

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
FACULTY OF LANGUAGE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

**EFL TEACHERS' PRACTICES IN TEACHING SPEAKING LESSONS AND IN
IMPLEMENTING ADAPTIVE TECHNIQUES AT GRADE 11: LIYEWASRES
PREPARATORY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL IN FOCUS**

BY



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MAY, 2011

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**A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (GRADUATE
PROGRAM) IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS (MA) IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN
LANGUAGE (TEFL)**

MAY, 2011

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(GRADUATE PROGRAMME)

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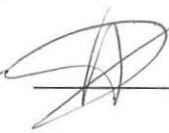
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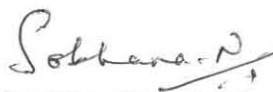


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Date

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my thanks to the following:

1. To my advisor, Dr. Hailom for his generous devotion of time and knowledge in giving me constructive comments so that this study has been completed successfully.
2. To my previous teachers, Ato Kassahun and Ato Assefa who had taught me research courses at Dilla University thereby helping me grasp the basic knowledge about conducting research. My thanks goes to also Ato Belilew who was my advisor when I was undergraduate student and whose comments have been inputs to complete this study.

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Abstract

Truly, being effective in spoken English language is very important for one to be successful person both in academic and real life activities. However, most students in Ethiopian high schools and even those who are attending their education at tertiary level face the problem of communicating through spoken English and this, among other things, is resulted from the teaching learning conditions occurred in language classrooms. The problem of speaking English language has also been observed among the Liyew Asres preparatory and secondary school students which in turn initiated the researcher to assess the EFL teachers' practices in teaching speaking lessons and their efforts in making and keeping the speaking lessons more appropriate for their classroom situations by employing adaptive techniques when the speaking activities set barriers to the students' learning. To this end, the specified school was purposefully selected to be the setting of the study and data were collected from both students and teachers through classroom observation, interview, focus group discussion and lesson plan analysis. Then the data were analyzed qualitatively and the study has come up with the findings which reveal that EFL teachers are not successful in providing students with speaking activities that allow them to make real interaction in classroom and they devote the less proportion of class time to the teaching of speaking lessons in general and for students' independent works in particular; they tend to focus on making students work on dialogue activities which are mechanical and to be done based on repetition. They don't also commit themselves in making the speaking lessons suitable through adaptation even when the speaking activities set barriers to students' learning. Based on the findings identified, these teachers are advised to commit themselves to teach speaking lessons by devoting enough proportion of class time and by providing students with free communicative activities that can allow them make real interaction in classroom thereby helping students improve their communicative competence and use the language in their real life communication. And for this purpose, it is also recommended that teachers should be provided with necessary materials such as the syllabus and teacher's guide by the body concerned as well as they should get chances to participate in workshops or other language improvement trainings.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This introductory part presents background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives, significance, scope of the study and limitation of the study as well as the abbreviation used in the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Speaking is one of the important skills in language teaching and learning. Being able to speak English language is very essential for a learner to be successful in academic activities. According to Cunningsworth (1984:43), the ability to communicate effectively through spoken English enables one to be 'proficient' in various language skills. For example, when we see students' academic performance, it is highly dependent on their ability to ask questions; to discuss and to understand concepts from their teachers and peers.

It is known that English is a medium of instruction in Ethiopia starting from grade 7 or 5 (in some places) up to higher institutions. Therefore, it is clear that learners need to speak and to interact with one another in order to succeed in the teaching and learning of the language they are operating with. In line with this idea, Bygate (1987: VII) points out that learners need to be able to speak the language they are learning in order to 'carryout' their basic tasks. Speaking English language effectively is important not only for academic purposes, but also to be a successful person in real life activities such as politics, business etc.

However important the speaking skill is, scholars such as Brown and Yule (1983:3) state that for most of history language teaching and learning has been given emphasis to the study of written language and speaking has been neglected. Even after the beginning of its teaching, spoken language was taught in a way that couldn't enable learners to use the language meaningfully i.e. in traditional classroom, speaking was treated in the form of drills and memorization of dialogues.

However, unlike the traditional way of teaching speaking, today's world requires the way of language teaching that can enable learners develop their communicative competence.

And this can be realized if, among other things, teachers teach creatively and flexibly by providing students with interesting and free communicative activities through meaningful contexts and by giving them opportunities to make real interaction in classroom as well as by adapting language activities thereby making them more suitable to their specific classroom situations.

In language teaching/ learning, adaptation refers to the process of making some internal changes so as to make a given textbook suitable for particular type of learners. "Adaptation means making the materials meet one's requirements" (Cunningworth, 1984:65). Scholars seem to agree that adaptation (which includes: adding, omitting, modifying, simplifying and reordering) is very important activity among language teachers. According to Misirh (2010), adaptation is an indispensable part of language teaching/ learning.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Speaking is one of the important skills that have to be mastered by students in foreign language learning. Indeed, learners need to speak English and interact through it as it helps them in many respects.

However important the speaking skill is, students face difficulties in using foreign language for communication. According to Melakneh (2006:iii), most of the Ethiopian students are unable to express themselves in English language after they have completed their education up to grade 12.

The problem of speaking English language has been also observed among students at Liyew Asres preparatory and secondary school. The researcher was teaching these students for one month during the last summer and he could observe them expressing their ideas in Amharic even in English class.

Therefore, teachers should help learners to overcome this problem by providing them with a variety of activities in right way and in suitable contexts. According to Rivers and Tempeley (1978:46) as cited in Bygate (1987:59), teachers should be alert to create opportunities for students to interact with one another in classroom so that they succeed in communication.

Teachers can also help learners improve their comprehension of language by making appropriate adaptation to the speaking activities in the text book especially when students face problems in carrying out these activities.

It is becoming a challenging task for teachers to establish a successful language classroom for different reasons such as teachers' way of teaching, the presence of difficult activities in a text book or student related problems etc. For example, as Harmer (1983), there are teachers who don't promote working in pairs and groups as they worry about noise and indiscipline when these techniques are used in classroom.

And also teachers are not concerned about the application of adaptive techniques in their actual teaching. Cunningsworth (1984:1), says that most teachers use the textbooks from the beginning to the end without any supplementation as they realize that adapting activities in textbooks is time taking and therefore only some teachers use books by adapting. In fact according to Grant (1987:6-9), there are three teachers' opinions about the way of using activities in textbooks. Some teachers say that they always depart from the texts; some say that they are totally reliant on the texts and others say that they use texts a lot of time, but not all the time.

At the end this scholar concludes as: "using a textbook is not a bad idea after all. But one needs not to be a slave to a textbook. It is in fact easier to use a textbook selectively than it is to use it slavishly. It is important to know well some new ways of deciding when and how to get away from the textbook" (Ibid: 9). This means simply, a teacher should not follow a textbook page by page. Rather he/she needs to use language activities by making them more appropriate to his/her classroom situation through either by adding further sections or by modifying the existing ones etc. For example group and pair works may not be suitable for a particular classroom at a particular time. And at this time it is the role of classroom teacher to arrange conditions and to use other alternative techniques which suit his or her class. Supporting this idea, Bowen and Madsen (1978) cited in McDonough and Show (1993) state that a good teacher is always adapting language activities in a text book in a way that satisfies his/her students.

In spite of its importance in language teaching/learning, the practices of EFL teachers in applying adaptation to their actual teaching remain unexplored by local researchers. Unlike the previous local studies the present one sought to consider not only how teachers teach speaking lessons, but also their efforts in applying adaptive techniques in order to make their teaching processes suitable to their respective classrooms.

To this end, the following basic questions were posed and have been answered.

- Do EFL teachers devote an appropriate proportion of class time to the teaching of speaking lessons?
- What type of activities do EFL teachers use in speaking classrooms?
- Do EFL teachers present speaking lessons in contexts where students have opportunities to work on free communicative activities in pairs and groups and to create real interaction in classroom?
- Do EFL teachers try to make speaking lessons more suitable through employing adaptive techniques when the speaking activities set barriers to the students' learning?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to investigate the practices of EFL teachers in teaching speaking lessons through applying adaptive techniques so as to make the speaking activities appropriate thereby creating successful language classroom. It had also the following specific objectives:

- To find out if teachers devote an appropriate proportion of class time to the teaching of speaking lessons
- To identify the activities teachers implement in speaking classes

- To assess if teachers present speaking lessons in contexts that promote working in pairs and groups thereby giving opportunities for students to interact with one another in classroom
- To describe teachers' efforts in applying adaptive techniques when speaking activities set barriers to the students' learning.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This investigation is important for two main reasons. Firstly, having identified the status of teachers regarding their teaching practices and implementation of adaptive techniques, valuable recommendations have been drawn.

Secondly, the result of this study will give insight that can allow other researchers to study further and arrive at comparable results.

1.5 The Scope of the Study

This research work was conducted on the teachers' teaching practices and their use of adaptive techniques to the teaching of speaking lessons in grade 11 English textbook at Liyew Asres preparatory and secondary school in 2003 E.C. The study was delimited to only one school and a single grade level due to time and financial limitations. Speaking skill was selected as it is found to be the critical problem among students to master. And it has been also a challenging task for language teachers to establish successful language classrooms.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

The shortage of time was a major barrier affecting the researcher in conducting the study. The researcher had planned also to make 24 observations. However due to the constraints of time, he was obliged to limit to 12 observations. At the middle of data collection there was an interruption of registration which created trouble and resulted in financial problem on the researcher due to coming and going back.

1.7 Abbreviation Used

EFL: English as a foreign language

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

Introduction

This chapter states prominent issues exploited from different literatures which are relevant and supportive for the present study. The major areas to be discussed are speaking skill and its place in language teaching, the goal of teaching speaking, activities to be implemented in teaching speaking, problems affecting the development of speaking ability and suggestions for classroom teachers who teach oral language. Adaptation and its role in language teaching/learning, reasons for adapting and individual techniques are also presented.

2.1 Speaking Skill and its Place in Language Teaching

Speaking is one of the important language skills in language learning and it has been defined by different scholars as follows. For example, according to Nunan (1989:26-27), speaking is a skill which is characterized by short, often fragmentary utterances in a range of pronunciations and with a great deal of repetition and overlapping between one speaker and another.

This means simply, speaking is an oral interaction where a speaker tends to repeat ideas more than usual accompanied by his/her intonation which goes up at one time and goes down at another time and also a listener intervenes while the speaker is speaking.

“Speaking is an oral proficiency skill aimed at communicating with others (expressing oneself with relative ease fluency and accuracy” (Melakneh, 2006: cover page). In other words, this definition tells us that in speaking a listener can interpret and understand meanings easily with the help of facial expressions, bodily movements and other contexts even when the speech is ungrammatical and incomplete.

In whatever terms it is defined, speaking is very important skill which should be mastered by language students. In fact the ability to communicate through a target language clearly and appropriately enables learners to succeed in academic studies and in their social lives. If students are competent enough in oral communication, it will make language lessons simple for students to attend and acquire properly.

According to Littlewood (1981:18), communicative activities during speaking class help both the teacher and students to create a good atmosphere in classroom which in turn supports the teaching/ learning process positively. In line with this, Bygate (1987:vii) suggests that it is worth giving a great attention to the teaching of speaking skill as other language aspects are learned primarily through it.

Generally the ideas mentioned above implicate that speaking is a fundamental skill to human communication and it is an integral part of language teaching and learning. Therefore, it is important for language teachers to spend a high proportion of class time and teach in a way that can help students develop their communicative competence.

2.2 Teaching Speaking

When teaching speaking skill, it is worth realizing that it involves treating other sub skills in it. According to Harmer(1991), learners need to spend enough time developing the following sub skills in order to be effective in communication.

A. Pronunciation- it is worth helping students learn how to say (pronounce) words in English which in turn includes knowledge of sounds, stress and intonation. In other words, learners should be helped to know how English sounds are produced and which part of a given sound should receive the heaviest emphasis etc.

B. Fluency- Brown and Yule (1983), suggest that like that of grammar and vocabulary it is important to focus on pronunciation and fluency of our students' speech in treating spoken English production. Fluency represents the ability of using language quickly and confidently during any communication. And teaching speaking should be aimed at not only developing students' knowledge regarding the production of speech sounds, stress, fluency, but also helping them develop their competency in expressing their ideas using these language elements appropriately in each communication circumstances.

2.2.1 Aims of Teaching Speaking Skill

The goal of teaching speaking, like other skills, is to get learners become communicatively competent. "What should a course in spoken English production prepare a student to do? The intention is, often that the student should be able to express himself in the target language, to cope with basic interactive skills like exchanging greetings, thanks, and apologies and to express his needs-request information, services etc"(Brown&Yule, 1983:27). In the same way, Cunningsworth (1984:43) says that teaching language should be aimed at enabling learners to be competent in using the target language for their own meaningful communications. Byrne (1987:1) also adds, "..... our main concern as language teachers is not to inform our students about the language but to develop their ability to use the language for a variety of communicative purposes."

On the whole, the ultimate goal of language teaching in general and speaking in particular is to help learners use the target language in communicating their feelings, opinions etc. understandably and appropriately in different real situations they encounter. Therefore, language teachers should teach speaking skill and other language aspects bearing this major goal in mind.

2.2.2 Activities to Promote Speaking Skill

There are a lot of activities which can be used in speaking classroom and it is very important for language teachers to select and apply the suitable ones for their own circumstances where the needs and levels of students come in to prominence. Speaking lessons should be selected and graded by taking the level, age, motivation etc. and scholastic background of learners in to account (Rivers, 1987:5). Because activities which are suitable for a certain class situation, may not work well for another.

Therefore, teachers should take a closer look whether or not speaking activities are interesting and suitable for students to interact with one another in classroom. In other words, teachers should choose and implement those speaking activities which are appropriate for their specific classroom situations in terms of creating successful language learning.

“We consider language learning successful if the learners are actively involved in the process” (klippel, 1984:5).

Furthermore, Ur (1996) cited in Ayele (2008:18) states that a speaking activity is effective if the following behaviors happen in classroom.

- Learners’ talk - if the teacher reduces his/her speaking time and allows students to talk more during the allotted time.
- Participation is even – if classroom discussion is not dominated by a minority of talkative participants; all get a chance to speak and contributions are fairly evenly distributed.
- Motivation is high - learners are eager to speak because they are interested in the topic and have something new to say about it.
- Language is of acceptable level- learners express themselves in utterances that are relevant and easily comprehensible to each other and of an acceptable level of language accuracy.

Some activities which can be applied to speaking class are given below together with the ways how to implement them for teachers who teach spoken language.

2.2.2.1 Role Play Activity

One way of getting students to interact actively in classroom is role playing. According to Littlewood (1981:49), role play is a classroom activity which is carried out by making students imagine themselves as they are in real life situations and adopt roles as well as behalf as if the situations really existed.

2.2.2.2 Information Gap

It is an activity where students are made to work in pairs on sharing information with each other. “Information gap refers to the disparity in knowledge and experience that exists between people involved in communication with each other” (Cunningworth 1984:82). This activity is very important in making learners to use a target language extensively when they try to collect new information from each other.

2.2.2.3 Interview

Interview is another activity which requires students to prepare interview questions in advance and to ask for the information they want to obtain either from their partners or other people outside the class.

And this helps them to exchange ideas by integrating their different skills. Interviewing involves talking and writing (Byrne, 1986 : 132)

2.2.2.4 Picture Interpreting-

According to Atkins et al (1995:128), picture interpreting is a way of using pictures in speaking activities where students are made to study a given picture with their partners and then to make interpretations as well as to work out a story based on it followed by reporting the story to the whole class. In other words, this activity is very important in increasing much talk in classroom in thereby improving students' speaking skills.

2.2.2.5 Finding Similarities and Differences

Another way to make use of pictures in a speaking activity is making students work in pairs. Each couple is given two different pictures and participants in each pair are required to discuss and to find out as many similarities and differences as possible between their pictures and that of their partners in their pairs and they are required to report to the class (Ibid :127).

2.2.2.6 Conversation

Conversation is an activity which is important for language teachers to implement (apply) in speaking class. Byrne (1986:57) suggests that teachers should create interaction both between him/her and his/her students and among the students themselves. For this aim, learners should be encouraged to tell their opinions and feelings and also to find out other experiences from their partners over different issues. A conversation in speaking class should be done in a way that can get students be interested and it is important to make it in a relaxed way so as to foster confidence among them thereby creating a good oral interaction in classroom.

Klippel (1984:7) supports this idea by saying: "the first essential requirement for the use of interactive activities is a relaxed and friendly atmosphere."

Generally, in addition to these, there are also other activities such as story telling, reporting, games, discussion etc. that have potential to motivate students and to make them be involved more actively in the language teaching/ learning processes.

2.2.3 Stages to Teach Speaking

There are 3 stages of teaching speaking lessons during which teachers are required to play different roles. According to Byrne (1986:3), these stages are presentation, practice and production.

A. The presentation stage - presentation is a stage at which students are introduced to the clear information regarding meaning and form of a material to be learned so as to help learners perceive it. At this stage, the teacher plays the role of informant and it is important to take care of the danger of spending too much time by presenting more (ibid). Cunningsworth (1943:43) suggests that teachers should help learners get a 'firm grounding' during the presentation which means that students ought to be clear with what is presented at this stage.

B. The practice stage - is the stage where the teacher serves as the conductor and monitor whereas students are required to do most of the talking in the speaking class.

C. The production stage- is another important stage at which learners are let interact freely. Cunningsworth (1984:43) states that it is not sufficient to stop the learning process at the stage at which students practise controlled activities. We should move on to the stage where the teacher plays the role of manager and guide and students use English in an uncontrolled situation.

It is known that a teacher has the general function of creating suitable conditions for the teaching /learning process.

In addition to this general role, he/she needs to have other specific functions such as assessor, organizer, participant etc. (Harmer, 1983:201).

And it is vital for him/her to be careful in discharging these roles during classroom activities and the role of the teacher should be flexible. Because if he/she continues to act as controller, it will make the teaching /learning process continue in devoid of student's active participation (Ibid).

2.2.4 Problems in Teaching Speaking

It is not an easy task to create effective speaking class and to help learners develop competency in using a target language for real life communication. Bringing learners to the stage where they can use it for meaningful communication is one of the most difficult aspects of language teaching and learning. (Bygate, 1987:3 & Brown and Yule, 1983:25).

And this problem is attributed to the following factors which are forwarded by both the local researchers and other authors.

2.2.4.1 Unclear Direction

Unless students are given clear directions before they start to practise any speaking activity, it will hinder them from participating actively in class as intended. "Too sudden transition to undirected activity creates difficulties and tensions which could undermine the students' confidence both in themselves and in teaching methods being used (Littlewood, 1981: 18).

2.2.4.2 Uneven Participation and Large Class Size

Large class size and un even participation of students in class room has its own influence on teaching speaking skill. According to Byrne (1986:55), if the class is dominated by some talkative students, others will be passive and therefore it makes the teaching/ learning process difficult. This entails teachers to be careful in making their students work in pairs and groups. They need to involve each student in every speaking activity using different ways of participation.

2.2.4.3 Being Over User (Inhibition)

Most students worry about making grammatical mistakes and they keep themselves silent in speaking class. As Berhanu (2000), most students find it difficult to speak English language because of having less confidence which is inturn created from the fear of making mistakes. And at this time teachers should encourage students to speak by giving positive and constructive comments in a relaxed environment. Teachers should also note that it is not good to correct students' pronunciation mistakes very often while they are speaking.

2.2.4.4 Lack of Exposure

The absence of language exposure outside the class is another critical problem for students to practise a target language in foreign language teaching / learning. "Lack of conditions to use the language both in and outside the school is one of the factors affecting improving students' speaking ability (Ibid). Byrne (1986:1) supports this idea by saying that teaching language for communication becomes difficult as we are trying to achieve it only in class room while the more appropriate place is practicing it outside the classroom. Therefore, teachers need to teach speaking by linking the classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom. For this purpose, they should create classroom environments where learners have a real life communication so as to promote oral language.

2.2.4.5 Difficulty of Activities

Another local researcher, Ayele (2008) states that the difficulty of activities in a text book can impair the effectiveness of teaching spoken English language. This means a different reason for students' problem may be because of that the class room activities are boring and are not appropriate to create a successful oral communication. Therefore teachers are required to take a closer look at the activities used in classroom whether they are appropriate for interaction or not.

Generally, in the presence of such multiplicity of factors, it is a very challenging task to create a successful speaking classroom. Teachers need to cope with such problems in order to achieve the intended goal of language teaching/learning. For this purpose, they need to be familiar with different methods and techniques of implementing different speaking activities appropriately according to the situations they are in.

2.2.5 Suggestions for Teachers in Teaching Speaking

Some suggestions which are important for teachers while teaching spoken language are given below.

2.2.5.1 Making Students Work in Pairs and Groups

Using pair and group works in speaking class is very essential in enabling students to use a target language freely. Because these techniques motivate learners and make them active thereby promoting much talk as well as helping them to learn from one another. According to Rivers (1987:4), letting students learn from their peers is very important as it helps them to use all the language they have at their disposal. Atkins et al (1995:71) also suggest that we should make our learners work in pairs and groups in order to make a hot interaction in classroom thereby helping them develop their confidence in using the target language.

In spite of their importance in language teaching/ learning, teachers who use pair and group works must confront the challenges arised while these techniques are used in speaking class. Fore example, according Atkins et al (1995:71), there may be noise which is out of hand and students may make mistakes.

Consequently, inorder to exploit the potential benefits of pair and group works, teachers ought to be wise in organizing groups and managing the class room behaviors. Teachers should also make sure that seating arrangements are suitable to run pair and group works.

It is the role of teachers to look for different alternative solutions and help students when they face difficulty in using the target language in classroom.

In conclusion, language teachers should use pair ad group works in speaking class as they promote interaction among learners if they are applied wisely.

2.2.5.2 Giving clear Instructions and Examples

Giving clear and precise instructions is another important element in helping learners to participate actively in speaking class. Students should be given clear instructions about what they are going to do (Byrne, 1986:54). In other words, a teacher must make sure that learners are clear with what they are required to do in class room activities.

2.2.5.3 Keeping Students Speak the Target Language

It is essential for language teachers to use the target language and also to make students communicate through it in classroom. If students are left free to use their mother tongue languages, they will always tend to speak it in any activities and it prevents them from developing their ability in using the target language in any situations. According to Atkins et al(1995:71), the tendency of students in chatting in their first language is likely to increase during pair and group works.

2.2.5.4 Motivating Students during Speaking Class

Motivating students is an important activity to bring improvement on their oral participation. "What ever you are doing in classroom, your ability to motivate students; to arouse their interest and involve them in whatever they are doing will be crucial" (Byrne, 1986:3). Atkins et al (1995:21) also say that motivation is the vital for successful language learning. This is to mean that when teachers face the problem of having passive students in speaking class, they can help them by increasing their level of motivation using different ways.

They can do it, for example, by introducing various interesting activities in meaningful contexts that can give opportunities for students to make interaction among themselves. "Context means a situation or a body of information which causes a language to be used". (Harmer, 1991:57). This means context includes the setting in which the language is used, the topic, the roles and the general relationships of the participants in the interaction and it should be appropriate for students to use the target language.

According to Atkins et al (1995:132) learners will participate actively if they are given speaking activities which are purposeful and relevant for them. Students will best learn to communicate in a target language if they are made to do on topics which are closely related to their lives.

In other words, if students work on class room activities which are based on the issues related with what they are familiar, they will be motivated to talk more and to flow out their ideas.

Teachers can also arouse students' motivation by using different authentic materials. As Rivers (1987:44), authentic materials are poems, photographs, and advertisements etc. which are not prepared specially for pedagogical purposes. However, these materials are important in helping students use the target language authentically to communicate meanings in various situations (Ibid). Similarly, Klippel (1984:5) notes that learners' curiosity can be aroused by texts and pictures.

Generally, teachers should motivate learners by providing with various activities which are interesting and meaningful for them. But it does not mean that overdoing activities in one speaking lesson. Rather, it is to mean that teachers should be aware of different types of techniques and procedures and exposing students to diverse class activities that will influence language learning positively.

2.2.5.5 Teaching by Integrating Different Language Skills

Teaching language skills in a way that can maximize the integration of two or more skills is an important activity that should be implemented by teachers. Scholars such as Harmer (1991:52) and Cunnin Worth (1984:49) agree on that students can best learn when they are given chance to practise a variety of activities that can allow integrating different skills. As Littlewood (1981:43), activities meant to speaking class should approximate more closely to the kind of communication situations encountered outside the classroom. If we agree on this idea, it is common that in real life most of communicative situations involve integrating two or more of the 4 skills. For example, when we see a conversation, it involves speaking and listening skills which always go together and therefore teachers should try to reflect this in their actual teaching /learning process. Byrne (1986:131) states the importance of integration as follows:

Teaching by integrating skills is important for two major reasons: first, they provide opportunities for using language naturally, not just practicing it. Secondly, students seem to learn better when they are engaged on activities which involve more than are skill.

And we can achieve this purpose by employing pair and group work activities as they call for integration of a variety of skills in order to involve all students.

2.3 Adaptation and its Role in Language Teaching

Adaptation is an integral part of successful language teaching and learning. Platt and Richards (1985:4) define it as: "adaptation is the making of changes to published texts or materials to make them more appropriate for a particular group of learners or particular teaching need." Similarly, according to McDonough and Show (1993:83), adaptation is an activity which is done with the purpose of maximizing the appropriacy of teaching materials such as textbooks by modifying some of the internal parts from them to better suit one's particular circumstance. These two definitions mean that adaptation in language teaching/learning denotes the act of making changes or modifications on what a given text book contains such as exercises, tasks, instructions, explanations etc. so as to make them more suitable for a certain type of learners in a certain situation.

Infact adapting teaching materials is an important activity in enabling teachers to keep teaching/learning processes appropriate and in a good truck.

McDonough and Show (1993:82) say that since teachers have no direct involvement in materials writing i.e. it is done by those who are working in higher organizations such as Ministry of Education that don't have direct and personal knowledge of each particular teacher's class, the necessary and preferably activity among teachers is that of a adaptation. In other words, it is to mean that teachers should readjust the various parts of text books in a way of being suitable for their respective classrooms.

Another author, Nunan (1989:133) adds his suggestion as: it is important for language teachers to move a may from being passive recipient and implementer of language activities, techniques and methods etc. designed by others towards the away of using those things more flexibly and creatively by considering what works and doesn't work in their actual classrooms. The teacher should be the master of the textbook rather than being the slave or servant of it (Grant, 1987:121).

Generally, adapting teaching materials is done with in reality of particular classroom situation where there is a need for change of certain features such as exercises, tasks etc. in the text book thereby making the language lessons direct and relevant to the learners.

2.3.1 Reasons for Adapting

We employ adaptive techniques as short-term solutions if our teaching materials (e.g. text books) are found inadequate to help learners in their language learning. Infact textbooks may lack in many respects. According to Cunning worth (1984:65), it is impossible to find a textbook or another teaching material which is suitable to all situations. This means that it is unlikely to find a textbook which is perfectly suited to the needs of all situations. Rather, it is likely that there is always scope which entails teachers to supplement additional materials or omit some parts from a text according to the situations in which they are operating.

Supporting this idea, (Grant, 1987:46) suggests that since there is no perfect text book, language teachers should have habits and skills of evaluating textbooks and making decisions on how they can be most appropriately used in their respective classrooms. Klippel (1984:1) also advises that we should use textbooks by adapting in a way of being suitable for a group of students in a certain situation. Therefore, the rationale behind adaptation comes from the fact that the teaching/learning situations are different from one another and there is no written material or a textbook which is completely appropriate in terms of language inputs, techniques, methods etc. for each of the teaching situations.

However, although reasons why one might need to adapt his/her teaching materials may be different from that of another, the following are some of the possible areas which call for adapting (Misirh, 2010).

2.3.1.1 Uninteresting Topics

Some topics in given textbook may not appeal to the learners' interests and they may need to be changed to catch more learners interms of attention throughout the lesson.

As Harmer (1987:17), it is important to select and apply topics which are related to students' lives for classroom language activities so that they can be interested and participate actively.

2.3.1.2 Lack of Visual Materials

Cunningworth (1984:50-52) notes that visual materials include pictures in the textbooks, film trips, ideo tapes etc. and they are important in facilitating teaching/learning processes if they are used properly.

However, there may not be enough visual materials in a text book and even the available ones may not be culturally accepted or may be difficult for students to understand. At this moment, teachers need to replace by other appropriate and acceptable illustrative materials from their own sources.

2.3.1.3 Not Balanced Skills

The balance of the skills may be deficient in quality or there may be too much emphasis on one specific language skill area. And also exercises for each skill may be mechanical filled with drills and lack meaningful activities or the activities in general may be too complicated for the aimed objectives etc.

Generally, the activities in a textbook may be problematic in terms of communicative performance, order of activities, timing, interests, learning styles, sequencing and grading of the lessons etc. At this time, teachers should take a closer look on materials to check if they are appropriate to the contexts of teaching/learning processes and if they are found inadequate, it is important to make them suitable by adapting.

2.3.2 Adaptive Techniques

When teaching materials such as text book set a barrier to students' learning, teachers need to make them appropriate by using different techniques of adaptation.

According to McDonough and Show (1993 :92-95), adaptation in language teaching includes the following individual techniques.

2.3.2.1 Adding

Means supplementing additional sections of activities, exercises, tasks etc. into the existing ones and this addition can be extending or expanding. Extending refers to the supplying more of the same i.e. only quantitative change while the methodological framework remains the same. For example, when students find the explanation of a language item rather difficult because of that exercises, tasks, activities contain insufficient practice, then additional ones will be supplemented. On the other hand, addition by expanding brings change on both methodological framework and quantities of contents within the text book.

In general addition is done when a teacher feels a textbook lacks important items which can support a given teaching/learning process positively. For example, a teacher may add further speaking activities to a unit.

2.3.2.2 Omitting

Omitting takes place if exercises, tasks and activities in a textbook are found unnecessary in context of particular classroom situation and it includes subtracting and abridging. Subtracting denotes simply reducing contents in amount without significant change on methodology whereas abridging represents a greater change which can be applied to novels, fictions which are written with difficult languages.

2.3.2.3 Modifying

Modifying is another technique which refers to an internal change in the approach of focus of an exercise and it includes re-writing and re-structuring. Re-writing is done when textbooks are found lacking behind an understanding of a class of students. Therefore, it represents the process of making exercises, tasks and activities etc. related more closely to the learners' background and interest may be, in terms of culture. Another part of modifying is re-structuring which means only modality change, for example, replacing role play activities with topic based ones for the sake of classroom management or because of the presence of other problems.

2.3.2.4 Simplification

As the name implies, it is the process of making different elements of language learning simple. Teachers can simplify instructions, explanations, exercises, tasks and even visual layout of the materials etc. However, teachers should be careful of the danger of making language elements disworking while trying to simplify more.

2.3.2.5 Re-Ordering

The teacher may decide not to follow the sequence of activities in a unit but to re-order them for a particular reason. In other words, re-ordering is an activity where a teacher re-arranges units in a text book or activities in a unit in what he/she considers a more suitable order.

3.4 Local Studies

There are some local studies which have been conducted on assessing the nature of classroom oral interaction and different factors that affect the active participation of students during speaking class. The most prominent ones are those done by Ayele (2008) and Yitayew (2008).

Yitayew (2008) has found results which show that teacher dominated class and inadequacy of speaking activities in a text book are factors that hinder the teacher from achieving successful implementation of speaking class. Ayele (2008) on his own turn concluded that the presence of teacher dominated class, teachers' strict control over the lessons, the shortage of time given for the speaking lessons and the difficulty of speaking activities would impair the effectiveness of oral interaction.

Generally, the studies which have been done up to now have assessed the nature of teaching/learning process of speaking lessons regardless of the efforts of teachers in employing adaptive techniques so as to make the language class suitable in general and to make activities simple in particular.

However, there is still an issue which called for further investigation .Therefore, the present study seeks to not only the nature of classroom interaction ,but also if teachers do it by making and keeping the speaking activities more suitable for their classroom situations and what practical techniques they use when the activities set barrier to the students' learning.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section presents the setting of the study, respondents, sampling techniques used, data gathering tools and data analysis technique.

3.1 The Setting

This study was carried out at Liyew Asres preparatory and secondary school which is found in Amhara Region, East Gojjam Zone, Bebugn Wereda. This school was purposefully selected based on two major considerations: first as the researcher is experienced in a lot of things about this school and since there are students and teachers who are intimate friends of him, he believed that the respondents would be cooperative in giving reliable information. And the second consideration was that since plasma television doesn't work there, it would be suitable to study the independent efforts of the teachers.

3.2 Respondents of the Study and Sampling Techniques

The respondents of the study were all grade 11 EFL teachers who are 4 in number and sample students selected from total number of 340 grade 11 students who are 6 in sections. Before the data collection, the researcher had planned to gather information from grade 12 students also because they are assumed to have good experiences regarding the teaching /learning conditions in grade 11 as they passed through and completed this grade level in the previous year. However, since all teachers are newcomers and they have not taught these students, later the data collection was confined to only grade 11 students.

To this end, 12 students (two students who stood first and second in each section) were selected using purposive sampling and focus group discussion was held with them. Students for the group discussion were selected based on the academical achievement as they are assumed to react best to the discussion and to give relatively reliable information regarding the problem.

3.3 Instruments and Data Gathering Procedures

Tools which were used to collect data from the sources are classroom observation, interview, focus group discussion and lesson plan analysis.

In order to elicit additional information from the study subjects, the researcher used also informal conversations with teachers and students. And the data gathering process was done in the following procedure.

3.3.1 Classroom Observation

First the researcher made observations in order to obtain data which reflect the typical classroom behaviors of teachers and students. The researcher believed that making observation before conducting interview or focus group discussion would relatively minimize the tendency of teachers and students to change their classroom behaviors. According to Kumar (1996:105), observation is a feasible tool when we are interested in assessing the behaviors of subjects. Based on this, non participant and free observations (without check list) were made i.e the researcher himself wrote what he was actually observing while teachers and students were working on speaking activities in classroom. Each teacher was observed 3 times and each section 2 times with total number of 12 observations.

3.3.2 Interview with Teachers

Semi- structured interview was another tool used in this study. According to Kumar (1996), it is a flexible kind of interview where the interviewer can formulate additional questions spontaneously during an interview thereby being able to elicit rich information. Teachers were interviewed right after the classroom observations in order to produce supplementary data regarding the teachers' practice of teaching speaking lessons. Not only this, but also to find out if teachers have understanding (theoretical knowledge) of adaptation and its role in language teaching and if they employ the individual techniques in their actual teaching of speaking lessons.

3.3.3 Group Discussion with Students ✓

To strengthen the relevance of the data, group discussion was held with the sample grade 11 students. During the discussion the researcher himself acted as moderator and listener by posing pre-determined questions and formulating additional ones as they come to mind around the issue being investigated.

Since the students' first language is Amharic, it called for the translation of the instruments in to their Amharic versions in order to enable the respondents forward their ideas freely and without any communication barriers.

3.3.4 Lesson plan analysis

. Lesson plans prepared by the EFL teachers to the teaching of speaking sections were analyzed in order to find out if teachers devote an appropriate proportion of class time or in line with the clues given by the corresponding syllabus for speaking lessons.

3.3.5 Focus Group Discussion with Teachers

At the end, i.e. after the researcher got some insights concerning the problem, discussion was held with EFL teachers by raising the issues which have been mentioned before together with new insights gained through other instruments.

2.4 Data Analysis Technique

Since the data were collected using classroom observation, interview, discussion and lesson plan analysis, there were no variables to be put in measurement and mathematical manipulation. Rather, there were concepts, suggestions which called for qualitative technique of analysis. The researcher analyzed the data by describing what he observed about the behaviors of teachers and students in classroom and also what he got from interview, focus group discussion, and lesson plan analysis in narrative form.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter is about the results and discussion of the data obtained through classroom observation, interview with teachers, group discussion with students and lesson plan analysis as well as the discussion with EFL teachers.

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Results from Classroom Observation

As stated before, 4 teachers who teach English as a foreign language were observed 3 times each and each section was observed 2 times and the results are presented below.

Observational Result 1 (Teacher 1)

The teacher entered on time and told students that the day's lesson was about debating by writing the topic on the black board.

Having introduced the topic, he posed the following leading questions for students to answer.

- a. What do you know about debate?
- b. How can it be done?
- c. What are the characteristics of a good debate?

Then he asked students if there was any volunteer to answer the questions. However, students kept themselves silent. Then the teacher himself wrote the following notes on the blackboard for students to copy into their exercise books.

Debate refers to a series of arguments for and against a motion in which each opposite component tries to convince through the force of reason. And the following are characteristics of a good debate.

- Speakers are good speakers and good listeners
- Speakers are polite
- They attack ideas but not people
- They think logically

Steps in preparing for a debate

The following steps are involved in preparing for a debate.

- First, decide on which side you will argue
- Second work closely with your partner and find your evidences from different sources and then build your case based on the major points and relevant arguments

Then the teacher stopped writing and he read the note from the black board for students where necessary for about 4 minutes and he continued writing the following points.

The following terms are common in debating.

Motion	Chair person	Secunder
Debaters	Opposer	judge

The following are expressions which can be used in actual debate.

1. Opening expressions
 - I would like to begin by.....
 - I would like to mention briefly that
2. Introducing new points
 - I would now like to turn briefly to the problem of
 - The next issue I would like to focus on.....
3. Expressing opinions
 - In my view (opinion).....
 - I strongly /firmly believe that.....
 - I personally believe that.....

Around 25 minutes were wasted while the students were copying the note from the blackboard. Then the teacher made detail explanation over the note by reading from the board. When he finished his explanation, he asked students if they were not clear with the lesson. But no one asked him. Then the teacher concluded the day's lesson by summarizing it briefly and by advising students to read further by themselves and he told them that there would be actual debating among them in unspecified time.

Observational Result 2 (Teacher 1)

The teacher entered the class 4 minutes late and after greeting students, he wrote 'Asking for information/advice' on the black board. He told students orally about the day's lesson and also its importance in real life experiences.

Then he ordered students to copy the following points from the board

- Polite question forms
 1. Would you mind---?
 2. I was wondering if you---
 3. May I ask you-----?
- Asking for further information
 1. Could you be a little more precise?
 2. I am sorry, but would you explain in a little more detail?
 3. Could you give me some examples of-----?
 4. Could you expand on that-----?

Asking for advice

The following are the most common expressions we use when we ask for advice.

1. What do you advise me to do?
2. What shall I do?
3. Do you think I should--?
4. Should I ---?
5. What do you recommend?
6. Where can I ---?

Giving advice

1. Why don't you---?
2. I would advise you (not) to ---
3. You had better (not)-----

Then the teacher wrote the following short model dialogue on the blackboard.

Almaz = I am having a terrible time with this challenging assignment. What shall I do?

Alemu = I would say you need a rest

Almaz = I guess you are right

Alemu = Why don't we go out for a drink?

Almaz = Alright what about the Sheraton Addis? It is a fashionable and very attractive hotel

Alemu = Wow! What a fantastic idea! Let us go

After the students had finished copying the note into their exercise books, the teacher ordered them to play out the dialogue in pair turn by turn by reading from the board. A lot of students raised their hands i.e. they were eager to participate in carrying out the dialogue activity. Twenty students practised the dialogue standing in front of the class in pair and the class was concluded by the teacher's advice to practise it by themselves both in class and outside the classroom.

Observational Result 3 (Teacher 1)

The teacher entered in class and he reminded students that they had discussed over vocabulary section during the previous lesson and then he introduced the day's lesson which was 'Expressing agreement and disagreement'

He said that agreeing or disagreeing is a clear concept that we do in our daily lives and therefore it is important to know the expressions we use to agree or disagree.

Then the following things were written on the blackboard.

Expressions of agreement

- Yes, he/she/ it is, (isn't he/she/ it?)
- He/she/ it, certainly is
- You/they are (quiet) right

Expressions which are used while expressing disagreement

- I am not sure I agree
- Personally, I don't see it that way
- As a matter of fact, I don't think so
- I agree with you partially
- I am afraid I disagree
- That is true but

Then the teacher ordered students to be in pair and to discuss over the following statements and then to express their agreements or disagreements using the above expressions written on the board.

- A. Girls must be treated equally with boys
- B. A boy usually loves his mother more than he does his father
- C. A girl's place must be at home
- D. Punishment is a sign of love and responsibility
- E. Teachers should punish their students

After the discussion, some students raised their hands and expressed their agreements and disagreements and the class was then concluded.

Observational Result 4 (Teacher 2)

After greeting the students, the teacher announced that the discussion on agro industry was the topic under discussion.

Then students were ordered by the teacher to be in groups and to do the following activity.

Imagine that you and your friends have decided to start the following agricultural industries in your area. You have enough money to buy some land as an investor and get started. Then discuss with your groups about advantages and disadvantages of each agro industry and list them from what you think most successful to the least successful for investment and then report to the class.

- Edible oil
- Tea and coffee processing
- Meat products
- Animal feed

Students discussed for about 10 minutes and during the discussion the teacher went round and observed students. Some students were heard using Amharic during the group discussion.

Then the teacher made students report what they discussed with their groups to the class and students from each group report what they did. The teacher corrected when students' messages were not clear to understand and when the grammatical structures and word selections were not of acceptable level.

The class then ended with the teacher's thanking for students' participation.

Observational Result 5 (Teacher 2)

The teacher exchanged his greeting with his students and then he reminded students that the previous lesson was about future perfect tense and he revised it for 5 minutes. Then he wrote 'Greeting' on the black board and continued writing:

Greeting is the first and most important part of communication that we exchange everywhere we meet someone. It measures person's quality within the society, his/her sociability, polite and respectful manners.

The most common formal greeting expressions are the following.

Greeting	Response
a. Hello	a. Hello
b. Good morning/afternoon/ evening	b. Good morning/afternoon/evening
c. How are you?	c. I am fine, thank you. How are you?
d. How do you feel now?	d. I am fine thank you
e. How have you been?	e. very well thank you

Then the teacher wrote the following two model dialogues on the black board for students to copy and then to practise in pairs.

Dialogue 1

Abebe = Oh! Kebede nice to meet you! How are you?

Kebede = I am very well thank you and you?

Abebe = I am fine thank you, how is life?

Kebede = It is alright

Dialogue 2

A: Good morning, how are you?

B: Very well thank you, how are you?

C: Fine thanks, how is Emebet?

D: She is very well

After students practised these dialogue activities for 20 minutes by looking from their exercise books, the teacher asked them if there was anyone who was not clear with the day's lesson. Then he summarized the lesson briefly and wound up the class.

Observational Result 6 (Teacher 2)

After greeting his students, the teacher wrote the topic of the day's lesson, which was 'Expressions of certainty and uncertainty'.

- Then he ordered students to copy what he was writing on the board and he continued writing as:

A. Certainty expressions

- I am certain that---
- It is certain that---
- There is no doubt that---
- Undoubtedly ---

B. Probable expressions

- I am almost certain that---
- It is highly probable that ---
- It is quite likely that ---

C. Possible expressions

- It could well be that ----
- It is possible that-----
- It is not impossible that ---

D. Unlikely

- It is highly improbable that -
- It is (highly) unlikely that –
- there is very little likelihood that---

E. Uncertainty

- I am not certain that /if---
- I have doubts about ---
- I doubt if ---

Then by writing the following sample conversation on the board, he made students practise the conversation with him by calling the name of each student where the teacher acted as A at one time and as B at another time.

A = Could you tell me about your new agriculturally based industrial products?

B = The oil products are not ready yet, but I am certain that the canned beans will go on sale in October.

A = How much do you think the beans will cost?

B = I am almost certain that the recommended retail price is 9.50 birr per can.

A = Where will they be available?

B = They will be available at any major dealer in agricultural products.

A = Are you confident about sales?

B = Without a doubt, I think they will be very popular

At the end, students practised the conversation themselves in pairs and then the lesson was concluded.

Observational Result 7 (Teacher 3)

The lesson was concerning expressing agreement and disagreement. The teacher reminded students that they had learned about expressions of agreement and disagreement at lower grades and no need of wasting a lot of time on them. He only listed expressions on the board as follow and then ordered students to express their agreements or disagreements when he read the statements from the textbook.

Expressions of agreement

- Yes, he/she/ it is
- He/she/ it certainly is
- I agree with you (entirely/ partially)
- That is exactly what I think
- That is just what I was thinking

Expressions of disagreement

- I couldn't agree more
- I am not sure I agree
- personally I don't see that way
- I am afraid I disagree

The statements read by the teacher and to which students were required to respond were:

1. Beating a child is not educating him to be disciplined
2. Parents should give the chance to their children to participate in home management
3. Girls must be treated equally with the boys
4. Teachers must not judge their students as stupid if they are merely ignorant of the subject they are teaching them.

Generally, after teacher spent 20 minutes on speaking, he then moved on to the grammar section for the rest 20 minutes.

Observational Result 8 (Teacher 3)

As soon as the teacher came in to classroom, he made some discussion over the previous home work concerning simple past tense for 10 minutes and then moved on to the day's lesson which was 'note making'.

Students were told by the teacher to work on the following note making activity individually and then to discuss over what they have done in pairs thereby taking correction from each other.

Instruction: write a note summary about the food of the Ha people based on the information given in the short passage below. Include where the Ha find their food.

The Ha people live in the Kigoma region of Werstern Tanzania. Most of the Ha depend on agriculture. Cereal crops are grown throughout the region, and the hilly Southern region many cattle are kept, together with sheep and goats. In the north, near the border with Burundi, the country is covered with forests. Tsetse flies make it difficult to keep cattle there, so meat is obtained by hunting. Large amounts of wild honey are also collected from the forests. In recent years, many Ha men have gone to work on sisal plantations near the coast.

The note summary

- 1-----
- 2-----
- 3-----

During the activity, the following things were observed.

- Some students were heard using Amharic and others were talking about matters out of the lesson.
- The teacher was reading the text for himself.

At the end some students were made to present what they had done and the teacher gave feedback for the whole class and then the class ended.

Observational Result 9 (Teacher 3)

Interviewing was treated as the topic of the lesson. The teacher first gave a brief explanation on how to conduct interview by mentioning the following major points.

- First make necessary arrangements well in advance
- Decide questions you will ask carefully
- Then greet the interviewee politely
- Ask clear questions
- Remember to thank the interviewee

Then students were ordered to be in pair and to make interview each other within their pairs about their biographies. The class stayed warm with students' talking even though some students were using Amharic and other some were not doing the real work.

During the activity, the teacher was giving assistance for students when they asked him.

At the end, two students were made to demonstrate in pair what they have done as a sample during which the teacher gave correction when they made mistakes.

Then, by revising the lesson, the teacher told students to interview any person and to come up with information obtained for the next session.

Observational Result 10 (Teacher 4)

The lesson topic for the discussion was about expressing certainty and uncertainty.

The teacher ordered students to study the expressions that are used in expressing certainty and uncertainty from their text book first and then to practise the following conversation which he was writing on the board from the text.

A = Could you tell me about your new agriculturally based industrial products?

B = The oil products are not ready yet; but I am certain that the canned beans
will go on sale in October

A = How much do you think the beans will cost?

B = I am almost certain that the recommended retail price is 9.50 birr per can

A = Where will they be available?

B = They will be available at any major dealer in agricultural products

A = Are you confident about sales?

B = without a doubt, I think they will be very popular.

The expressions what students were ordered to study from their text were:

A. Certainty expressions

- I am certain that---
- It is certain that---
- There is no doubt that---
- Undoubtedly ---

B. Probable expressions

- I am almost certain that---
- It is highly probable that ---
- It is quite likely that ---

C. Possible expressions

- It could well be that --
- It is possible that---
- It is not out of the question that--
- It is not impossible that---

D .unlikely

- I think there is very possibility that--
- I think there is very possibility

- It is highly unlikely that----
- There is very little likelihood that--
- It is highly improbable that -----

E. Uncertainty

- I am not certain that ---
- I have doubts about ---

Students were made to practise the conversation with their desk mates in pair first and then some student did it with the teacher. At the end, students themselves practised in pairs by changing their roles: at one time one student acted as A and as B at another time. But during the conversation activity, there was noise and disturbance when students discussed in pairs and when students moved from place to place in order to get the text when they were told by the teacher to study expressions from it. The activity was really mechanical-students were practising it by reading from the black board and it was not by thinking.

Observational Result 11(Teacher 4)

First the teacher announced that the lesson was about conducting interview and he informed students that the lesson took about two sessions i.e. in the first session they would see the theoretical part and in the second one (next part) students would conduct practical interview among themselves.

Then the teacher went on giving explanations by writing the following major points which should be considered during an interview.

The following are very important tasks to be fulfilled in conducting interviews.

1. Greeting – is the first and most important part of communication that we exchange everywhere we meet with someone.

The most common formal greeting expressions are as follows.

Greeting	Response
a. Hello	a. Hello
b. Good morning/afternoon/ evening	b. Good morning/afternoon/evening
c. How are you?	c. I am fine, thank you how are you?
d. How do you feel how?	d. I am fine thank you
e. How have you been?	e. Very well thank you
f. How nice to see you?	f. It is nice to see you too

2. Giving thanks and responding to thanks

In conducting interview, it is important to thank an interviewee and the following are among the common expressions which can be used in doing so.

Giving thanks

- a. Thank you
- b. Thank you very much
- c. It has been a pleasure
- d. Thank you for the advice

Responding to thanks

- a. You are well come
- b. Don't mention it. It was not trouble
- c. (It is) my pleasure
- d. I have enjoyed talking to you

Then, the teacher told students to meet in the next session again with the same lesson and he departed.

Observational Result 12 (Teacher 4)

As soon as the teacher entered the class, he revised the previous lesson and he reminded students that the day's lesson was the extension of what they had started before. Then he started the lesson by writing what they were left with to conduct practical interview as follows.

3. Asking for permission and giving permission

During an interview, ask permission from an interviewee to quote his/her words and the common expressions are the following.

Asking for permission

- a. May/can I talk to you now?
- b. May/can we stay here?
- c. Would you please allow me to ask you a question?
- d. Could you give me your views on please?
- e. Do you think I could interview this evening?
- f. I wonder if I could/might take some of your time?
- g. Would you please give your permission for

Giving permission

- a. yes, you can/may
- b. yes, go ahead
- c. please do
- d. yes. Of course
- e. yes, that would be fine
- f. why not?
- g. yes, certainly

my article to be printed in a news paper or magazine?

Then students were ordered to do the following classroom activity.

Instruction: Imagine that you are at a place where a crafts man or crafts woman does his/her work. First be in pairs and choose one of the following crafts and work together to produce a list of questions during the interview.

Student A acts as the crafts man/.woman whereas student B acts as a visitor who is very interested in finding out about the work being done. Do it by changing roles and include usual greetings, welcoming remarks and the like that you would normally expect people to say in such a situation.

During the activity, the time given to carry out the interview was not enough i.e even at the end, students were not made to demonstrate what they had done to the class.

In general, the classroom observation proved that in most of the speaking classes teachers usually make students practise dialogue activities which are mechanical and done based on repetition; they were observed writing model dialogues on the black board and then making students play out them by reading from the board and it was not by thinking.

This implies that teachers don't give opportunities for students to work on free communicative activities. For example, in observation 2, teacher1 gave explanation about asking for information/advice by writing expressions on the black board first and then wrote the model dialogue for students to practise.

And teacher 2 in observation 5 gave note concerning the expressions which are used in greeting followed by providing students with two short model dialogues for practising.

Similarly, in observation 6 and observation 10 teacher 2 and teacher 4 explained about expressions of certainty and uncertainty and then they made student carry out the dialogue activities.

The discussion with teachers confirmed that they tend to implement dialogue activities in most of the speaking classes as they realize that it is suitable to make relatively large number

of students participate on dialogue activities within a short period of time rather than wasting much of the class time by exposing students to free communication.

Another theme emerged from the classroom observation is that teachers try to make students work on speaking activities in pairs and groups .As it can be seen from the annex, teacher 1 in observation 1 and observation 3 ordered his students to carry out speaking activities in pairs.

And also in observation 4 teacher 2 made students do speaking activities in groups and in observation 5 and 6 in pairs.

In the same way, in observation 8, teacher 3 was observed ordering students to work on note making activities individually first and then to discuss over what they did in pairs.

In observation 9 also students were made to be in pair and to interview each other. Teacher 4 on his own turn tried to make students do in pairs in observation 10 and observation 12.

However, teachers are not successful in establishing speaking classes where students can participate evenly; they don't commit themselves in exposing students to free communication by spending enough time for students' independent works.

During the classroom observations teachers were writing notes on the blackboard and much of the class time was wasted while students were copying the notes and while teachers were making detail explanations over the lessons being delivered.

This indicates that teachers don't make much effort to help learners learn the spoken language by communicating freely through the target language itself. Rather, they tend to teach students about the language by writing notes and by giving detail explanations over them.

For example, in observation 7, teacher 3 was heard saying that students had learnt about the expressions of agreement and disagreement at lower grades and no need of wasting a lot of time practicing them. As a result, after spending 20 minutes on explaining these expressions, he then moved on to the grammar section for the rest 20 minutes which in turn shows us that teachers don't give attention to the teaching of speaking lessons.

The classroom observation revealed also that teachers are not good at forming pairs and groups during speaking activities. Students were observed carrying out the speaking activities simply with their desk mates. Teachers didn't make effort to re organize pairs and groups by mixing males with females and weak students with active ones.

During the discussion, teachers informed that they tend to make students work with their desk mates rather than re-organizing new pairs and groups as they realize that it creates disturbance and consumes class time.

These teachers are not also committed in managing pairs and group works during speaking activities. During the classroom observations, some students were heard using Amharic and others dealing with other matters out of the lesson. Teachers don't also consider the role of seating arrangements in carrying out the speaking activities. In general the data obtained from the classroom observation indicate that teachers teach speaking lessons in a way that doesn't enable students develop their communicative competence.

4.1.2 Results from Interview with Teachers

After the researcher had observed 12 speaking classes, he then made interview with 4 teachers who teach English as a foreign language at grade 11 and the results are presented below.

The results from interview show us that EFL teachers don't make efforts in implementing adaptive techniques to their actual teaching of speaking lessons. They don't try to make practical contribution to make the speaking lessons suitable for students by supplementing the speaking activities by additional ones even when they realize that those in the text book are inadequate and set barriers to the students' language learning. Rather, they simply advise students to read further by themselves.

And also it was reflected by the responses of the two teachers that they perceive the speaking activities in the text book as sufficient as they are already designed by ministry of education and no need of killing time by adding further sections or making modification on them.

This indicates that teachers have no the habit of using speaking activities in the text book by evaluating and by making them more suitable to their classroom situations through appropriate adaptation. Teachers gave also similar responses on the type of activities they implement in speaking classes as all of them replied that they use those activities such as interview, dialogue, debating etc. which are found in the text book.

(2)

However, the real time classroom observation revealed that teachers don't implement these activities effectively as they in most of the observation were observed tending to make students work on dialogue activities rather than exposing them to free communications.

Even when teachers provide students with activities which have the potential to make real interaction among them, they do it without budgeting enough time to carryout the activities.

For example, in observation 4, teacher 2 ordered students to discuss over Agro Industries in groups. However, the time allotted to the students' independent work was only 10 minutes.

Similarly, during observation 12, students were ordered to conduct interview. However, the time given to carry out interview activity was not enough i.e. students were no made to demonstrate what they had done to the class because of lack of time.

4.1.3 Results from Lesson Plan Analysis

In addition to classroom observation, interview and group discussion, lesson plans prepared by EFL teachers were analyzed in order to find out if they budget enough class time for speaking lessons in accordance with the number of periods specified in the corresponding syllabus.

The following table compares the number of periods allocated to teach speaking sections in grade 11 English syllabus and what teachers devoted in their actual teaching in each unit.

Units	The number of periods specified in the syllabus	The number of periods what EFL teachers actually devoted in their actual teaching			
		Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4
1	3	1	2	1	-
2	4	2	1	-	1
3	3	1	1	1	1
4	3	1	1	1	1
5	3	1	1	1	1
6	3	1	1	1	1
7	3	1	1	2	2

As it can be seen from the depicted information, in unit 1, from the total number of 3 periods specified in the syllabus, teacher 1 and teacher 3 spent one period each; teacher 2 devoted 2 periods whereas teacher 4 skipped the lesson totally.

When we come to speaking lessons in unit 2, only teacher 1 budgeted 2 periods from the specified number of 4 periods and teacher 2 and teacher 4 used 1 period each while teacher 3 missed the class completely.

And regarding units 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, two of the EFL teachers are found allotting 1 period each out of 3 periods specified in the respective syllabus. And teacher 3 and teacher 4 spent 2 periods to the teaching of speaking lessons in unit 7.

In general the depicted information and the results from the interview and the discussion with teachers tell us that teachers don't budget enough proportion of class time which is specified in the syllabus to the teaching of speaking lessons and they rather devote the major attention to the other skills which in turn shows that they are teaching English language in a way that doesn't sound the current principle of language teaching and learning. Because, nowadays, spoken language has been given due attention in language teaching/learning as other languages are primarily learned through it.

4.1.4 Results from Group Discussion with Students

Group discussion was held with sample grade 11 students by raising the following issues and the results of the discussion are presented here under.

The discussion with students together with the information obtained through interview with teachers made clear that although teachers make students work in pairs and groups during speaking classes, they are not successful in implementing authentic teaching situations where students can learn speaking lessons by communicating and making real interaction among themselves through the target language.

While students listed the difficulty of the speaking activities and teachers' way of teaching as factors that affect them in learning speaking skills, teachers on the other hand raised other factors such as lack of confidence among students to speak English language, their poor background knowledge and their less attention towards learning spoken English etc.

4.1.5 Results from Group Discussion with Teachers

At the end of the data collection, group discussion was held with EFL teachers and the following points were raised and discussed.

When teachers were asked why they don't budget the number of periods for speaking lessons in line with the specification in the syllabus, they invariably informed that they don't have any syllabus in their hands and they don't know how many periods are specified for the teaching of each language skill. They know only the general credit hours budgeted to teach English language as a subject in a week.

This indicates that the absence of the syllabus in the hands of the teachers has its own influence the teaching/learning process by making teachers fail to treat different language skills by looking for appropriate balance among them.

The discussion made clear also that student tend to learn more of other skills than speaking. Teachers informed that since students have had the experiences of learning more of grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension which is in turn attributed to the fact that these skills appear most in the national examinations, students have no background to practice more of speaking skills.

And classroom teachers don't try to assess the students' speaking ability through continuous assessment and to make students give due attention to the speaking lessons.

The discussion indicates also that teachers' commitment in providing students with free speaking activities together with enough time to complete them thereby helping students make real interaction is very limited. And this is resulted from the fact that they realize exposing students to free communication will consume much time and put students in to defense as they are poor in spoken English which in turn shows teachers' wrong perception of language teaching and learning.

4.2 Discussion of the Results

As stated before, grade 11 students are 6 in section and each section was observed 2 times and each teacher 3 times. Then 4 EFL teachers were interviewed followed by analyzing lesson plans prepared by these teachers. Then group discussion was held with sample grade 11 students. And at the end the researcher made discussion with these teachers by raising points mentioned before together with new insights got from the interview, observation, lesson plan analysis and discussion with students.

Additional data were also collected through informal talks with teachers and students and the results are discussed as follow.

In grade 11 English syllabus it is stressed that the number of working hours allocated to the teaching of English language in general and each skill in particular should not be missed.

However, as it can be seen from the lesson plan analysis, EFL teachers are found spending very little proportion of class time (1 or 2 periods) for the teaching of the whole speaking sections in each unit while these are specified in the respective syllabus to be covered with a minimum of 3 periods and maximum of 4 periods. Based on the data found from the informal conversation with 2 teachers, even having prepared the lesson plans for the purpose of showing to the department head, they miss speaking classes.

In the same way, these results and those obtained through interview and group discussion with teachers implicate that almost all the 4 English teachers spend the majority of class time to the teaching of other skills such as reading, grammar and vocabulary and they don't treat the speaking lessons by budgeting enough class times as intended.

And this tendency of EFL teachers to devote the major attention to the teaching of other skills than speaking is attributed to different factors.

First, students even attend the classes actively if it is reading, grammar or vocabulary lesson which is in turn resulted from the fact that these skills appear most in the national examinations.

According to Atkins, Hailom and Nuru(1996:159), in order to encourage our students to speak, we should assess their speaking skills by continuous assessment or by short oral tests.

However, the discussion with teachers revealed that teachers seldom make practical efforts to assess students' oral ability continuously. They pointed out that they try to do that once or twice a semester as they think that it takes time.

The discussion made clear also that teachers have no either the syllabus or the teacher guide and they don't know how many periods are specified to teach each skill in each unit.

The students' wrong perception of the goal of language learning has also its own influence on students to focus on grammar, vocabulary and reading lessons and to ignore speaking skills.

During the discussion, teachers indicated that students perceive that success in language learning is the ability to manipulate different grammatical structures and therefore students ignore practising speaking skill with the belief that the grammar, vocabulary and reading lessons are most important skills.

From the data obtained through classroom observations, interview and discussion with both students and teachers, it was possible to realize that all of the 4 teachers try to make students work in pairs and groups. However, they are not good at organizing and managing pair and groups. The researcher could observe that pairs and groups were formed without considering males with females, clever students with passive ones and the suitability of seating arrangements were not taken in to account.

In addition to these, some students were heard using Amharic language and others dealing with other matters out of the lesson during the speaking activities. Teachers during the discussion claimed that re-organizing groups and pairs than ordering students to do with their desk mates will create disturbance and time wastage.

During the interview, teachers said that they provide students with those speaking activities such as interviewing, debating and dialogue activities etc. which are found in the text book. However, the results from the classroom observations, group discussion with students and

teachers, it has been possible to realize that teachers tend to implement dialogue activities in most of the speaking classes.

In the grade 11 English textbook, there are both activities which entail students just to engage in controlled practice such as dialoguing and other activities where students are required to talk freely by using all the language they know.

However, in most of the observations teachers were noticed stopping their teaching after they had given detail explanations and they had made students practise dialogue activities which are performed mechanically depending on repetition and they didn't expose them to free communication by budgeting enough time to the students' independent work. Cunningsworth (1984:47) says that although dialogue activities enable students to practise integrated skills, listening and speaking, they don't help learners engage in real life communication.

Teachers during the discussion claimed that they usually use dialogue activities as they save time and they enable teachers to make many students participate in carrying out the classroom activities in a short period of time and also they are feasible for students who are poor in spoken English.

Another implication from the interview with teachers is that at least 3 of the respondents know what adaptation means and that it is important in language teaching/learning.

But, all of them admitted that they have never employed adaptive techniques to the teaching of speaking lessons even when students get confused.

As Nunan (1989:134), teachers are crucial agents who know well what is more appropriate to the needs of particular teaching/ learning situation. This is to mean that even when students face the problem of understanding a certain language lesson, because of difficult activities or unfamiliarity of contexts, teachers are required to commit themselves in alleviating the problem and making situations more suitable through proper mechanisms.

However, one of the respondents said that even when speaking activities set barriers to the students' learning, he tries to explain in detail or he misses the class totally and other 3 teachers confirmed that they simply advise students to read further.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section discusses major findings resulted from the data analysis, the conclusions and the recommendations drawn by the researcher from the whole process of the investigation

5.1 Summary of the Findings

This study was conducted to assess teachers' practices in teaching speaking lessons and their efforts to employ adaptive techniques especially when students face difficulties with speaking activities. To this end, data were collected through classroom observation, interview, lesson plan analysis and discussion with students and teachers and the study the following findings have been identified.

- ◀ Teachers don't devote the appropriate proportion of class time to the teaching of speaking lessons. In the corresponding syllabus speaking sections in each unit are specified to be covered with in minimum of 3 periods. However, the lesson plan analysis and the interview as well as discussion with teachers showed that they devote only 1 period and they spend 2 periods rarely. And this problem is resulted from the fact that teachers have no any syllabus in their hands and they don't know how many periods are budgeted to teach each skill in the syllabus. Therefore, it is found that teachers devote the major attention to the teaching of other skills such as grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension. And this tendency of teachers is attributed also to the fact that even students attend classes actively if it is grammar, reading or vocabulary lessons as these are the ones which appear most in the national examinations.
- ◀ Although teachers try to make students work in pairs and groups, they are not good at organizing and managing group and pair works (male with female, weak students with clever ones) and they are not successful in establishing speaking classes where students are exposed to free communications. Teachers were observed focusing on practicing dialogue activities which are mechanical and done based on repetition rather than providing students with free speaking activities and enough time for students' independent work that allow them to make interaction thereby improving their speaking skill.

Another finding identified from the study is that teachers don't make practical efforts to employ adaptive techniques to their actual teaching of speaking lessons: they don't try to make speaking activities suitable through adding further sections or by making modification on the existing ones even when these activities are difficult and set barriers to students' language learning. The interview with teachers made clear that even when students get confused with speaking activities, teachers advise them to read further by themselves.

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the findings identified above, it is possible to conclude that EFL teachers don't provide students with free speaking activities by budgeting enough time for speaking lessons in general and for students' independent works in particular.

They don't have also the habit of implementing speaking activities by making them more suitable for their classrooms even when these activities set barriers to students' learning.

Therefore, teachers are not teaching speaking lessons in a way that helps students improve their speaking skills and prepare themselves for real life communication and this in turn doesn't match with the current principle of language teaching/learning in general and with what is specified in the corresponding syllabus in particular.

5.3 Recommendations

Having found the findings mentioned above, the researcher would like to recommend the following points.

- ❖ The absence of the syllabus in the hands of the teachers hinders them from teaching speaking lessons by devoting the enough proportion of class time. Therefore, EFL teachers should be provided with the corresponding syllabus by the body concerned so that they can identify the number of periods specified and treat speaking lessons as intended.
- ❖ The issue of teaching /learning process should not be left to the subject teachers only. The school management also should be cooperative with teachers by creating chances for them to

participate in workshops and in language development training so that they can be better positioned to teach language skills in a way that improve the students' communicative skills.

- ❖ EFL teachers should generously devote their time and knowledge to help students in improving their comprehension of English language.

To this end, they should provide students with speaking activities where students can learn the language lessons through working in pairs and groups and by making real interaction among them thereby developing their speaking skills. And they should create awareness among students that the major goal of language learning is to use it for meaningful communication and they should also assess students' oral ability through continuous assessment thereby making them give great attention to the learning of speaking lessons.

Teachers are also required to have the knowledge and professional habit of making speaking activities appropriate especially when they set barriers to students' learning. And this can be done through adaptation i.e. by bringing additional sections or by simplifying the existing ones etc. based on the reality of their actual classroom situations rather than avoiding classes totally. In fact it is important for teachers to know where adaptation is feasible and to implement individual techniques where necessary as the activities in the text book do not always work well to their classroom situations.

Recommendation for further research

During the interview and group discussion, teachers informed that lack of interest among students to learn speaking is one of the problems that affect the teaching/learning process of speaking lessons in general and students' ability to master their speaking skill in particular. Therefore, further research should be conducted in order to identify the students' motivation well and to take appropriate measures.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Questions with Teachers

- 1 . What is adaptation in language teaching/ learning and what are the individual adaptive techniques?
- 2 . How are they important? Do you employ these techniques in your actual teaching of speaking lessons? When do you use them?
- 3 . Do you supplement speaking activities in the text book with additional ones from sources such as newspapers, magazines, etc. and other related books? When do you do this?
- 4 . What type of activities do you use in speaking classes? Are the speaking activities and even contexts in the text book sufficient in variety and in maintaining students' motivation and active involvement? What do you do to fill the gap if you feel that they are inadequate in doing so?
- 5 . Do you create your own contexts or situations which enable your students to discuss more in pairs and groups during speaking classes?
- 6 . Do you encourage your students to speak English both in and outside the classroom?
- 7 . How many periods do you devote to the teaching of speaking lessons in each unit?
- 8 . What do you think are problems that affect you in making successful speaking classes?

Appendix B: Questions for Group Discussion with Students

During the speaking classes,

1. Do your English teachers make you work on speaking activities in pairs and groups?
2. What kind of activities do they provide you with?
3. Do they present the speaking lessons in contexts that are familiar to you and do they encourage you to communicate through English freely?
4. What do you think are the factors that affect you in participating actively?

Appendix C: Questions for Group Discussion with Teachers

1. In the grade 11 English language syllabus, speaking sections in each unit are specified to be covered within minimum of 3 periods. However, as it can be seen from your lesson plans, you spend only 1 or 2 periods. Why do you budget these less amount of periods for speaking lessons?
2. What do you think are the factors that make students tend to learn other skills such as grammar, vocabulary and reading lessons and to ignore speaking skills?
3. When you make your students work on speaking activities in pairs and groups, do you make sure that pairs and groups are formed by mixing males with females, clever students with weak ones and the seating arrangements are suitable to the works?
4. In most of the classes I observed, you were using dialogue activities. Do you think that making students practise only dialogue activities will improve their speaking skills ?
5. Do you use continuous assessment technique in order to insure that your students are making progress in speaking English?

Declaration

I, the under signed, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

Name Alelign sinshaw

Signature 

Place: Addis Ababa University

Date of submission May, 2011