

In-service Teachers' Perceptions of Teaching Speaking in English Language Classes

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Abstract

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Speaking is a significant productive language skill that can be acquired while studying English as a foreign language. It has been one of the main problems teachers have had to deal with. This article aims at exploring perceptions of in-service English language teachers and the problems they encounter in teaching speaking in English classes. For this purpose, I selected four English language instructors purposively from four public schools as research participants. An unstructured interview was employed to gather the necessary data for the purpose. The study was conducted using a narrative inquiry method and the social constructivism theoretical framework. The research findings showed that English language teachers had favourable perceptions about teaching speaking; however, teaching speaking was not satisfactory at the secondary level as it was neglected by the teachers. In addition, immediate correction by the teacher, their poor competency, lack of resources in schools, insufficient interaction with the students, and lack of correlation between English and Nepali sounds in English were

the major problems of speaking. Furthermore, the study implies that the learners need adequate exposure and regular training to the teachers in speaking. To guarantee the quality of the exam, physical facilities must be enhanced, and students' speaking abilities must be made effective through the reform of the current testing system. The study can be helpful in the improvement of teaching speaking skills in the context of Nepal.

Keywords: communicative activities, communicative competence, communicative syllabus, paralinguistic features, stressed time language

Introduction

Communication is the prime form of language and it is a productive, oral and active language skill. Speech is the capacity to self-expression fluently in a foreign language which consists of

pronunciation of vowel and consonant sounds, stress, rhythm, juncture, intonation and many more supra-segmental and non-linguistic features. Oral expression of thoughts and feelings requires thought, language, and social skills. The majority of the world's language learners are mostly concerned with learning to speak (Ur, 2008). Nevertheless, teaching speaking owes not only mean to teach those factors separately but teaching the learners how to express themselves in the target language. Every speaker speaks to express his desires, opinions, experiences, comforts, discomforts, happiness, and sadness and establish social relations as well. The knowledge of phonetics and phonology is indispensable for developing good speech habits. Since speech is the primary form of language, the majority of languages in the world have no written script and are solely spoken. Everyone picks up speech only after hearing it in their environment (Anuradha et al., 2014).

A key component of teaching English is speaking ability. Effective English speakers must be able to use connected speech in addition to separate phonemes. Accuracy, fluency, comprehensibility and content are the main components of speaking (Heaton, 1988). Hence, the capacity for appropriate language use in social contexts is necessary for efficient oral communication. Long's Interaction Hypothesis and Swain's Output Hypothesis (Cowan, 2009) emphasize the importance of communication in the acquisition of second languages.

Language is learned through communication and interaction. However, in many classrooms, speech work is neglected almost as much as listening. There are many textbooks of a more traditional kind which contain hardly any speech work. This is very unfortunate because speaking is a vital language skill. We all know students who are excellent at answering multiple-choice questions, or blank-filling. But these students may be unable to answer even a simple question in English (Grant, 1988). There are three kinds of speech in the classroom: drills that encourage correctness, and communication practice exercises to improve fluency. These can be divided into two categories: natural language use, which is crucial for introducing regular, daily human speech naturally and spontaneously into the classroom. This is something that some textbooks try to encourage, but only the teacher can do, for the teacher in a way that the textbook cannot. Thus, the above-mentioned three kinds of speech work are very important to develop accuracy, fluency and spontaneity and in the long run to develop communicative competence in learners.

English language teaching was introduced formally in the school-level education system in 1854 AD. After starting to teach, a teacher may enrol in in-service teacher training. The training seeks to improve the performance, knowledge, and abilities to work as instructors. It assists to update and renew the knowledge, technical skills, etc., of teachers to enhance and maintain their teaching efficiency. In Nepal, the National Center for Educational Development (NCED) and Secondary Educational Development Center (SEDC) are largely responsible for running in-service teacher training programmes. The government-run NCED was established in 1992 and carries out teacher preparation.

Since the beginning, English was taught from primary to the graduate level as a compulsory subject and it has remained so. We have all experienced, as language learners, difficulties with the sound of a foreign language- both when listening and speaking. The present textbooks of English at the secondary level seem to be communicative to some extent. They do not contain enough genuine communicative activities but they only contain some communicative exercises. The communicative

exercises contained in the textbook are not at a suitable level because they are too easy for English medium school students and a bit difficult for Nepali schooling background students. The exercises they contain also fail to develop speaking because they are not sufficiently related to the student's background or interests. Students from Nepali medium schools consistently perform poorly on English tests. He should move and live with those who speak the language to fully develop his speaking abilities. He is then compelled to apply what he has learned to meet his physical and emotional demands (Rivers, 1987). Pronunciation, fluency, appropriateness and paralinguistic features are the main aspects of spoken English. To be a good speaker, a person must be competent in these aspects.

Regarding speaking, Ur (2008) has established four qualities of an effective speaking activity: Learners are given more talking time, and they are provided with equal opportunity to speak. High motivation and good language proficiency and they have a particular purpose to meet through talking. If they are corrected too much, they stop speaking losing their natural curiosity, confidence, energy and resourcefulness. The goal of communication, on the other hand, can be to explain facts, persuade someone about something, or seek or express viewpoints. Speaking ability does not automatically transferable from the first language of the speaker to the second (Thornbury, 2007). Knowing the principles governing how spoken language reflects the context in which speech happens, the participants, their unique roles and relationships, and the type of activity the speakers are engaged in speaking are necessary for each of these various purposes for speaking (Richards & Renandya, 2010). Understanding the rules that describe how spoken language reflects the context of communication, the participants and their unique roles and relationships, and the type of activity the speakers are involved in is necessary for speaking.

The use of monologue, dialogue, questions and answers, drills, speaking games and group works in the tutorial room can minimize the problems of teaching speaking skills (Ur, 2008). They raise the amount of student conversation in a short period as well as the inhibitions of students who are reluctant to speak in front of the entire class. Since the greatest way to keep pupils speaking the target language is for them to just be themselves, the teacher cannot monitor every learner's speech in this situation. The students' goal in speaking class is to communicate their thoughts, knowledge, and emotions. To improve a student's capacity to speak, they must practice using language. In this respect, Hedge (2008) argues that interaction not only enables students to develop more suitable and precise language but also offers feedback to other students.

This research study has expected to have great significance in addressing the problems and enhancing teaching speaking. The goal of the study is to examine in-service English teachers' perceptions of teaching speaking and the problems they encounter while teaching it. For this study, I have formulated two research questions.

- 1 How do in-service English language teachers perceive teaching speaking skills?
- 2 What problems do they encounter in teaching speaking?

This study takes constructivism as a theoretical framework developed by Vygotsky (1978) because its implications for how teachers should teach and learn to teach are immense. According to social constructivism, people make knowledge and meaning out of their experiences (Bada, 2015). Hence, knowledge is viewed as a "human product (Kim, 2001) which is possible through interaction among classmates. Therefore, it is built with consideration for the surrounding sociocultural context.

When people connect and their environment, meaning can be created.

Methodology

In this qualitative study, I employed a narrative inquiry research method to collect, analyze and interpret the data. For this purpose, four secondary-level in-service English language teachers from Rupandehi were purposively selected to connect with individuals who are highly knowledgeable on specific topics (Cohen et al., 2007). Data were collected through unstructured interview sessions informally. According to Creswell (2011), "A common strategy in educational research is the one-on-one interview, which is a data collection technique in which the researcher poses the questions to the participants and records answers from only one in the study at a time. Interviews are potent tools for qualitative researchers (Cohen et al., 2007). To ensure the validity and confidentiality of the study, I interviewed four in-service teachers on the speaking problems they encountered in the classroom. They were Ramu, Sita, Prem and Gita. Pseudonyms were used to mask the participants' identities to uphold ethical standards. They decided to share their opinions and real-life experience of teaching speaking after demonstrating a significant level of awareness and practice in the subject. Through life-story interviews or other narrative approaches to humane experiences, a narrative inquiry analyzes human experiences (Ford, 2020). To provide in-depth information about the experience of an English instructor, a narrative inquiry is required. Through in-depth interviews with the participants at various points in time, the interviews were taken in the Nepali language, recorded on an audio recorder, transcribed, translated into English language, coded the collected data and categorized under different themes. These codes were arranged according to the research questions.

Results

I have identified study topics based on the data gathered from the participants. The study's findings are presented in six themes: In-service English teachers' perceptions of teaching speaking, the problem of syllabus and examination system, the problem of pronunciation, the problem of students, problems of teachers and problems of the school. They are discussed as follows:

In-Service English Teachers' Perceptions of Teaching Speaking Skill

The process of teaching and learning is significantly influenced by perception. Overcoming the difficulties they face regularly while teaching languages, helps the teachers adjust or develop their lesson plans or instructional methodologies. The perception of language teachers affects how they educate in the classroom. Teachers reflect their beliefs and can take the form of methods, procedures, resources, interactions, and directions in the classroom (Borg, 2003). Exploring teachers' ideas, attitudes, and thought processes in classroom practices is essential to comprehending how they conduct various instructional activities (Richards & Lockhart, 2007).

Ramu claimed, "I always welcome to fruitful noise of my students in the class. I let my learners interact with me with their friends and between their pairs on the assigned tasks." Ramu's lived experience clarifies that he always welcomed to fruitful noise of his students in the classroom. His perception is in harmony with Harmer (2007). They claimed the teacher needed to ask their pupils to discuss a topic and engage them in a topic that they are going to write about. If they do so, this would support them to develop other language skills. The teachers' narratives are in harmony with (Farrell & Bennis, 2013). They believed that it was crucial to examine language teachers' views to understand how they transferred such perceptions into classroom practices. Teachers mostly based their decisions

on their perceptions of the needs of the students. The speaking skill is seen positively by in-service English instructors.

In the same vein, Sita mentioned, "I frequently ask my students to discuss the assigned task that they are going to write." This perspective points out that she asked her students to discuss the assigned task they were supposed to write. The teacher must provide dynamic, communicative teaching-learning activities to get more pupils talking to one another (Rohmah, 2017). Teachers must therefore make their lessons dynamic and communicative so that students can engage in active learning in a fun environment. They know that to be competent in English, they must be competent in speaking. However, all the teachers do not plan their teaching activities properly in English class and they do not integrate it with other skills. Only telling the significance of English to the students cannot support them to improve their speaking skills rather they need to conduct such activities in class frequently.

Problems of Teaching Speaking

Problems of teaching speaking that the teachers narrated are as follows:

The problem with Syllabus and Examination System

The present English syllabus for secondary level in Nepal seems to undervalue the significance of speaking skills. It is not a valid method of testing to use paper-and-pencil work to reflect pupils' communicative skills. In the Nepalese context, testing speaking is just for formality, not for reality. Hence, the learners fall behind in getting adequate speaking exposure. In this vein, Ramu stated:

I've observed many English classes of secondary level and have found the bitter fact that only few teachers make the students practice in speaking. Instead, they spend almost all the time giving lectures themselves. Further, I do not test students' speaking in the exam.

Ramu's shared narratives indicate that there was no provision for routinely and thoroughly checking the students' speaking ability in our exam rather than forcing them to pass the exam without speaking skills. Even in the SEE examination, the speaking test, a teacher test more than three hundred students in a day. During the speaking test of SEE, some of the students come out of the examination hall only putting their signatures. Most of the students were asked only to give their introduction. None of them was given more than two minutes to speak by the examiner. This is because the English syllabus has not provided equal distribution of time and marks to four language skills. According to Khaniya (2005), the assessment system has the power to significantly influence how learning occurs. The existing examination of speaking instruction in school appears to have a negative impact. Sita had a similar view to Ramu regarding his perception of speaking. She stated, "My students do not pay attention to speaking as it is not tested seriously in the exam by the examiner as other language skills." Students did not learn speaking as seriously as they learn other language skills as from the perspective of the exam, reading and writing were more significant than speaking.

Problem of Pronunciation

Pronunciation refers to how sounds are produced. Many Nepali learners find it difficult to achieve native speaker-like pronunciation in English. The teacher should know English consonants and vowel phonemes because the number of phonemes in Nepali and English is not equal. The manner and place of producing a Nepali phoneme do not necessarily equal correspond to that of English. Some sounds of Nepali may be found similar in English. This helped the learner transfer the learning habits of the first language positively to the target language. As opposed to that, the transfer of learning is

negative when the sounds of Nepali do not correspond to that of English (Bhattarai, 1989).

Regarding this, Ramu explained, "There is only an introduction of English consonant and vowel sounds, stress and intonation in the present textbooks of English. But I cannot teach them within a limited time." Due to limited time and not knowing phonetic symbols, the learners cannot pronounce words, phrases and utterances correctly. They even did not know the sounds and symbols as a result they could not consult a dictionary for correct pronunciation. But due to limited time, he could not teach them. In this regard, Sita narrated:

There is no one-to-one correspondence between English spellings and sounds. e.g. spelling 'a' may represent several sounds. *many* /meni/ *rat* /ræt/. *agree* /əgrɪ/ *arm* /ɑ:m/ *was* /wɔ:z./ all /ɔ:l/ *private* /praɪvet/ *pay* /peɪ/ *air* /eə/ Sometimes 'a' is not pronounced in some words e.g. *sandal*, *primal* whereas, there is /ə/without having no 'a' in spelling. e.g. *prism*/prɪzəm/.

Such a fact reveals that there was no one-to-one correspondence between English spellings and sounds so; students faced problems in speaking skills. Ramu stated:

Some sounds that existed in Nepali have not existed in English and vice versa. It causes difficulty for Nepalese speakers while learning English. e. g. there are three /z, ʒ, dʒ/ in English but there is only one /z/ in Nepali. Two voiceless stops /p,t,k/ sounds are in English but only one sound of this type is found in Nepali.

As mentioned by Ramu some sounds that exist in Nepali have not existed in English which causes difficulty for Nepalese learners while learning English. Therefore Nepali speakers found difficulty in pronouncing these sounds accurately that were not found in their language. Likewise, Ramu added, "Linking /r/ e.g. *far away* /fɑ:rəweɪ/ and *instructive* /r/ *Africa and Asia* /æfrɪkə rən eɪsə/ Assimilation *right place* /raɪp pleɪs/ and *elision sit down* /sɪdaʊn/. Some sounds that existed in Nepali are also not found in English. For example, kh, gh, chh, th, dh, etc sounds also cause difficulty in pronouncing English speech sounds correctly. Prem asserted:

The system of pronunciation in Nepali and English is quite different. Sounds and combinations of sounds in English do not occur in Nepali learners' language. The consonants /f, v/ are difficult for many Nepalese students as /f, v/ sounds are labio-dental in English whereas [f] and [v] are bilabial in Nepali.

The above evidence justifies that there is a lack of correlation between English and Nepali sounds. Nepali speakers of English tend to use the above four sounds as bilabials. In this regard, Ramu mentioned, "Because of separate systems both in Nepali and English, some sounds are difficult to pronounce correctly. Voiceless stops /p, t, k/ are aspirated in their initial position of a syllable in English but not in Nepali."

e. g. *pen* [p^hen] , *ten* [t^hen], *cat* [k^hæt]

Moreover, he added, the length variation of vowels cannot be observed in a speech in Nepali but it can be observed in a speech in English.

e. g. *seat* /si:t./ *sit* /sɪt/ *pool* /pu:l/ *pull* /pɒl/
caught /kɔ:t/ *cot* /kɒt./ *nurth* /nɜ:θ/ *nut* /nʌt/

In a similar context, he further added:

Some sounds in English, e.g. /w, j, h/ do not occur word finally unlike in Nepali where /w/ may occur word finally. Similarly, /ŋ/ does not occur word-initially in English which is frequent

in Nepali. The number and function of diphthongs in English also largely differ from that of Nepali.

The above fact confirms that the sounds found in two languages do not correlate with each other because there are forty-four English speech sounds out of which twenty are vowels and twenty-four are consonants. However, there are only twenty-nine consonants and six vowels in the Nepali language. They all do not correlate with each other and cause difficulty in pronunciation. Sita explained, "The clusters or sequences that are not found in learners' first language cannot be pronounced properly in English. The initial consonant clusters [sk.....] is pronounced as [ɪsk.....] e. g. school /ɪsku:l/" Her experience clarifies that the sequence of consonants and vowels in English also created difficulty in pronouncing words correctly. Accordingly, all eight diphthongs are not used by Nepali learners of English. Usually, they use /ai, au, and uə/ but other diphthongs are pronounced as monophthongs e. g. say /se/ but not as /sei/.

Similarly, stress and intonation also plays important role in pronunciation, semantics and grammar. There are no watertight rules and regulations on stress and intonation. Ramu contended, "Nepali speakers learning English cannot use stress and intonation properly as Nepali is a syllable-timed language so, Nepalese speakers have the habit of pronouncing each syllable with equal stress." He agreed that the main difficulty in speaking is that Nepalese speakers learning English have the habit of pronouncing each syllable with equal stress. Moreover, they write in the way they speak, on the other hand, English is a stressed time language. They could not maintain the stress in English.

Thus, the primary factor influencing a learner's speech is their native tongue. You will be better able to identify a student's problems if you are familiar with the native language's sound system (Brown, 2001). If a student's native language differs linguistically from the target language, it will be difficult to teach speaking in their mother tongue.

Problem of Students

The problem of speaking also lies with the students and their backgrounds. Speaking problems result from students' lack of knowledge of their academic level. Those who are weak and shy cannot take part in speaking naturally. School teaches the students that to be incorrect, unclear, or confused is a crime. They do not interact with each other because they are not given any opportunity for communication. There is a lack of communication between the instructor and learners.

Regarding the speaking problems of students, Gita claimed, "My students are very weak as they do not have access to audio and visual aids, resources and speaking materials. So, I have to teach them English in Nepali. They feel comfortable when I use Nepali in presenting English lessons." She explicates that she was unable to make her students speak English as they were weak but they felt easy when she used Nepali while teaching English lessons.

Instructors are teaching English utilizing a poor translation method due to a lack of physical facilities, resources, and materials for current technology (Bista, 2011). She further added, "Speaking skills must be developed through exposure. Lack of speaking time prevents heterogeneous pupils from developing positive speaking habits. Without exposing English, we expose the Nepali language to our students without providing sufficient time for speaking." The main problem with speaking was due to a lack of exposure. The key issues in Nepalese schools, according to Karranjit (2017), also include dealing with heterogeneous students, emphasizing deductive reasoning, and exposing Nepali language

learners to English classrooms.

Problem of Teachers

The teachers, who teach language, are themselves incompetent in language. They discourage the learners from active learning and interaction. Most of the teachers teaching English are untrained to use modern techniques and methods to develop correct pronunciation as well as communicative competence in the students. They do not know supra segmental features which are very essential for developing spontaneous and natural communication.

Regarding the problems of the teachers, Ramu expressed, "In-service training in speaking prepares them for entering the profession with basic knowledge of spoken skills. To enhance professional competence, we need regular training." This account clarifies that only trained teachers could adopt communicative methods and could speak English distinctly and fluently discriminating correct stress and intonation. In this line, Sita mentioned, "We have to use the target language as a medium of teaching while teaching language in class. However, we, the teachers in public schools use learners' mother tongue." Due to their anxiety about making mistakes when speaking English, pupils find it difficult to speak in public.

Sita clarified that due to the anxiety of committing errors, her learners were reluctant to speak. In such a situation, it is very difficult to expect her students to speak in the target language. It is obvious that the more they practice speaking, the more they will be better at it. The proficiency of students in speaking would be satisfactory only when both teacher and students use English as a means of teaching. Her view is very similar to Ur (2008). He highlighted fear, guilty feeling, unequal involvement, excessive use of their first language, etc., as the difficulties in the involvement of pupils in speaking.

Likewise, in this respect, Prem stated, "Errors are no longer taken as a bad sign in learning. Instead, the error is inevitable and natural." In the past, errors were taken as bad signs in learning. Teachers and educationists suggested avoiding errors. So they used to overcorrect errors and criticize them. Nowadays, the situation has changed. He further added, "If errors are immediately corrected by teachers, they break the fluency of speech of the students. Also, they discourage and de-motivate them." Errors need to be corrected but not immediately in the class. Error correction helped and encouraged them to learn more.

Making an error is a sign of progress. It is said no error, no learning. Thinking that students would develop a bad habit of speaking, teachers start correcting students' errors immediately in the name of developing competency and proficiency in speaking. The participants' experience is in harmony with Gardner (2009). He claimed when a child is starting to talk, he doesn't always need to be corrected if you correct him too frequently, he will stop learning. However, we never offer a student the chance to learn from their failures in school not to mention fix them. All of it is done for him. We behave as if we didn't believe we'd ever catch a mistake until someone pointed it out to us or correct it before he did.

In this vein, Gita stated, "We need peaceful time for creative activity. However, we, very hardly get much time. Every time we are very busy so, they do not have time to plan and set speaking activities for their students." She means that until and unless teachers had sufficient leisure time to think and plan, they could do nothing for their students. Similarly, Ramu shared:

To finish the rigid course in time, we use teacher-centred techniques which discourage active learning, originality, creativity and experimentation. Besides, it makes teaching one-sided. In my opinion, unless students speak for themselves, they cannot develop speaking skills. In teacher-centred techniques, there is no interaction in the class as a result they are dominated.

Ramu emphasises that a teacher-controlled classroom environment could not develop students' speaking abilities. Learning occurs through reciprocal relationships with peers, teachers, and the wider world with the experience possessed by other individuals (Vygotsky, 1978). Knowledge and understanding are constructed when one socially engages in dialogue in classroom activities. There is a lack of interaction between the teacher and students. He meant to say teachers need to promote student autonomy. Teachers convert their learners' natural intelligence, curiosity, confidence, resourcefulness, independence, patients and energy into passiveness, laziness, dependence, indifference boredom and low self-esteem.

Problems of School

Facilities of many schools in Nepal are not ideally encouraging to a language learning situation. Additionally, the setting in schools does not support requiring learners to practice their English. In our traditional educational culture, silence is valued. Administrators say that the English teacher is unable to regulate noise and maintain classroom discipline. This is especially true during pair and group work. It is very difficult for teachers to maintain discipline without dominating them. Regarding the problems at school, Sita stated her experience, "My colleagues and administrators frequently express concern about "noise" that interferes with other classes while communication activities like group work, role plays, and language games are taking place. I believe they learn by sharing ideas."

As Sita narrated how she encountered problems in teaching speaking, this confirms that the English teacher is forced to follow administrators' expectations and use the teacher-centred method because teacher autonomy in the classroom is uncommon in our class. Her view is justified by social constructivism theory which claims when students work together on activities and share their experiences, they learn more effectively (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). The administrators do not realize the fact that speaking requires the active participation of the pupils. Regarding the infrastructure of the school, Gita narrated:

The physical facility of my school is not satisfactory for the speaking situation. In my school, we do not have proper physical facilities. Such as electricity, and audio-visual materials for speaking language practice. So, I cannot make my students practice speaking skills.

The improper physical facilities mentioned above demonstrate that due to the lack of resources in schools, she could not make practice her students speaking skills as effectively as she wanted. The infrastructure of the classes was also unsuitable for the students for favourable activities of speaking. In this line, Ramu mentioned similar problems:

Normally, most of the classes in my school at the secondary level are overcrowded and unmanageable and the students get very little time for speaking practice. Students taking time in overcrowded classes with eighty to a hundred students will be less. The schools cannot afford the expense of the school in dividing the class into different sections.

From his response, it is clear that the classroom environment in his school was not favourable for speaking practice. Unless a teacher had a very small class, he or she would never be able to give

them enough chances to practice speaking in front of others throughout the lesson. Putting together engaging and innovative teaching and learning activities could seem unattainable (Harmer, 2008). Furthermore, it was discovered that the classroom setting was inappropriate for testing various speaking abilities. So, it was challenging for teachers to interact with the children in the rear of large classes since it was challenging for them to request individual attention.

Discussion

This study aims to explore perceptions of in-service English language teachers in teaching speaking skills in English classes. I have analyzed the narrative story of four English teachers to gain their perceptions on problems of teaching speaking skills. The study found the problem with the syllabus and examination system, the problem of pronunciation, the problem of students, the problem of teachers and the problem of school. The data received from the participants suggest that they were not aware of effective speaking strategies. They know that to be competent in English, they must be competent in speaking. However, all the teachers do not plan their teaching activities properly in English class and they do not integrate it with other skills. The data were analyzed from a social constructivist perspective. In this regard, Taber (2006) noted that although knowledge is in some ways individualized and personal, learners generate knowledge through their engagement with the real world, group collaboration in social settings, and exposure to other cultural and language contexts. In the Nepalese context, testing speaking is just for formality, not for reality. Hence, the learners fall behind in getting adequate speaking exposure.

Likewise, lived experience stories of participants indicated that the English syllabus has not provided equal distribution of time and marks to four language skills. According to Khaniya (2005), the assessment system has the power to significantly influence how learning occurs. The existing examination of speaking skills in school appears to have a negative impact. Most teachers give more importance and more time to reading and writing skills than speaking skills. Besides this, the sounds found in the two languages do not correlate with each other. In this line, Ur (2008) highlighted fear, guilty feeling, unequal involvement, excessive use of their first language, etc., as the problems in the involvement of pupils in speaking.

The results also show that immediate correction by the teacher hinders speaking. In this regard, Gardner (2009) claimed when a child is starting to talk, he/she doesn't always need to be corrected. If the teacher corrects him/her too frequently, he/she will stop learning. Additionally, their lack of competence, lack of resources in schools and less exposure to the students are the major problems in speaking. Participants' opinions are in line with social constructivism, which emphasizes the importance of interaction and knowledge exchange in the development of personal understanding. Social constructivists hold that knowledge is socially created through collaboration (Sardareh & Saad, 2012). The main difficulty in speaking is that Nepalese speakers have the habit of pronouncing each syllable with equal stress. Moreover, they write in the way they speak, on the other hand, English is a stressed time language. So, they could not maintain the stress in English. They do not interact with each other because they are given less opportunity for communication. Immediate teacher correction, inadequate competency, lack of resources in schools and little exposure to the students are other problems with speaking. There is a lack of physical facilities, resources, and materials for current technology (Bista, 2011). Due to students' anxiety about making mistakes when speaking English,

they also find it difficult to speak in public.

There is a lack of interaction between the teacher and students as in our traditional educational culture, silence is valued. The English teacher is forced to follow administrators' expectations because the administrators do not realize the fact that speaking requires the active participation of the pupils. Language teachers must promote interactions to naturally help learners learn language skills (Harmer, 2008). Unless a teacher had a very small class, he or she would never be able to give them enough chances to practice speaking in front of others throughout the lesson. Teachers had large class sizes, which is typical of Nepal's public schools. Large classes, according to Harmer (2008), provide challenges for both teachers and students. Teachers and students are unable to interact in large classes. Also, they are not given enough time to deal with each student individually on their areas of weakness due to the demanding class schedule and pressure to complete the curriculum within the specified academic framework. In Nepal's public schools, it is uncommon to find the optimal classroom setting for language instruction. Teachers use Nepali as the medium of teaching while taking an English class which hinders effective speaking. This is in harmony with Alderson (2000). He mentioned that the dependency of L2 learners on their L1 is due to their insufficient knowledge of L2.

The study reveals that most public school in-service teachers are not adequately equipped to address the problem of speaking as they have asserted that they need proper training. Also, over crowdedness is an issue that is beyond teachers' control and they would benefit from an appropriate environment and a manageable number of students to deliver their teaching. This study can offer a unique contribution to exploring teachers' comprehensive perceptions of how to teach speaking skills in their classes and can be helpful in the improvement of teaching speaking in the context of Nepal.

Conclusion and Implications

This study explored in-service English teachers' perceptions of teaching speaking and the problems they encountered in it. The findings of this research study show that in-service English teachers have a positive perception of speaking skills. However, teaching speaking does not seem satisfactory in public secondary schools as it is neglected by the teachers due to the dominance of the mother tongue in the class and the less effective examination system of Nepal. Besides, immediate correction by the teacher, their poor competency, lack of resources in schools and less exposure to the learners, and lack of co-relation between English and Nepali sounds in English are other problems in teaching speaking skills. Therefore, the teachers are unable to address and meet the real needs of the students since they are found to lack the necessary practical abilities as expected. Furthermore, this study may contribute to the English language teachers thorough knowledge of how to address problems of teaching speaking in their classes and their potential contribution to enhancing speaking ability in Nepalese contexts.

Communicative syllabi and textbooks should be designed to improve speaking skills and create English speaking environment in public schools. Teacher training should be made compulsory so that they can prepare authentic materials and activities that foster communication, such as role-playing, discussion, and debate, to develop English speaking environment. Immediate over-correction by the teacher in class should be avoided until and unless students commit serious errors. The teacher should provide ample opportunities to their students by increasing learner talking time in the class to make student-centred instruction. Thus, physical facilities need to be improved and students' speaking skills

should be made effective by reforming the current system of testing it to assure the quality of the exam.

This study has some limitations as the study is small-scale and only involves four participants. Therefore, the results cannot be applied nationally as a whole. The only research method employed in the study to examine in-service English teachers' perceptions of teaching speaking was in-depth interviews. The study also suggests additional in-depth research using various research methods, including questionnaires and observation in connection with mixed research designs, to explore fresh and rich data in other related fields, such as school and university teachers and students' experiences with teaching speaking.

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