. I understand that my participation is completely voluntary.
5. I understood that I can withdraw from this study at any time before I submit the response to the given questionnaire.
6. I understand that personal information about me that is collected over the course of this study will be limited to this use or other research related usages as authorized by Tribhuvan University.
7. I understand that personal information about me that is collected over the course of this study will be kept more confidential in the secure position of the researcher.
8. I understand that the data I will provide will not be used to evaluate my performance anyway.
9. I understand that personal information about me will only be told to others with my permission, except as required by law.
10. I understand that the results of this study may be published, and that publications will not contain my name or any identifiable information about me.

I consent to:

Completing questionnaires

Yes No

Signature:

Name:

Appendix I

Questionnaire for Candidates

Dear candidates,

This questionnaire is a research tool for collecting information for my master level research entitled “Autonomous learning Activities of IELTS candidates for developing speaking skill” under the supervision of Mr. Laxmi Prasad Ojha, lecturer of Department of English Education. I would like to request you to assist me with information enclosed in the form of questionnaire.

Information provided by you would be of great help to me in making my research as one of the best and major increase in the knowledge in terms of research study. All the information collected through the questionnaire will be kept confidential and will not be used for any purpose other than the research. The researcher will appreciate your honest opinions and assure that your responses will be completely anonymous.

Please feel free while filling the questionnaire

Thanking you for your kind cooperation

Researcher,

Sulochna Bhattarai

T.U Kirtipur, Kathmandu

Questionnaire to the Candidates

Name of the Candidate:

Date:

Academic Qualification:

SA= Strongly Agree

A= Agree

N= Neutral

D= Disagree

SD= Strongly Disagree

Please put tick mark (√) only in one box for each statement as this Likert Scale will help me to find out the information about the autonomous learning activities you use for developing speaking skill.

S.N.	Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
1.	I participate in discussion, conversation and debate competition to develop speaking skill.					
2.	Brainstorming helps me to generate lots of ideas on a particular topic for successful speaking.					
3.	I use simulation technique in a group to imitate the different real life like situations for developing my speaking skill.					
4.	I play the role of interviewee and interviewer on selected topics for speaking practice.					
5.	I love to create short stories based on my own life experiences and share with friends for developing my speaking skill.					
6.	I think reporting the different events really					

	enhance my speaking power.					
S.N.	Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
7.	I work in pairs and discuss the differences and similarities between pictures to improve my speaking skill.					
8.	I play cards with my friends in my spare time for practicing speaking skill.					
9.	I use information gap activity to develop my speaking skill.					
10.	I integrate speaking skill while practicing other skill like: listening, writing and reading so that I can develop my speaking skill					
11.	I try to catch a good chance of taking part in activities such as group work and role play to enhance my speaking skill.					
12.	I talk to myself in front of mirror so that I can develop confidence level while speaking.					
13.	I use internet and computer to develop my speaking skill.					
14.	I prefer to play language related games like puzzle and scrambles to develop vocabulary for better speaking.					
15.	I use cassette recorder for listening the recorded materials of the native speakers of English for improving my speaking accents.					
16.	I make good use of my free time in library by reading several authentic books, essays					

	and poems to learn speaking better.					
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S.N.	Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
17.	I speak in English with my fr native speaker to enhance my speaking skill					
18.	I watch English movies with subtitles to boost up my speaking skill.					
19.	I listen to the English news and songs for developing my speaking skill					
20.	I use social networks sites to enhance my speaking skill.					
21.	I like self-study and take responsibility of my own learning to improve my speaking skill.					
22.	I involve in mock test to enhance proficiency in speaking skill.					
23.	I record my own voices so that I can point out my own strengths and weakness for improving speaking skill.					
24.	I practice all the speaking exercises from Cambridge books for IELTS to improve my speaking skill.					

Appendix II

Interview Schedule for IELTS Candidates

I am going to carry out the research work entitled “Autonomous learning activities of IELTS candidates for developing speaking skill” under the supervision of Mr. Laxmi Prasad Ojha, lecturer of Department of English Education, T.U. Kiritipur. In order to collect data, I will conduct in-depth interview with five candidates who are preparing for IELTS examination. So, I develop the guidelines for interview.

Name of the Candidate:

Date:

1. Activities used by IELTS candidates for developing speaking skill.
2. Purpose of using autonomous learning activities.
3. Ways of selecting autonomous activities to develop speaking skill.
4. Types of ICT tools used by IELTS candidates for developing speaking skill.
5. Materials used by IELTS candidates for developing speaking skill.
6. Need of autonomous learning for developing speaking skill.
7. Studying in library for developing speaking skill.
8. Differences between dependent learners and independent learners.
9. Suggestions to those learners who heavily rely on teacher’s notebook and instructions.

Appendix III

Transcribed Form of Oral Interview

Interview-I

- *Do you use autonomous learning activities to develop your speaking skill?*

Yeah, I use autonomous learning activities to develop my speaking skill.

- *What kinds of autonomous learning activities do you use to develop your speaking skill?*

Well, generally I prefer to use very common ways of developing my speaking skill that is having conversation with my friends, family members, relatives and native speakers in facebook, imo, viber and messenger. In that way it helps a lot like we can have a very casual talk with them and that very casual talk also enhance my speaking skill. Similarly, I always practice books on IELTS and listen to the BBC news, lyrics of English songs. And apart from that, I opt to take mock exam of speaking every week so that I can know my actual level of speaking and also opt to use library and learn many more things with the resources available over there in that way I can develop my speaking skill.

- *Why do you use autonomous learning activities?*

Well, the purpose of using autonomous learning activities is clear. It creates positive feeling in us towards language learning and if we are really positive, our language learning become much easier and effective.

- *How do you select autonomous learning activities?*

Frankly speaking, regarding the selection of autonomous activities, I don't set out any criteria such and there is nothing like universal rule that you should follow this and shouldn't follow that. It just goes with flow. And to be more specific, it depends upon my need, level, preference and convenience.

- *Do you use ICT tools to develop your speaking skill?*

I am totally in to ICT tools regarding the practice of my IELTS examination especially the practice of speaking skill.

- *What types of ICT tools do you use to develop your speaking skill?*

Ummm..... ICT tools like yes, the very common one is my smartphone, I use my smart phone and record the voices and do the stuff like that as well as I use computer, internet and my personal laptop for developing my speaking skill.

- *What are the materials do you use to develop your speaking skill?*

Ummm.....If you have talked about the very concrete materials then it would be Cambridge books on IELTS, You- tube videos of speaking, flash cards, pictures and I also go for novels, English newspaper and many other internet-based resources.

- *Do you study in library and how is the library useful for developing speaking skill?*

Yeah! I study in library whenever I am free. I study in library available in this institution where I am taking IELTS classes and apart from this I also frequently visit British library and American library where I can find variety of reading materials, I can even use internet and watch different videos of IELTS speaking on You-tube and also listen recorded materials available over there in my own time and convenience. So, in this way library study is very useful for me to practice and develop speaking skill in an autonomous way.

- *Do you think autonomous learning is really needed to develop your speaking skill?*

Well, it is within us who have zeal to practice, to enhance, to get to know and to explore and everything. So autonomous learning enables us to find our true ability to explore, to work on our own interest, to learn and develop our speaking skill. Moreover, what I personally believe is, it is very essential to have an independent way of learning, to have an independent way of thinking, to have an active participation in learning, for us as an individual, for us as a student we need to have the habit of autonomous learning. And you know speaking is something that comes from our own instinct so if we do not opt for autonomous learning we are not developing our speaking skill that's why autonomous learning is really needed for developing our speaking skill.

- *What differences do you find between dependent learner and autonomous/independent learner?*

I find dependent learners are more like passive learners and they do limit themselves within the boundaries for getting the knowledge however I find independent learners are just opposite of dependent learners. They want to go beyond the boundaries of the classroom moreover they do not feel afraid of trying something new which they have not tried before. So all in all, I found that independent learners are more creative and active learners than the dependent ones.

- *Do you have some suggestions to those students who heavily rely on teachers' notebook and instructions?*

Well, I am not in that level for suggesting other. But you know it is well known fact that you can take suggestions from anyone and in anytime. So if you asked me I would like to suggest them please do not depend heavily on your mentors, teachers, and anyone else it is because depending heavily on others means you are hampering your study in one way or another way and whatever your teachers provided you that is not sufficient so, please go beyond the limit and the knowledge provided by your teachers in order to be more active and creative learners.

Appendix IV

Transcribed form of Oral Interview

Interview-II

- *Do you use autonomous learning activities to develop your speaking skill?*

Yes, I use autonomous learning activities to develop my speaking skill.

- *What kinds of autonomous learning activities do you use to develop your speaking skill?*

I prefer to practice my speaking skill autonomously. I prefer to watch and listen news and events which are broadcasted through different T.V channels like CNN and BBC as well as listen English songs in my mobile phone. I think listening English news and songs also help a lot in improving our speaking accents.

Similarly, I prefer to communicate in English with my colleagues, relatives, and family members especially with my cousin who is studying in abroad via email, phone and face-book. Besides these, I discuss and solve the difficult exercises of speaking with my friends from Cambridge books for IELTS, take mock exam once in a week and sometimes I also visit library and use different materials according to my choice.

- *Why do you use autonomous learning activities?*

The main purpose of using autonomous learning activity is to develop our competencies in the use of four language skills.

- *How do you select autonomous learning activities?*

There are not such a specific ways or steps to select autonomous activities. I rather follow my interest and select those activities accordingly. Along with the interest,

I think whatever I must familiar with, whatever I am comfortable with I prioritize those things more. For example, instead of studying in group or having conversation with others, I feel more comfortable to learn alone by listening news, music and watching movies and you tube videos.

- *Do you use ICT tools to develop your speaking skill?*

Yes, I use. I use a ICT tools a lot. As you know that in this world of technology, everyone is depending on technology and.....you know technology is so friendly for us and we can get everything that we needed with the help of ICT tools when it comes to practice of our speaking skill.

- *What types of ICT tools do you use to develop your speaking skill?*

Well, the ICT tools that I use are: firstly, my computer because most of things are available in the internet and I can download everything and then I also use laptop, CDs, DVDs, VCDs, cassette recorder, smart phones etc. which are very helpful for us to develop our speaking skill.

- *What are the materials do you use to develop your speaking skill?*

In my case, I have been using various materials like IELTS practice books, other English textbooks, grammar books, magazines, audio clips and video clips for developing my speaking skill and you know these supportive materials are very useful and effective for IELTS candidates in developing speaking skill.

- *Do you study in library and how is it useful for developing your speaking skill?*

Definitely, I prefer to study in library in my free time for enhancing my speaking skill. In my case library study has become quite effective and useful because it offers an opportunity to use various resources and facilities in a peaceful environment and you know, I can use these kinds of resources in library according to my own time, desire and pace. In this way library study is quiet useful to practice and improve our language skills. Thus, I fully use these resources and facilities available in library to learn speaking in better way.

- *Do you think autonomous lea really needed to develop your speaking skill?*

Oh my god, It's very common question, you can just answer it, because it's really needed. Personally what I feel is autonomous learning is the need of the day. As you know that it is a quiet new concept and now it is high time that every learner should adopt this concept because it allows learners to expose with various learning activities and opportunities. Moreover, it also allows learners to learn actively on their own interest. So.... yeah, if we are exposed with various learning activities and learn actively by following our own interest, we will really get motivated towards our learning so that it becomes easier for us to develop our speaking skill. That's why autonomous learning has become the necessity for every learner in this present world for increasing our speaking skill.

- *What differences do you find between dependent learner and autonomous/independent learner?*

Ummm....., I found a huge difference between dependent learners and independent learners because the word dependent and independent itself sounds totally different. Independent learners are always seeking to learn more and think out of the box whereas dependent learners are confined with the knowledge of the one to whom he or she is dependent with. Moreover, Independent learners have a kind of passion to learn and explore new things. They also find out their own mistakes and correct themselves while dependent learners learn whatever their teachers taught them and they cannot explore the new things so learning becomes monotonous for them.

- *Do you have some suggestions to those students who heavily rely on teachers' notebook and instructions?*

You know in this present situation, everything is changing and becoming so competitive, so, if you are dependent only upon your teachers' notebook and instructions you are not going beyond the box and you are not thinking out of the box. It limits you, it limits your understanding and limits the way you think how

actually the things work in the world so, if you confined yourself, if you rely only on your teachers' notebook then you are just getting only the half of the things that you need to get.

Appendix V

Transcribed Form of Oral Interview

Interview- III

- *Do you use autonomous learning activities to develop your speaking skill?*

Off-course, I use lots of autonomous learning activities for developing my speaking skill.

- *What kinds of autonomous learning activities do you use to develop your speaking skill?*

Frankly speaking I directly or indirectly get involved in different kinds of autonomous activities for instance, I prefer to listen English news and songs, watch movies and different reality shows along with which I practice my speaking skill in a relaxed and entertaining way. More importantly I do not miss the opportunity to take every Saturday's mock exam conducted by our institution. Similarly, I prefer to visit British library where I can practice books on IELTS, read other several books, listen CDs, DVDs and even watch You tube videos, in this way I use these activities as autonomous activities for developing my speaking skill.

- *Why do you use autonomous learning activities?*

Ummm..... to talk about purpose of using autonomous learning activities, it enhances our English language proficiency. And you know autonomous learning not only enhances our language proficiency but also help us to learn other lifelong learning skills which will be helpful in other areas of both learning and life. Similarly, they said using various autonomous learning activities make them confident, responsible and motivated as well as help to take decision of their learning.

- *How do you select autonomous learning activities to develop your speaking skill?*

Well, I don't think there is hard and fast rule for selecting autonomous learning activities. I think it's differ from one individual to another individual. In my case, I select those activities which I am interested at and which I feel ease to learn.

- *Do you use ICT tools to develop your speaking skill?*

Definitely, I use different ICT tools to develop my speaking skill. Nowadays using ICT tools have made the things easier and you know it helps us in a quick search for knowledge and information so we don't have to buy a bulky books and spend a lots of money. And you know, the most important thing is, the access to the ICT tools help us to get various online resources as per our own time, desire and ability.

- *What types of ICT tools do you use to develop your speaking skill?*

Normally, I use ICT tools that are easily accessible like computer, mobile phone, laptop. And apart from that, I also opt to use radio and T.V.

- *What are the materials do you use to develop your speaking skill?*

Normally, I use the varieties of supportive materials like practice books for IELTS, newspaper, Journals, articles, pictures, play card, CDs, DVDs, VCDs, etc. Through these materials we can definitely practice our speaking skill in an easiest way.

- *Do you study in library and how is it useful for developing your speaking skill?*

- Yes, of-course, I opt to study in library. I always prefer to learn in peaceful environment where I can fully concentrate and learn more. And nowadays, in library varieties materials and options are available such as such as we can either read books, articles, magazines, CDs, DVDs or we can watch different instructions for speaking on Y and with which practicing speaking is much easier and faster. That's why library study is very much important and useful.

- *Do you think autonomous learning is really needed to develop your speaking skill?*

Well, what I believe is, autonomous learning is highly essential as it enhances our creativity, awareness, motivation and confidence level. And the more we become creative, aware, motivated and confident through autonomous learning, the better we are in our speaking skill.

- *What differences do you find between dependent learner and autonomous/independent learner?*

They do have. They do have lots of differences. For dependent learners everything is ready for them. They don't explore the things but for independent learners everything is under their responsibility so they explore and learn more and more. While for dependent learners learning is more like parrot rotting. They just rote the things. So that they do not learn what they should actually learn.

- *Do you have some suggestions to those students who heavily rely on teachers' notebook and instructions?*

I want to suggest all the learners please be independent learners, always keep your mind open, you should take instructions from every one possible. Go around asking for suggestions like what kinds of mistakes you are making or what kinds of improvement you need, so it's always good to take instructions and advice from your teachers but when it comes to practice do own your own.