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

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND  
PRACTICES IN LOWERING AFFECTIVE FILTERS IN  
TEACHING SPEAKING**

**(Mettu Secondary and Preparatory School in Focus)**

**By**

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**AAU**

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF POST GRADUATE STUDIES  
FACULTY OF LANGUAGE STUDIES  
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## Table of Contents

Contents	Pages
Acknowledgements-----	i
Table of contents-----	ii
List of tables-----	vi
Abstract-----	vii
1. Introduction-----	1
1.1. Background of the Study-----	1
1.2. Statement of the Problem-----	3
1.3. Objectives of the Study-----	4
1.3.1. Research Questions-----	4
1.4. Scope of the Study-----	4
1.4.1. Rational for Selecting the Site-----	5
1.5. Significance of the Study-----	5
1.6. Limitations of the Study-----	6
1.7. Abbreviations-----	6
2. Review of Related Literature-----	7
2.1. Teachers' Beliefs and Practices-----	7
2.2. Affective Filter in Second Language Acquisition-----	9
2.3. Teaching Speaking Skills in Relation to Affective Filters-----	10
2.4. Conceptual Foundation of the Affective Filter-----	11
2.5. Categories of Affective Filters-----	12
2.5.1. Motivation-----	13
2.5.1.1. Motivation in SLL-----	13
2.5.1.2. Creating motivational conditions-----	14
2.5.2. Self-confidence-----	15
2.5.2.1. Creating Students' Self Confidence-----	15

2.5.3.	Anxiety-----	16
2.5.3.1.	Communication Apprehension (CA)-----	16
2.5.3.2.	Test Anxiety-----	17
2.5.3.3.	Fear of Negative evaluation-----	18
2.5.4.	Anxiety and Speaking Skill-----	18
2.5.5.	Effects of Anxiety thorough the Three Stages of Language Learning-----	19
2.6.	The Role of Teachers in Lowering Affective filters-----	21
2.7.	Practical Techniques used to Decrease Affective Filters-----	22
2.7.1.	Raising Students Awareness-----	23
2.7.2.	Error Corrections-----	23
2.7.3.	Developing Friendliness in The Classroom-----	23
2.7.4.	Practicing Speaking through Deferent Tasks-----	23
2.7.5.	Classroom Procedures-----	24
3.	Methodology of the Study-----	25
3.1.	Design of the Study-----	25
3.2.	Subjects and Sampling Techniques-----	25
3.3.	Data Collecting Instruments-----	26
3.4.	Development of the Instruments-----	27
3.4.1.	Observation Checklist-----	27
3.4.2.	Focus-group Discussion-----	28
3.4.3.	Questionnaire-----	28
3.5.	Data Collection Procedures-----	29
3.6.	Data Analysis Procedures-----	30
4.	Findings and Discussion-----	32
4.1.	Presentation of Data-----	32
4.1.1.	Biographical Data of the participants of FGD-----	32

4.1.2.	Presentation of Data Gathered via FGD-----	33
4.1.2.1.	Teachers' Views of Affective Filters-----	33
4.1.2.2.	Motivation and Motivational Strategies-----	33
4.1.2.3.	Classroom Organization-----	34
4.1.2.4.	Error Correction and Feedback Provision-----	34
4.1.2.5.	Causes of the Heightened Affective Filters-----	35
4.1.2.6.	Intended Solutions to Lower Affective Filters-----	35
4.1.3.	Presentation of Data Gathered via Classroom Observation-----	36
4.1.3.1.	Design of Speaking Tasks-----	36
4.1.3.2.	Motivational Strategies-----	37
4.1.3.3.	Classroom Organization-----	37
4.1.3.4.	Mode of Error Correction-----	38
4.1.3.5.	Teachers' Behavior-----	38
4.1.3.6.	Students' Behavior-----	39
4.1.4.	Presentation of Data Gathered via Questionnaire-----	40
4.1.4.1.	Practices of Teachers' Teaching Speaking-----	43
4.1.4.2.	Design of Speaking Tasks-----	43
4.1.4.3.	Types of Speaking Activities-----	44
4.1.4.4.	Students' view about Their Teachers' Behavior-----	44
4.1.4.5.	Students' View about Making Mistakes-----	44
4.2.	Discussion of the Findings-----	45
4.2.1.	Design of Speaking Tasks-----	45
4.2.2.	Motivation and Motivation Strategies-----	46
4.2.3.	Classroom Organization-----	46
4.2.4.	Mode Of Error Correction and Feedback Provision-----	47
4.2.5.	Teachers' Behavior-----	48

4.2.6. Students' Behavior-----	49
4.2.7. Challenges Teachers Encounter in Teaching Speaking----	49
5. Conclusions and Recommendations-----	50
5.1. Conclusion-----	50
5.2. Recommendations-----	53
References-----	59
Appendices:	
Appendix I:Points of FGD-----	64
Appendix II: Observation Checklist-----	65
Appendix III: Students' Questionnaire-----	67
Appendix IV: Afan Oromo Version of the questionnaire-----	70
Appendix V : Transcription of FGD -----	73

## List of Tables

<b>Tables</b>	<b>Pages</b>
<i>Table 1: Biographical Data of the Participants of FGD</i> -----	32
<i>Table 2: Data Gathered through Observation</i> -----	37
<i>Table 3: Biographical Data of the Respondent Students</i> -----	41
<i>Table 4: Presentation of Responses about Speaking Activities</i> -----	42
<i>Table 5: Students' View about Their Teachers' Behavior and Making Mistakes While Speaking In English</i> -----	43

## **Abstract**

*The study was conducted to explore English teachers' beliefs and practices of lowering affective filters in EFL classes. Some basic research questions, like, 1) to what extent do English Language teachers have the knowledge about affective filters?, 2) to what extent do teachers attempt to minimize the negative influence of the affective filters during teaching speaking?, 3) what practical techniques were used by teachers to foster speaking skill of the learner by lowering the affective variables? To answer these questions three tools: FGD, observation, and questionnaire were deployed. FGD was used mainly to grab teachers' belief;, observation was deployed to see the practices of teachers in real classrooms; and the questionnaire was used to get evidence from the students. The data gathered was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The findings revealed that English teachers in the school had good awareness about affective filters and they were using different practical techniques to combat the negative effects of affective filters. Though the teachers were doing a good job in lowering affective filters, this study didn't neglect some gaps on which teachers need to focus. It was recommended that English Language teachers of the school should enrich themselves with up to date knowledge of FL teaching, should be alert to know and tackle some psychological problems in FL classes, should not ignore some useful techniques of lowering affective filters like students' constructive peer correction. Experience sharing between teachers, conducting action research to improve students' English speaking skills and arranging some extra times for improving English speaking were also among the issues recommended.*

## Chapter One

### Introduction

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

One of the skills taught in EFL classes is speaking. Speaking, as a productive skill, is one of the skills teachers and learners strive to improve because one of the main aims of language teaching is to enhance communication; and one of the ways in which communication takes place is speaking. (Brown and Yule, 1983)

In our country's context English is taught as a second language at all levels and it is the instructional media in secondary and tertiary level. Being this is the fact, Ethiopian English students need to improve their speaking skill in order to communicate their idea as much as possible. Moreover, English is also an access to technological, social and political advancement of the world.

Teaching and learning speaking, as it is common for all learning, is influenced by some factors. Among these, the psychological factors are the crucial one. Some of them are personality factors (Brown, 1994). Personality factors can be treated as student's motivation, self-esteem, empathy, inhibitions, attitude, etc. Krashen in his theory of SLA called these factors 'the affective filters' (1987).

The concept of affective filters was first proposed by Dulay and Burt (1977) as cited in Krashen (1981). Spada & Lightbon (1993), defines affective filters as imaginary barriers which prevent the learners from using input which is available around them. According to him 'affect' refers to such things as motives, needs, attitudes, and emotional states. Yule (1996) also defines it as it is used to describe a kind of barrier to acquisition that results from negative feelings or experiences. Obviously, if someone is psychologically stressed, discomfort, or unmotivated, he/she is unlikely to learn anything.

McLaughlin (1982:32), another educator, underscores “affective filters are seen to play an important role in SLA”. According to him there is a general agreement that affective factors play a critical role in SLL. Another language researcher who dealt with Krashen’s work on affective filters was Yong (1999). Her expression can be quoted as:

*Stephen Krashen’s influential works on language learning and teaching helped bring widespread attention to the potential impact learners’ emotional states have on successful language acquisition (pp:ix).*

Speaking is a productive skill and can be considered as an output in language learning. If input is affected by some affective variables, it has the direct influence on producing output. So, affective filters influence student’s speaking. When a learner is tense, not confident and bored, he/she has no interest to speak. Learners do not want to produce spoken language because of fear of making errors. As Tanveer (2007:1) mentioned, students’ oral practice in SLL is highly affected by this psychological factors.

Here, the teacher’s facilitative role in speaking class becomes crucial. Teachers should provide an environment which promotes speaking. An environment which can promote speaking is a one that with low anxiety atmosphere. Regarding this, River (1987: 10) said, “The relaxed and enthusiastic atmosphere stimulates student participation in the interaction that is essential to language learning.” Speaking is one of the interactive activities in SLL.

Spada (1993) claims the implication of affective filters for teachers as practitioners of language teaching. She states that controlling these factors in order they do not obscure or constrain the learning will be teacher’s decisive role though it is difficult to avoid them.

Some researchers under took the studies on the causes of affective filters (Tanveer, 2007), and on female students speaking anxiety (Gebeyew, 2008).

As the researcher's experience is concerned, there was no local researcher who conducted study on the practice of lowering the affective filters in relation to speaking classes. This work could expand these starts to further the problem gets attention by other researchers

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

We live in the global world where communication, especially orality, is vital for everyone to cope with social, economic and political dynamicity. The way to cope with is through global language. Whether one likes it or not, today English is overwhelmingly dominating the global communication. It is unquestionable that someone gets English very important in his /her participation in the global world (Tanveer, 2007).

It is the fact that the main objective of teaching English in Ethiopia is to address this need. It was also to attain this goal that MOE under Ethiopian Government has launched a program known as ELIP (Pat, 2007). Through this program effort is being made at the national level to provide the English language teachers, particularly to those teaching at secondary and primary school levels, with trainings that would enable them to improve their students' English language skills. They are expected to use English in order they get an access to the world and in order they become competent in their academic status. However, students of English in Ethiopia, as various local researches frequently showed whatever their grade level is they are experiencing low performance in speaking English. They are not well performing in expressing their ideas using English. One of the problems they have is the problem of heightened negative affective filters during speaking foreign language. These affective filters restrain learners from using the language fluently in communicating their idea when needed.

The researcher, as a practitioner of language teaching, observes his students with this problem. He thought that the role of the teacher in minimizing the negative influence of the affective filters is of great importance. As he was a

member of English teaching team in the selected school, the researcher was interested to explore teachers' beliefs and practice in decreasing the negative effects of psychological constraints in fostering speaking skill.

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

The major purpose of the research was to investigate and describe the beliefs or perception that English second language teachers have, and further to demonstrate the extent to which the practitioners in the selected schools were striving to minimize this problem. The study also attempted to highlight what the affective filters are, their components and strategies to be designed to tackle their negative effect in teaching speaking skill. So the study was supposed to answer the following questions.

#### **1.3.1 Research Questions**

1. To what extent do English language teachers have the knowledge about affective filters in teaching speaking?
2. If they are aware of the affective filters, to what extent do teachers attempt to overcome the problems of teaching speaking?
3. What practical techniques are used by teachers to foster speaking skill of the learners by lowering negative affective variables?
4. What are the challenges teachers encountered when they attempt to improve students speaking skills, particularly challenges related with lowering affective filters?

### **1.4 Research site and Subjects**

The research was conducted in Mettu preparatory school grade 11-12 English classes and all English teachers of this secondary school.

#### **1.4.1 Rational for Selecting the Site**

The school selected was situated in the capital town of Illu Abba Bor zone. Its location made the school as a center for teachers' on job training. Usually teachers of different woreda come to this school to attend training. For

instance, all ELIP training took place in this school; very recently, last summer (2010) a charity organization named *Menschen fur Menschen* (MFM) offered on Job training for English teachers of the high schools in this school for consecutive 40 days. This opportunity made the teachers in this school to fully participate in these trainings and could exchange experiences with those from other high schools. So, more can be expected from these teachers.

Another fact was that, the school, being the centre of the zone has relatively experienced and educated teachers compared to other high schools of which almost all of them have at least first degree in ELT. The last reason for the researcher to select this site was the closest and good rapport the researcher had with the leading body of the school and members of the English language department as the researcher once was the member.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

According to Lier's (1988) argument as cited in Kedir (2000), there are two main motives to conduct research: 'wanting to know' and 'wanting to help'. This is to mean the purpose of any research is to gain additional knowledge and to seek solution for a given problem. The importance of this study could be to add some knowledge about real teachers' beliefs and practices of addressing the affective filters in their class and also to show some techniques that could be used by teachers to solve students' problems of speaking English.

The issue of addressing students' speaking skill problem was being studied frequently because of the influence it could have in the students' communication ability and academic success. If the teachers understand what affective filters are in second language learning, they try their best to lower the negative effect of these variables in students' speaking activity. Moreover, language teachers could be benefited in that they would be able to

design different techniques that fosters learner's speaking activity by minimizing these psychological constraints.

### **1.6 Limitations of the Study**

From the very beginning, studying about belief is something abstract which cannot be described in number or in any other concrete measurements. As my study was concerned, Mettu secondary school English language teachers' beliefs and practices were investigated using the three tools which were set based up on the theories drawn by different scholars. It is impossible to say these tools were perfect and bias free, though the researcher have tried to gather them from works of different language educators. The other thing was some of unclear expression of FGD participant while transcribing and might be some of researcher's bias during observation. These all factors might have negative impact on the end result of the research which could in turn affect the generalizability of the findings.

### **1.7 Organization of the Study**

This study has five parts: the introduction, literature review, methodology of the study, presentation & discussion, and conclusions & recommendations.

#### **1.7 Abbreviations**

EFL- English as a Foreign Language Program	ELIP- English Language Improvement ELT- English Language Teaching
FGD -Focus Group Discussion	FLL _Foreign Language Learning
SLA- Second Language Acquisition	SLL- Second Language Learning
TL - Target Language	

## **Chapter Two**

### **Review of Related Literature**

In this part of the study, explanations on main umbrella ideas in this study such as the belief and practice of teachers, the affective filters, and the affective filters in relation to speaking skill were provided. Following this, conceptual or theoretical foundation of the affective filters was addressed on which the study was based. The next concern was about the components of affective filters which were categorized in to three, namely motivation, self confidence and anxiety. Special attention was given for anxiety which is frequently called for its great effect on speaking skill by various language educators. Lastly, the teacher's roles and some practical techniques used to lower the affective filters were addressed having a thorough look at different sources.

#### **2.1 Teachers' Beliefs and Practices**

Belief is defined as "a presupposition or a statement of relation among things accepted as true" (Eishenhart et. al. 1998:153). Pajares (1992) also defined belief in terms of manipulating knowledge for a particular purpose or under necessary circumstance. (Brown and Cooney, 1982) cited in Pajares (1992) explain that beliefs are dispositions to actions and major determinants of behavior, although the dispositions are time bounded and context specific qualities that have important implications for research and measurement. From this one can understand that beliefs are conceived ideas accepted as true by an individual and which guide one's action or behavior which help the individual to understand his environment and influence the perception of information in to the belief system.

Teachers' beliefs refer to teachers' pedagogical belief or the belief of relevance to an individual training. Freeman (1986) cited in Pajares (1992) describes

that teacher's beliefs are sometimes called preconception or implicit theories. He further states their belief encompasses belief about students and learning process, role of schools in society, responsibility for achieving their goals ,and matters that are related to their profession that have an influence on their classroom practice.

According to Richards (1998), teachers' beliefs are emanated from their own experience as language learners, established practice, and personality factors and educational or research based principles.

Practice, the other important notion in this study, was also dealt by Woods (1996).Practice is the overall activities which are undertaken by the language teacher to make language teaching real in the classroom. Practice of the teacher is determined by his beliefs or assumptions. For instance, one who assumes language learning as knowing the rules and forms of the language works to make his students enriched in knowing about grammatical rules of that language. The other who assumes teaching language is making the learners use the target language strives to help his students use the target language in different social contexts to communication.

When we consider teachers' practice, no one would argue that the beliefs teachers hold influence their perceptions and judgments which in turn affect their behavior in classroom, or understanding the belief structures of teacher (Pajares, 1992).Teachers' beliefs, according to Johnson (1994) educational research findings, influence perception and judgments, and play a great role to translate information on teaching methods in the classroom practices. Similarly, Farrell's (2005) study investigated the extent to which teachers' beliefs influenced their classroom practices and his findings suggested that what teachers say and do in the classroom is governed by their beliefs.

Different research findings indicate that the beliefs teachers hold about themselves, learners, language learning and teaching influence their classroom practice more than the method that they are told to adopt by

“outsiders” (Richards, 1998). Teachers’ belief and classroom practices are, therefore, so interwoven that teachers need to examine their pedagogical beliefs everyday and monitor how far their actions reflect their beliefs (Williams and Burden, 1977).

## **2.2 Affective Filter in Second Language Acquisition**

The notion of affective filter comes to exist by Dulay and Burt (1987). It began to be dealt in language literature during 1980’s when Terrell and Krashen hypothesized the second language acquisition hypotheses (Krashen and Terrell 1983).

Stephen Krashen was the father of the natural order approach to language teaching which was based on few simple concepts. The first concept stated the acquisition of the language was more important than learning. He argued that it was only through acquisition that language skills could truly be developed. Krashen’s theory has five parts: 1) the natural order of language acquisition, 2) acquisition of language versus learning language 3) conscious learning as monitor 4) learning language through comprehensible input and 5) the presence of affective filter in second language students. It is the fifth part of this theory which is the focus of this study.

Spada and Lightbown (1993) define the affective filters as imaginary barriers which prevents the learners from using input which is available around them. Another researcher called Lim (2007) also defines affective filters as a psychological factor that filter the amount of language received by a second language learners’ brain. According to Lim, these factors can include all types of emotions from motivation to self- doubt to boredom.

Brown (1973), in his words, called the affective filters ‘the affective variables’ in which he defines these variables as psychological constraints which impedes the process of learning.

Another writer, Mclaughlin (1987), uses the term `mental block` to express the affective filter. He defines `filter` separately as the part of internal processing system that sub-consciously screens incoming language based on what psychologists call `affect`: the learner's motives, needs, attitudes and emotional states. Filter is taught to limit what it is that the learner attends to, what will be learned, and how the language will be acquired. The 'affective filter' which is to be focused in this study is that which negatively affects the student English speaking skill in and out of classroom.

### **2.3 Teaching Speaking Skills in Relation to Affective Filters**

Speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non verbal symbols in a variety of contexts (Bygate, 1987). Speaking is the crucial part of second/foreign language learning.

Teaching speaking is to teach ESL/EFL learners to produce the English speech sounds, sound patterns, use words and sentences, formation, patterns and rhythms of the second language, select appropriate expression in the right social context, e.t.c (Nunan,2003). The main goal of teaching speaking is to promote efficient communication. Learners should be able to make themselves efficient communicators. Learners should be able to make themselves understood by others, using their current proficiency to the fullest.

According to Cook (2002), we teach speaking through speaking. The word teaching in case of speaking is sometimes vague. Teaching here should mean helping students use the target language. Now a days linguists and ESL teachers agree on that students learn to speak in the second /foreign language by `interacting`. Communicative language teaching and collaborative learning serve best for this aim. Communicative language teaching is based on real-life situations that require communication in short. ESL teachers should create classroom environment where students have real-life communication, authentic activities and meaningful tasks that

promote oral language. One of the measures of conducive speaking classroom environment is the beliefs the ESL teachers have about affective filters. Because speaking as a productive skill is highly influenced by these variables (River, 1987).

#### **2.4 Conceptual Foundation of the Affective Filter**

The 'affective filter', as stated before, was first proposed by Dulay and Burt , and got sound attention by Stephen Krashen. Krashen, in his fifth hypothesis, claims that affective filters have relation with second language acquisition process. He advocated that performers with optimal attitudes have lower affective filter. That means the performer or the learner is ready to receive input and the input is well processed and changed to output (Krashen, 1987).

When we deal with the foundation of this theory, different question can be raised. For example, to what extent the hypotheses were supported by evidence, to what extent the hypotheses where accepted by scholars, etc. Concerning these questions, Krashen and Terell (1993) claimed their hypotheses were hypotheses or 'guesses' as to how language acquisition works. Therefore, they underscored that other researcher may change the hypotheses. For their hypotheses, they motioned that they made hypotheses based on exact data, and made further observation in an attempt to find supporting evidence and /or contradictory evidence. To quote their confirmation,

*so we are presenting our best guesses to date not necessarily the ultimate truth about second language acquisition... lets assure you that the hypotheses presented here are well supported by imperical data and are therefore unblemished by damaging counter- examples "Krashen and Terell (1983: )*

One can induce from their expression that their hypotheses were guesses with evidence though they were not absolute truth.

Among the language scholars raised his argument against Krashen's language acquisition hypotheses was McLaughlin Barry. McLaughlin (1987) argues that the limiting or restrictive role of the affective filter is left rather vague in the writings of Krashen and his colleagues. One of his arguments is the hypothesis lacks an explanation, for instance, how the filters influence and which part of the language they influence more. The second point of his argument is there is no verification about learners' or acquirers' individual differences concerning the distinctions they have in entertaining these affective variables. Krashen has provided no coherent explanation for the development of the affective filter and no basis for relating the affective filter with individual differences in language learning. Nor does the hypothesis bear sound linguistic prove.

McLaughlin, after putting his points of arguments, witnessed that few would see a need to approve an affective filter which is vague in its origin and function but most researchers in the field of second language acquisition would admit that the affective variables play a critical role (Ibid)

Regarding this idea, McLaughlin himself said:

*This (his argument) is not to say that Krashen is wrong in his perceptions about language teaching. Many researchers working in the field agree with him on basic assumptions, such as the need to move from grammar based to communicatively oriented language instruction, the role of the affective factors in language learning and the importance of acquisition sequences in second language development" (McLaughlin 1987:57)*

Ellis (1985), another language educator, incorporates this hypothesis in his work on understanding language acquisition. The writer relates the filter

controls how much input the learner comes in to contact with and how much input is converted to intake.

## **2.5 Categories of Affective Filters**

There are countless psychological factors which affect student's ability to digest new language instruction, but the affective filter theory has commonly broken down in to three main categories motivation self confidence and anxiety.

### **2.5.1 Motivation**

Motivation is one of the emotional factors that influence all kinds of learning activity. One of the most basic and truth about education of any kind is that a motivated learner will be able to absorb more information and inputs than a similarly skilled unmotivated learner (Harmer, 1983).

Dornyei (2001) classifies motivational components as intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation by eliciting the self determination theory by Deci and Ryan (1985) and Vallerand (1997). According to Dornyei, intrinsic motivation is concerned with behavior performed for its own sake in order to experience pleasure and satisfaction such as the joy of doing a particular activity or satisfying one's curiosity. Extrinsic motivation involves performing a behavior as a means to an end that is to receive some rewards or to avoid punishment

Krashen (1987) relates these two components to language learning by claiming that intrinsic motivation is essential for language learner to develop their communication competence, and he adds that the teacher of a language should focus on creating intrinsic motivation.

#### **2.5.1.1 Motivation in SLL**

Motivation in L2 learning has instead, chiefly been used to refer to long term stable attitudes in the students' minds in particular integrative and

instrumental motivation introduced by Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert in a series of books and papers (Gardner and Lambert, 1992 & Gardner 1995 cited in Cook, 2001).

Brown (1994) classifies these students' motives of foreign language learning in to instrumental, integrative and assimilative motivation.

According to Cook (2001) integrative motivation reflects whether the student identifies with the target culture and people in some sense, or rejects them. The more the student appreciates the target culture- reads its literature, visits it on holyday, - looks for opportunities to practice the language and so on the more successful the student will be.

Instrumental motivation is considered as learning language to pass an examination, to get job e.t.c.; but assimilation motivation is the need to become an indistinguishable member of speech community, and it usually requires prolonged contact with the second language culture (Brown 1994).

#### **2.5.1.2 Creating motivational conditions**

Students will find it difficult to learn a second language in the class room if they have none of the three motives. The teachers should be aware of their students' attitudes toward the language to ignite their motives of learning the target language. Motivation also works in both directions. High motivation can bring successful learning and successful learning again can create high motivation. The process of creating successful learning which causes motivation may be under the teachers' control. Selection of teaching materials and the content of the lesson should correspond to the motivation of the learner (Cook, 2001).

Regarding this, Yule (1996) states that a language learning situation that encourages success and accomplishment must consequently is more helpful than that dwells on errors and corrections. Indeed, the learner who is willing

to guess, risks making mistakes and tries to communicate in SL will tend to be more successful.

Dornyei (2001) lists some motivational strategies which the teachers of language can apply in their teaching. Appropriate teachers' behavior and a good relationship with the students, a pleasant supportive classroom atmosphere, and a cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms are three interrelated condition that can promote motivation of foreign language learner.

### **2.5.2 Self- confidence**

Another widely accepted tenet of second language acquisition is the fact that students with extroverted personality are successful in becoming competent in another language than the introverted students. Extroverted students, who have self-confidence, are more likely to receive a new language input which leads to increased competence, and the reception of additional language inputs. Introverted learners who have less self- confidence, on the other hand, are less likely to use new inputs that they have learned, therefore keeping their language learning stagnant (Krashen, 1987; Brown, 1994).

#### **2.5.2.1 Creating Students' Self Confidence**

Students both with high confidence and low confidence have or greater probability of testing new inputs if they have reason to expect that they will be rewarded for their efforts. Concerning this, Dornyei (2001) reminds that "there is a psychology theory called the expectancy value theory. According to this theory a person's mindset is a function of what kind of outcome a person expects combined with the value that the person places on that outcome."

If, for example, a student receives negative or no feedback from his teacher whenever he attempts to communicate, then according to the expectancy

value theory the student will likely not value improving his language skills enough to overcome the negative feedback expected. He will not try to communicate. But, if students receive positive feedback for trying new input, they may begin to develop a mindset that teaches him to expect rewards for trying even if the value he places on language improvement is low.

Language teachers should know positive reinforcement is an integral factor in all effective classrooms, especially in language classrooms. English teachers can build confidence for their students by placing them on in to a loop of language experimentation and positive results that could lead to accentual fluency in the language.

### **2.5.3 Anxiety**

Anxiety plays an important affective role in second language acquisitions. It is almost impossible to define anxiety in a simple sentence. It is associated with feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self doubt, apprehends or worry (Brown, 1994).

According to McIntyre and Gardner (1994) as quoted in Abate (1996) foreign language anxiety is defined as the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second or foreign language contexts, especially when learning and using the language in the classroom. Hortwitz et al. (1993) in Abate (1996) states that it is a distinct complex of self-perception, beliefs, feelings and behaviors arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process.

Anxiety can be either facilitating or debilitating. Facilitating anxiety motivates learners to adopt an approach, attitude and willing to confront the new learning task. Debilitating anxiety motivates learners to assume an avoidance attitude and therefore tends to escape from the learning task. Facilitating anxiety helps the learners do better than they might otherwise

and debilitating anxiety can create a state of fear, being reluctant to participation in classroom activities (Allwright and Bailey, 1994).

Horwitz et al. (1986) cited in Tanveer (2007) considers language anxiety with relation to performance evaluation within academic and social contexts, drew parallels between it and the three related performance anxieties: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Hence, the description of these components will lay the foundation for the concept of second /foreign language anxiety.

### **2.5.3.1 Communication Apprehension (CA)**

Communication apprehension as defined by Horwitz et al. (1986:120) is “a type of shyness characterized by fear or anxiety about communicating with people”. Communication anxiety may be specific to just a few settings (eg. Public speaking) or may exist in everyday communication situations and reticence are considered frequently precipitate CA. These feelings vary greatly from individual to individual and from situation to situation.

Daly (1991) cited in Tanveer (2007) presents five explanations in the development of CA which can offer an insight in to the issue of understanding the causes of anxiety for EFL/ESL learners. The first one in terms of ‘genetic disposition’ indicating that one’s genetic legacy may be a substantial contributor to one’s anxiety. Secondly, he explains CA in terms of reinforcement and punishment related to the act of communication. Another explanation Daly focuses on is the adequacy of people’s early communication skills acquisition. Children who receive early experience of talking are more likely to be less apprehensive than those who receive less apprehensive. All five explanations indicate that the nature of learner’s surrounding causes communication apprehension.

“Communication apprehension obviously plays a large role in second /foreign language anxiety. People who are apprehensive speaking in dyads or

group are likely to be given in more trouble when doing so in a second/foreign language class” (Horwitz, et al, 1986:127) cited in (Tanveer, 2007).

### **2.5.3.2 Test Anxiety**

Test anxiety as explained by Horwitz et al (1986) ‘refers to a type of performance anxiety stemming from a fear of failure. Test anxiety is quite pervasive in language classrooms because of its continuous performance evaluative nature. Many of the learners feel pressure when asked to perform in a foreign/second language, because they are doubly challenge by the fact that they need to recall and coordinate many grammar forms at the same time during limited test period. (Price,1991, MacIntyre and Gardner,1994) cited in (Ohata, 2005). It is also important to note that oral testing has the potential to provoke both written and oral communication anxiety in students (Horwitz et al. 1986 in Tanveer, 2007).

### **2.5.3.3 Fear of Negative evaluation**

Fear of negative evaluation is an extension of the second component (test anxiety) of foreign second language anxiety because it is not limited to test-taking situations; rather it may occur in any social evaluative situation such as interviewing for a job or speaking in the second/ foreign language class. (Horwitz ,1986) in Tanveer 2007. Small group class discussions even, some of the learners might feel anxious for fear of negative evaluation from their peers, possibly ending up being quiet and reticent, contrary to their initial intention to participate (Ohata, 2005).

In addition, the learners’ fear of being negatively evaluated in the classroom can be further intensified where the instructors believe that their primary role is to constantly correct students’ errors more like a drill sergeants than that of a facilitator. Although learners feel that some error correction is

necessary, (Koch and Terrell, 1991 in Ohata 2005) the manner of error correction is often cited as potentially provoking anxiety in students. (Ohata, 2005)

#### **2.5.4 Anxiety and Speaking Skill**

Studies revealed that foreign language learning in general experiences anxiety. Scholars attempted to separately investigate each language skills and anxiety at different times. For example, Saito, Horwitz and Garza (1999) cited Horwitz (2001) were among those scholars. According to their study each skill of language has the opportunity to provoke anxiety. But abundant scholars found that speaking is the highly anxiety provoking skill. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) claimed that speaking is anxiety provoking in foreign language class. Daly and Young (1991) also found that most students are particularly anxious when they have to speak a foreign language in front of the class. Spolsky (1989) reported that speaking is the most common complaint of anxious students.

Research has consistently shown that anxious language students suffer significantly during oral activities and that anxiety has a negative impact on students' attitudes toward language study (Philips, 1990 cited in Young 1999). Young (1990) found that the language students she surveyed were most anxious when they had to speak in front of their peers.

These all indicated that the anxiety and the other components of affective filters play significant role in students' foreign language oral communicative competence. The fact that this study focuses on affective filter in speaking skills emanates from this background.

### **2.5.5 Effects of Anxiety through the Three Stages of Language Learning**

The three stages of language acquisition are input, processing and output. (Krashen, 1985) These three stages are affected differently by anxiety in which the effect of one stage again affects the other.

#### **a. Input Anxiety**

“Input is the first stage of language learning. It activates Language Acquisition Device’ (LAD), an innate language specific module in the brain” (Chomsky cited in Spada & Lightbown, 2006:38) which carries out the further process of language learning. Anxiety at the input stage (input anxiety) refers to anxiety experienced by the learner when they encounter a new word or phrase in the target language. For successful language acquisition, learner’s affective filter needs to be lower, otherwise a tense, nervous or bored learner may filter out’ input making it unavailable for acquisition (Ibid).

Input anxiety is more likely to cause miscomprehension of the message sent by the interlocutors, which may lead to the loss of successful communication and an increased level of anxiety.

#### **b. Processing Anxiety**

Anxiety of the processing stage called processing anxiety refers to the apprehension students experience when performing cognitive operation on new information. *During the processing stage anxiety can influence both the speed and accuracy of learning. Because it acts as distraction, students may not be able to learn new words, phrases, grammar, and so on when they are worried (Young, 1999).*

Students who process deeply what they hear and integrate with previous knowledge and who try to understand its structure create a better understanding of the language and its use.

Speaking particularly in the foreign language requires more than one mental activity at one time like choosing words, pronouncing them, and stringing them together with the appropriate grammatical markers etc. Lightbown (2006:39) .Where limited processing mental capacity may cause anxiety, conversely, anxiety may restrict the operational capacity of the mind and both together may cause impaired performance.

### **c. Output Anxiety**

Anxiety while communicating in the target language is more likely to appear at the output stage, which entirely depends up on the successful completion of previous stages. Output Anxiety refers to learner's nervousness of fear experienced when required to demonstrate their ability to use previously learned material. (Onwuegbuzie et al. 2000:475 cited in Tanveer 2007) MacIntyre and Gardner asserted, "High level of anxiety of the stage might hinder students ability to speak in the target language" (MacIntyre and Gardner ,1994 cited in Tanveer 2007).

Anxiety arousal at the output stage can influence the quality of second language communication. Anxiety at this stage affects the students' production of oral and written skills (Young, 1999).

## **2.6 The Role of Teachers in Lowering Affective filters**

As noted earlier, the role of the teachers in language teaching depends up on the philosophy of language teaching they perceived. The beliefs or assumption they have limits what roles they play.

Instructors' beliefs about language teaching and learning, for instance, can be a source of anxiety. Literature asserted that instructors' belief that their role is to correct rather than to facilitate students when they make mistakes exacerbates second/ foreign language anxiety in students. Further, it is stated that the majority of teachers consider their role to be "less a counselor

and friend and objected a too friendly and in authoritative student- teacher relationship” (Onwuegbuzie et al. 1999:220 in Tanveer 2007)

Richards and Rodgers (2001) discussed the role of teachers in different methods. Some believe as the teacher is imparter or transmitter of knowledge and as a centre of learning and some other believe the teachers as catalyst, diagnosticians and model of learning still others limit teachers’ role to providing direction preparing instructional contents and planning the lesson etc.

Some scholars such as Krashen brought new approach to the role of the teacher. The role of the teacher is considered to be facilitator of learning language in which interaction is mainly focused. The teacher provides inputs, conducive environment to learning takes place and the learners develop their communication competence (Krashen, 1982). Rivers also underscores that classroom should not be teacher directed and dominated if interaction is the goal of language teaching. This implies that the role of the teacher in modern communicative language teaching is the facilitator, organizer, prompter and e.t.c of interaction (Rivers, 1987).

One of the facilitating activities of the teacher in teaching speaking class can be encouraging students to speak the target language. To do this the teachers must know the affective factors that hinder the learners from speaking the target language.

Krashen defines an effective language teacher as someone who can provide input and help make it comprehensible in a low anxiety situation. Krashen’s main hypothesis in terms of second language acquisition states that our goals should not only include supplying comprehensible input but also creating a situation that encourages a low filter (Krashen, 1985). Creating a low anxiety classroom atmosphere is clearly an important prerequisite to language learning success. Language classrooms are inherently face threatening environments (Dornyei 2001:9).

## **2.7 Practical Techniques Used to Decrease Affective Filters**

So far the points under discussion were about the components of affective filters, and their effect in developing oral skill of the learner with special attention to anxiety which is frequently called component for heightened filter in speaking. Having been acquainted with such knowledge, what is very important for language practitioners is to know the techniques to alleviate these psychological impediments in language learning (Horwitz, 1998 in Philips, 1990).

Understating some of the factors that can raise anxiety levels of language students is important. Knowing what to do to reduce stress in the classroom, however, is the issue of primary concern to most practitioners" (Philips, 1990). The study at different times by different scholars reveals that it is difficult to fully understand the ultimate causes of these affective variables. The reason is that the degree and the kind of the variables vary from place to place, learner to learner, etc. /Ibid/

Language educators suggest different techniques which can be used depending on the context in which foreign language learning takes place.

### **2.7.1 Raising students Awareness**

Firstly, students' cognitive awareness about making mistakes in L2 learning should be raised. This can be done by conducting discussion between learners in order that they freely discuss on the anxieties that individual learners experience. The student must talk openly with their peers and teachers on their problem. This helps to design strategies to cope with the problem (Young, 1991).

### **2.7.2 Error Corrections**

As early stated, fear of making error is one of the source of anxiety. Teachers' ways of correcting errors can highly affect students' feeling. Teacher should

Teacher should develop his students` mentality that making error is a part of learning. The way of correcting errors and giving feedback is frequently suggested by different scholars. For example Tanveer (2007) proposes “positive way of providing correctives and constructive feedback on errors rather than interrupting and correcting students while they are communicating.

### **2.7.3 Developing Friendliness in the Classroom**

Another strategy to cope with these factors is developing friendly atmosphere between teacher and students. The language teacher should be open to discuss with their learners on their difficulties. It is the issue of reducing an authoritarian position of the teacher. This kind of relation between the learners and teacher reduces anxiety and encourages motivation, (Ketabi and & Simin, 2009) and promotes interaction.

### **2.7.4 Practicing Speaking through Deferent Tasks.**

There are so many suggested tasks which promote speaking and lower affective filters. Some of them can be done in the classroom and the others out of the classroom. For example role plays, simulations, storytelling et.c can fit classroom activity and some like drama, interviewing and reporting to the class can be done out of the class and promote self learning in which students` self-confidence can be raised (Harmer, 1991; Bygate, 1987; Jones, 1983)

### **2.7.5 Classroom procedures**

One way to increase confidence is by using co- operative rather than competitive goal structures. Collaborative tasks in which all parties provide certain information create positive interdependence between students (Ellis, 2003). Learners are more intrinsically motivated towards the task when they have to support each other. To develop such an atmosphere grouping students in to pair work or group-work is essential (Burden, 2005).

In general, teachers should be flexible in varying their techniques according to their situations.

*When considering the issue of language anxiety and classroom practice, it is important to keep cultural differences in mind. In addition to the individual variation in students' reactions, it is entirely possible that some practices perceived by one group of learners as comfortable may prove stressful for learners from a different cultural group (Horwitz 2001).*

Therefore, it will be teacher's professional responsibility to select suitable technique according to his overall context.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Design of the Study**

As Horwitz (1998) pointed out, defining students' anxiety or affective filters in general is subjective. Studying about teacher's knowledge and perception is also an area which cannot be addressed through empirical or objective findings (Woods, 1996). For this reason; the researcher would attempt to carry on this research using descriptive case study. The principal instruments of the data gathering were FGD and observation. The other instrument, questionnaire, was secondary tool. FGD was interpreted qualitatively; data from observation and questionnaire were interpreted using simple statistical data such as frequency and percentage.

#### **3.2 Subjects and Sampling Techniques**

As it was found difficult to manage conducting the study in all high schools of Ethiopia, the researcher decided to conduct the study at Mettu Secondary and Preparatory School (Grade 9-12). It was selected hoping that the researcher would have better access in gathering data as he had been working there for years.

The researcher, then, went to the school and inquired important information from the office of a Deputy Director. The information obtained from the office revealed that there were 7 English teachers in the school of whom 5 were males and 2 were females. The deputy director referred the researcher to the head of English Department who cordially arranged the schedules for the study.

Having gathered such pieces of information, the researcher decided to include all the teachers in the study. But unfortunately, 1 of the male teachers and 1

of the female teachers were off-school owing to sick leave and maternal leave respectively. There for 5 teachers (4 males and 1 female) were included in the study.

Regarding the students, the researcher preferred grade 11 and 12 students. The reason behind the preference was the age of the students and their stay at that given school matters to give relevant information about the study which is related with affective filters. According to Krashen (1982) age is one factor for affective filters to be heightened.

The number of grade 11 and 12 is 485. Gray (1987) argues that sample size of at least 10% should be taken for population of 1000. Putting this idea in to consideration the researcher limits the sample size to 50 students which is almost 10 % of the total population. Using systematic random sampling method every 10<sup>th</sup> number of the students was taken as a sample. This was done by getting the students' list from record office which was already loaded on the computer and being assisted by the computer every 10<sup>th</sup> number were chosen from the names listed alphabetically. Though the qualitative study does not worry for sample number, the researcher tried to base his selection on some scientific grounds.

### **3.3 Data Collecting Instruments**

According to Cresswell (2003), the instruments that commonly used in qualitative studies are observation, interview, document analysis, focus group discussion and visual materials. To elicit data for this study, the researcher employed three different instruments: observation checklist, focus group discussion and questionnaire. Questionnaire actually serves for quantitative study, but here in this study it was used as a secondary tool to get extra evidences from the students. Interview questions were re constructed in to questionnaire because the number of the sample students was unmanageable to conduct interview. The rationale for employing such varied instruments was to get more and varied information.

### **3.4 Development of the Instruments**

The development of the instrument underwent the following processes. Firstly, the researcher prepared the observation checklist based up on the literature reviewed and the specific documents as cited in 3.3.1. Following this, the points which were used for focus group discussion were developed. Then at last, the questionnaire was prepared. The questionnaire was translated in to Afan Oromo because the researcher thought that lack of the students' mastery of English might influence the truthfulness of the responses.

Though there was time constraint, the instrument should have been tested. So the researcher conducted a kind of pilot study to check the effectiveness of the instruments, particularly the observation checklist and the questionnaire. The pilot observation of 5 sections were conducted and helped to modify the checklist once again. The questionnaire was distributed to 20 students, 10 from grade 11 and 10 from grade 12, and the responses were collected soon. Depending on this pilot test some questions were modified and some were discarded. For instance, open ended questions were unable to procure information from students as intended, therefore it was cancelled.

#### **3.4.1 Observation Checklist**

Class room observation provides a clear picture of what the actual teaching learning process looks like (Selinger and Shohmy,1989).It is also believed that observation is a very important data gathering tool because" it enables the researchers to document and reflect systematically up on classroom interactions and events as they actually occur rather than as we think they occur"(Burns,1990:80).The researcher, therefore ,found conducting observation vital for it would allow him to grab a good deal of information on the teacher's real practical activities, student's real classroom behavior. More specifically, the researcher thought that conducting systematic observation

would allow him to have a good grasp of the teachers' endeavor to reduce affective filters and facilitate students' speaking in the TL.

For this purpose, I prepared observation checklist that comprises 6 parts which deal with the suitability of the tasks, teacher's motivational strategies, and classroom organization, methods of error correction, teacher's behavior and students' behavior. The items in all parts were set to include parts addressed in the review of related literature implicitly and explicitly. Besides, during the preparation of the checklist, Dorney (2001) and Young (1991) were consulted.

### **3.4.2 Focus group Discussion**

The focus group discussion was the principal instrument to investigate teachers' beliefs about affective filter. Though it was impossible to get one's belief within such short discussion, the researcher taught that in depth and diversified questions or points for discussion which were based up on the literature were useful to get some information. The points of discussion were about the participants' (teachers) belief about affective filters, their practical experience of reducing affective variables which negatively affects the students' speaking skill of the TL, their mode of error correction and their belief about error correction.

The researcher was the moderator and the participant as well. The participants were 4 males and 1 female English teacher who were observed in the class while teaching prior to discussion. The co-moderator assisted in taking the photograph and recording the video. The recorded discussion was transcribed after the session and included in appendix. (Please have a look at Appendix V)

### **3.4.3 Questionnaire**

To strengthen the data procured via other tools, the researcher employed closed ended questionnaire. The questionnaire was practically found helpful

by the researcher for it would provide with a better opportunity to get additional information from the learner about their English teachers' practice in the class while teaching speaking and to know further about their behavior.

The main concern of the questions were about students' experience of learning speaking, different practical techniques used by their teacher, their perception about error correction and the way their teachers provide them with error correction and feedback .

### **3.5 Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher carried out the data gathering task in the following order. The researcher:

1. contacted the director, then the head department of English and then all English teachers. The contact was made to roughly tell the objective of the study and to arrange the time for observation and focus group discussion.
2. conducted the 5 English sessions classroom observation as a pilot test for five days and distributed questionnaire for 20 students.
3. Depending on the result of the pilot test the researcher re arranged the instruments.
4. conducted actual observation as per the class schedule arranged with the teachers. Each teacher was observed twice at speaking classes. The problem with observation was frequent unavailability of the speaking classes. Speaking class normally commenced once a week and or fortnight. That made the researcher to stay for one month to observe all the teachers.
5. administer the students' questionnaire to the selected students as a subject of this study. The students' questionnaire was also administered by requesting every teacher who was teaching in the sample students' sections to allow the researcher administer the

questionnaire at extra time arranged by the school director and English department. The sample students were gathered in one hall and the questionnaire was administered and collected back by the researcher himself for two reasons: i) to avoid the students' fear of being threatened if their teacher happened to see what they were answering to the questions, or to let them respond to the questionnaire items freely, and ii) to offer help at times of difficulty in understanding and giving responses, if any.

6. requested each teacher to let the research know the convenient time to conduct discussion. The focus group discussion was conducted after class when the compound was free from noise. Before the beginning of the discussion the participants were requested their willingness and signed the consent that the discussion was going to be recorded audio visually. The fact that focus group discussion was conducted at last was not without reason. The researcher taught that if focus Group discussion was conducted prior to classroom observation, the teachers' activity in the class might have been artificial.
7. analyzed the data right after each observation had been commenced.
8. transcribed thoroughly the audio visually recorded data from FGD.

### **3.6 Data Analysis Procedures**

Analysis was done by classifying the task of analysis in two main parts. The first part presents the collected data using tables, frequencies and percentage. The second part discusses or interprets what was revealed in the presentation part. This was done by classifying the points of inquiry in to main themes and discussing the findings obtained via each tool as per the theme set. The major route of discussion follows the way of describing teachers beliefs raised in FGD against their actual practice observed in the class and by confirming it with information gathered from students for the reason of triangulation of the analysis.

The data gathered via FGD was analyzed qualitatively. The points of discussion were used as a theme and ideas raised by the participants were presented under each theme. The idea is not individual based, because the discussion was undertaken collectively. There was the chance of arguing on the points and coming to the consensus. As a result each idea was shared by the discussants. Concerning this idea, Denzin (1996) and Frey and Fonatana (1993) as cited in Bedada (2002) argue that focus groups emphasize the collective, rather than the individual; they foster free expression of ideas and encourage the members of the group to speak up.

Information collected through observation was recorded using tallies. Then, the tallies which represent the 'Yes' and 'No' were counted accordingly for ten sessions of five teachers those observed twice. It was computed using frequencies and percentage.

For data gathered using closed ended questionnaire, the same method was used as observation. The nature of questions varies that some questions require only one answer and some provide the room for students to select two alternatives. Therefore each kind was treated differently. However, the frequency and percentage was used to present. In line with this, Kumar (1999:223) claims that "simple statistical measures such as percentages and mean,... reduce the volume of data, making easier to understand." Like themes were set for FGD, the same thing was done for observation and questionnaire.

## Chapter Four

### Findings and Discussion

#### 4.1 Presentation of Data

The data gathered through the three tools were presented one after the other. First, the data from FGD was presented under 6 themes. The themes were knowledge about affective filters, motivation and motivational strategies, classroom organization, error correction and feedback provision, causes of heightened affective filters, and solutions intended to lower the affective filters. Next, the data from observation was also presented under 6 themes and at last, the data from questionnaire was presented under the themes which were almost similar to the formers with few differences.

##### 4.1.1 Biographical Data of the Participants of FGD

The participants of FGD were all English teachers of Mettu secondary and preparatory school with different personal details as shown in the following table. The duration of discussion session was 1:15 hrs

**Table 1 Biographical data of the participants of FGD**

Information	Distribution	Number of the participants			Remark
		M	F	T	
Teaching Experience (in yrs)	Less than 5	-	1	1	
	5-7	1	-	1	
	8-10	1	-	1	
	More than 10	2	-	2	
	Total	4	1	5	
Academic Status	Diploma				
	BA	4	1	5	
	MA	-	-	-	
	Total	4	1	5	
Nationality	Ethiopian	4	-	4	
	Non-Eth.	-	1	1	
	Total	4	1	5	

#### **4.1.2 Presentation of Data Gathered via FGD**

FGD as analyzed qualitatively, it pursues the way of either quoting or paraphrasing the participants' idea in relation to the themes which were set on the ground of the theories discussed in the literature part. So the data obtained from FGD was presented under the following 5 themes. FGD was recorded and transcribed duly and attached as an appendix. Analysis under this section directly refers the reader to the appendix.

##### **4.1.2.1 Teachers' Views about Affective Filters**

The moderator, after briefing the objective of the discussion, requested the participants to shortly explain their knowledge about "Affective Filter". But no one explained his understanding though the moderator tried to define the term in detail. They rather embarked in to raising the points about students' problem of speaking. As the discussion was free, the moderator let them speak whatever they had felt. However, he tried to clarify the idea; and after confirming the clarification the discussion went on. (Line 1-28).

The second issue of discussion was about motivation. Concerning motivation the participants frequently raised the importance of motivating students. For example:

*T3: ... they do not participate, because the former teacher didn't initiate them... (Line 43)*

*...we start to initiate them... (Line 44-45)*

*T2: ...teachers are expected to encourage them...(line 84-85)*

*T5: ...I agree specially in encouraging... (Line 98)*

*T3: ... I encourage them when they give response (Line 119)*

As can be seen from this transcript, the teachers have a belief that claims motivating students while they attempt to speak in TL is important. Regarding strategies of motivation, the points were raised.

*T1: Praising when they take part can motivate, giving reward, for example, saying 'very good', etc... (Line 208-209)*

The idea raised is about the provision of rewards to let students motivated and keep on attempting to speak in TL.

#### **4.1.2.3 Classroom Organization**

As reviewed in the literature part, one of the techniques of lowering affective variables is using different classroom organization. Regarding this, participants forwarded their views as:

*T4: ...All students do not afraid to use this (TL) language, there are some actives; by mixing these actives with the passive ones, we can motivate the others. So mixing in the groups is a solution when we teach in the classrooms. (Line 75)*

Another speaker (T2) also adds *one of the methods or techniques is to group students and let them discuss (Line 199- 200).*

Furthermore the participants rose that diversifying the classroom organization with varied tasks enables to lower the affective filters. They have mentioned dialogues and conversations, out of classroom speaking activities with their partner, or parents as can be seen on Line 86, 88, 89,109-111 and 210.

#### **4.1.2.4 Error Correction and Feedback Provision**

Error correction and feedback provision were other points of discussion in which teachers' belief was plainly revealed. Almost all of the teachers reflected their view regarding error correction. They tried to make themselves about the issue by saying, for instance, the following statements:

*T5: I agree ...encouraging them even if they make mistakes (Line 98-99)*

*T3: when they make mistakes, instead of insulting them ...we have to show the direction. (Line114-115)*

*: when we make error, we learn more. If we fear to make mistakes we won't improve our speaking skill...we learn language by making mistakes.(Line122-124)*

*T2: Errors are not sign of failure rather they are sign of success.*

In general all the teachers believe that error is a sign of learning and that the students, when making mistakes, are learning the language more. They also added that the selective ways of correcting errors, tolerating some minor errors and systematic corrections are the best ways in which students do not discouraged from or inhibited from speaking the TL. All throughout lines 93-173 of the transcripts reads the idea of error making and error correction.

The issue of teachers' correction and peer correction was also discussed up on. The teachers claimed that teacher correction is better way than peer correction that their students expect from them and have confidence in errors corrected by the teacher. (Line 235-238)

#### **4.1.2.5 Causes of the Heightened Affective Filters**

The participants of the FGD had also dealt with the causes of heightened affective filter and its solutions. According to their view the cause for students' fear and lack of self confidence is students' poor background of the language. They attributed the problem more to lower class instruction that the students had been taught by untrained teachers. (Line 31-33,40-45,81-83).The other reasons of fear they mentioned were culture(Line54), being laughed at by peers or fear of negative evaluation(Line 55), and teachers' reticence in using the TL regularly(Line 57), and teachers preference of teaching grammar and less attention to teaching speaking(Line 61-63).

#### **4.1.2.6 Intended Solutions to Lower Affective Filters**

The solution raised were varying speaking activities ,selecting suitable topic of students' interest or adapting the topic, encouraging & advising the students ,peer teaching(Line 225), strengthening English club, English teacher should also bring about changes up on themselves in using the TL , as they said. If teachers are eager and volunteer to use the TL, the students can be motivated.

Extra solutions they proposed were that the English Department should play its role in improving the usage of the language, the school management had better arrange some extra times in which English speaking skill is practiced; and at the last using different opportunities, for example, arranging time for students with native English teachers found in the school and in the nearby college was mentioned as one of the solutions.

As frequently mentioned, the main objective of the FGD was to investigate teachers' beliefs about affective variables. In one way or the other, this discussion revealed teachers' beliefs while they were trying to forward their ideas, views and opinions concerning different issues of affective filters and speaking skill.

#### **4.1.3 Presentation of Data Gathered via Classroom Observation**

As early stated in 3.5, the classroom observation was undertaken for ten rounds. Observed teachers were 5 and all of them were participated in FGD. One teacher was observed in two sessions (periods). The duration of each period was 45 minutes. The observation checklist had 6 parts. The parts were used as themes for this presentation. The summary of each observation result was tabulated as displayed here under. The points of checklist were included in appendix. It is divided in to 6 main themes: design of the speaking tasks, teachers' motivational strategy, and classroom organization, mode of error correction, teachers' behavior and students' behavior. (Look at Appendix II)

**Table 2 Data Gathered through Observation in Percentage**

No. of Items	Responses	Rounds of Observation		Total	%	Remark
		1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>			
I.1	Yes	5	5	10	100	
	No	-	-	-	-	
2	Yes	3	3	6	60	
	No	2	2	4	40	
II.1	Yes	3	3	6	60	
	No	2	2	4	40	
2	Yes	2	2	4	40	
	No	3	3	6	60	
3	Yes	4	4	8	80	
	No	1	1	2	20	
4	Yes	4	3	7	70	
	No	1	2	3	30	
5	Yes	4	4	8	80	
	No	1	1	2	20	
6	Yes	-	1	1	10	
	No	5	4	9	90	
III.1	Yes	2	1	3	30	
	No	3	4	7	70	
2	Yes	3	3	6	60	
	No	2	2	4	40	
3	Yes	2	2	4	40	
	No	3	3	6	60	
IV.1	Yes	-	-	-	-	
	No	5	5	10	100	
2	Yes	-	-	-	-	
	No	5	5	10	100	
3	Yes	4	4	8	80	
	No	1	1	2	20	
V.1	Yes	4	4	8	80	
	No	1	1	2	20	
2	Yes	-	-	-	-	
	No	5	5	10	100	
3	Yes	4	4	8	80	
	No	1	1	2	20	
4	Yes	3	3	6	60	
	No	2	2	4	40	
VI.1	Yes	3	4	7	70	
	No	2	1	3	30	
2	Yes	4	4	8	80	
	No	1	1	2	20	
3	Yes	-	-	-	-	
	No	5	5	10	100	

#### **4.1.3.1 Design of Speaking Tasks**

The first part deals with the design of the tasks. Regarding the tasks, their suitability for speaking skill was observed and all (100%) tasks were suitable for practicing speaking. This is checked because some teachers might not pay attention for selection or adaptation. With interactivity of the tasks, it concerns the extent to which the learners were interested in the topic and tried to speak in the TL. In 6 sessions (60%) the activities were observed interactive. The non interactive activity required but the teacher had used them as they were in the text book, for instance, one of the topics was 'usage of Phrasal verbs in speaking'. The method the teacher used was deductive method of lecturing the usage. There was no activity in which students were made speak in the TL. Other activities, for example, debate on 'China's One Child Policy', pair work on 'speaking on the telephone' were highly interactive and the interest of almost all students aroused.

#### **4.1.3.2 Motivational Strategies**

One of the ways in which affective filters can be lowered is by motivating students using different strategies. The strategies checked were promoting interaction and cooperation and in 8 sessions (80%) positive traits were observed. Concerning creating pleasant and supportive atmosphere, and using oral rewards to motivate students, positive traits were observed in 8(80%) sessions. Learner autonomy was promoted in 7(70%) classes. Offering material reward was observed in only one session which is only 10%.The teacher offered candies for the group who won the speaking game and the class was highly motivated and almost all students were engaged in the activity.

Concerning discouraging teachers' approach, the teachers making of demotivating rebuffs were checked in all classes and none of such behavior was observed.

#### **4.1.3.3 Classroom Organization**

The ways teachers of language organize the class has influential role in reducing affective filters. Concerning this observation, at least three major organization types were checked and if any other than these occurred, they were recorded under open ended notes of observation which is going to be discussed separately. Individual oral work using teacher fronted approach was observed in only 3(30%) sessions. Such approach is believed to be anxiety provoking in speaking foreign language(Young,1992).Pair works and group works supervised by the teacher were observed in 6(60%) sessions and 4(40%) respectively. These organization types are suggested as anxiety reducing organization. In addition, students were found to be more relaxed speaking the target language when paired with a classmate or put in to smaller groups (Koch and Terrel, 1991 cited in Horwitz, 2001).

#### **4.1.3.4 Mode of Error Correction**

Manner of error correction, one of the teachers' practical techniques, is often cited as potentially provoking anxiety in students (Ohata, 2005).Young (1991:429), realizing this phenomenon, stated that "the problem for the students is not necessary error correction but the manner of error correction-when, how often, and most importantly, how errors are corrected". Due attention was given to check this technique. As shown in the above table 2, constant error correction by interrupting the students' speaking which is highly anxious was checked and no such technique was observed. Constructive peer correction, in another hand, which is believed to be anxiety reducing was not also observed in any class. But teachers systematic correction after tasks and giving constructive feedback was checked in all sessions and both occurred in 8(80%) sessions .Young( 1992 ) also suggests that for teacher to have a lower affective filter in his class ,it is better to give students more positive feedback.

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#### **4.1.3.5 Teachers' Behavior**

The next issue tried to observe was teachers' behavior. Young (Ibid) underlines the teacher's attitudes towards their learners affects learning process much. According to her, helpfulness of teachers to their students, adopting an attitude of that mistake is a part of learning, and being more friendly, relaxed and patient are some of behaviors expected from good FL/SL teachers.

Even though it is difficult to judge teachers' behavior within this short session of observation, researcher's effort was exerted to check some visible behaviors of the teachers. Teacher's helpfulness is checked while he/she was friendly approaching the learners and helped in clarifying the unclear tasks, moved in the class and assisted in their difficulties, specially his /her readiness to help the learners who were slow learners were some indicators of teacher's helpfulness, and friendliness. Accordingly in 8(80%) sessions teacher's helpfulness and friendliness was observed. On contrary aggressiveness of teachers when mistakes are committed was not seen in any class.

#### **4.1.3.6 Students' Behavior**

The last issue of observation was about students' behavior. The main aim of observation was not to check students' behavior. But the fact that some teachers' classroom practice influence students' behavior, some of their visible behaviors were tried to be checked by the researcher. In line with this, students' eagerness to take part in every task was checked and positive trait was observed in 7(70%) sessions. But in 3(30%) sessions students (most of the students were not eager to participate. The other behavior was students' experience of fear. Fear is not, of course, fully observable. However it is possible to check students' threatened face, shyness, dryness of their mouth, movement of their hands while trying to speak (Krashen&Terrel,2001).The researcher, therefore, tried to check whether

behaviors were happening. But, unexpectedly no one of the students who took part in role plays, in debate in group works, and interviewed the native English teacher didn't show such behavior. The other indicator of the prevalence of heightened anxiety is the dominant behavior of some few talkative students. Regarding this, in only 3(30%) sessions few students observed dominating the class.

At last specific situation which happened to lower anxiety or provoke anxiety were registered in the form of field note. Special scenario observed by the researcher was the native English teacher invited another native English instructor from the teachers' college and made her students ask the questions of their interest in the form of interview. The students were highly motivated and fluently communicated with the native speaker of English who was a guest to their class. The other thing happened by the same teacher was the technique she used to arouse her students' interest to learn. She let the students out to the field in front of the classroom, and then she made them do a kind of tricky sport in which all the students participated. She only wasted 10 minutes of the class and immediately returned back to the class. In the class, students were participating in speaking group tasks in which every learner had participated. Eventually she awarded the winner group. The award was a kind of candies and chocolates.

In relation to anxiety provoking situation no special thing observed. But in some few sessions when the learners attempt to speak teachers' avoidance of praises and encouragements had been observed.

#### **4.1.4 Presentation of Data Gathered through Questionnaire**

The questionnaire, as mentioned earlier, was not the principal tool in this study. But it was conducted hoping that students can witness what teachers said in group discussion and can also confirm some practical techniques used by the teacher not only for the observed sessions but also in previous speaking classes. This idea was emanated from the fact that respondents

stayed for at least two or three years in this school and were taught by the teachers who were the subjects in this study. This fact strengthens the reliability of their response. Moreover the age of the respondents are all at early adolescent stage. Krashen (1985) argues that the affective filters start to risen up during adolescent stage.

**Table 3 Biographical Data of the Respondent Students**

Information	Distribution	Number of respondents			Remark
		M	F	T	
Age	< 16	-	-	-	
	16-17	16	10	<b>26</b>	
	18-19	11	8	<b>19</b>	
	20-21	3	1	<b>4</b>	
	>21	1	-	<b>1</b>	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>50</b>	
Grade Level	11	16	11	<b>27</b>	
	12	15	8	<b>23</b>	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>50</b>	

As the above data shows the age of the students ranges from 16-21 which is adolescent stage. According to Krashen affective filters heightens as the age increases to puberty.

Part I. Contracted Idea of the Questions:

1. The extent to which the teachers let the learners practice speaking
2. The extent to which the speaking exercises provided by the teacher were interesting
3. Speaking activities students have ever participated in

**Table 4 Presentation of responses about speaking activities**

Item No.	Rates or Kinds of activities	Respondents		Remark
		F	%	
1	Always	37	74	
	Sometimes	7	14	
	Rarely	5	10	
	Never	1	5	
2	Very interesting	9	18	
	Interesting	35	70	
	Least interesting	6	12	
	Not interesting	0	-	
3	Pair work	36	72	
	Group work	43	86	
	Debate	19	38	
	Drama	4	8	
	Individual oral presentation	18	36	

Part II. Contracted ideas of the questions

1. Your English teacher while making you practise speaking:
  - 1.1 is friendly that you always try to speak in English
  - 1.2 is friendly while correcting my mistakes that I feel free
  - 1.3 is unfriendly that I always fear speaking in English
  - 1.4 is aggressive if I make mistakes so that I feel afraid
2. In your speaking class you think making mistake is:
  - 2.1 punishable and it is impossible to make
  - 2.2 is a sign of learning that I try to speak though my English is not accurate
  - 2.3 shame that my peers (partners) laugh at me
  - 2.4 frightening that my teacher feels angry when I use wrong English

**Table 5 students' view about teachers' behavior and making mistakes while speaking in English**

No. of Items		Responses		Remark
		F	%	
1	1.1	38	76	
	1.2	36	72	
	1.3	10	20	
	1.4	12	24	
2	2.1	-	-	
	2.2	44	88	
	2.3	6	12	
	2.4	6	12	

#### **4.1.4.1 Practices of Teachers in Teaching Speaking**

The students were asked the extent to which their teachers let them practise speaking English and whether the activities were interesting or not. As shown in the above table most of the respondents 37(74%) replied that their teachers always make them practise speaking. Some of them, 7 (14%), 5 (10%), and 1(5%) students replied that their teachers let them practice some times, rarely and never respectively.

#### **4.1.4.2 Design of Speaking Tasks**

The second area of investigation under this part was checking the extent to which the speaking exercises provided by the teachers were interesting. Concerning this 35 (70%) students replied the activities were interesting. The other 9(18%) respondents replied the activities were very interesting, 6(12%) respondents replied the activities were the least interesting and no one replied the tasks were not interesting.

#### **4.1.4.3 Types of Speaking Activities**

The third area checked was some practical activities students ever participated in .Most of these activities are anxiety reducing and with one anxiety provoking activity. The respondents were expected to select the activities in which they were frequently participated during speaking class. According to the data collected, pair work was selected by 36 (72%) students, group work by 43(86%), debate by 19(38%) respondents and drama by only 4(8%) respondents. Individual oral activities which were suggested in the literature as the anxiety provoking activity were selected by 18 (36%) respondents.

#### **4.1.4.4 Students' View about their Teachers' Behavior**

Students' view about their teachers' behavior was the other issue respondents were asked. The respondents were provided by 4 alternatives of which 2 of the alternatives are anxiety reducing behaviors and 2 of them were anxiety provoking teachers' behavior. In this way, 38(76%) respondents replied that their teacher is friendly that he/she made them try to speak in English and 36 (72%) respondents replied their teacher is friendly while correcting errors that they feel free. On the other hand, 10(20%) replied that their teacher is unfriendly that they always fear speaking in English and 12(24%) replied that their teacher is aggressive if they make mistakes so that they feel afraid.

#### **4.1.4.5 Students' View about Making Mistakes**

The last part of the questionnaire deals with eliciting students' view about making mistakes. According to Young (1991), the teachers are expected to aware the learners on the issues of mistakes in SL/FL learning. To check this, subjects were asked whether error making is impossible. No respondent replied in this way. But 44(88%) of the respondents confirmed that error making is the sign of learning. The least number of respondents i.e. 6(12%)

replied that error making is shame that their peers laugh at them and it is frightening that their teachers feel angry when they (the learners) use wrong English.

## **4.2 Discussion of the Findings**

As mentioned in the very beginning, the main objective of this study was to describe teacher's beliefs and practice in lowering affective filters which negatively affect as learners' skill of speaking the TL with particular reference to Mettu Secondary and Preparatory School English language teachers. The specific question going to be answered by the study was to what extent teachers are working toward improving students' foreign language speaking skill by reducing affective psychological variables in the school mentioned. The findings presented so far tried to figure out the beliefs and the real practice of the teachers under study. In this part the results of the inquiry is going to be interpreted.

According to different scholars ,teachers' beliefs and classroom practice are so interwoven that teachers 'teaching activity is greatly influenced by their beliefs' (Pajares, 1992; Johnson, 2000; Farrell's, 2005).This study tried to reveal this fact and hence the extent to which teachers were applying their beliefs in the real classroom.

As stated earlier, the findings obtained through different tools were presented using main themes of the study under each tool. But in this part the finding under each theme from the three tools were interpreted for the matter of triangulation.

### **4.2.1 Design of Speaking Tasks**

One of the points of inquiry was teachers' selection of suitable speaking activities. Selection of teaching material and the content of the lesson should correspond to the motivation of the learner Cook (2001).This indicates the type of speaking activity has influence on students' interest. In FGD this idea

was addressed by the participants by saying “if the topic is about ‘computer’ and if the students are unfamiliar with this topic we should modify in order students’ interest increased to participate in speaking”. Regarding topic selection, teacher’s practice was checked through observation and the topic they provide for students was found suitable for speaking (100%) with (60%) interactiveness. According to this data teachers’ beliefs and practice match with the theory that claims teachers should design speaking activities which addresses students’ need that can lower the affective variables by increasing their confidence. But in some cases sticking one’s self to the topic provided on the book happened to be seen in few observation sessions (40%).The title needs modification but the teacher didn’t shape the title to the students situation.

#### **4.2.2 Motivation and Motivational Strategies**

Motivation, which is one component of affective filters, was the point of investigation. Harmer (1983) asserts that in education of any kind motivated students can learn more than the unmotivated ones. As far as this study is concerned, the teachers plainly expressed what view they have about motivating the learners. Their view was consistent with the theory of motivation in learning. Their practical application in the classroom was also tested through observation and the result found was very good. Motivational strategies used by the teachers were checked and almost in all teachers’ classes more than 70% positive traits were observed. The students also confirmed that their teachers’ approach was motivating. According to this result the teachers used different motivational strategies which reduce negatively affecting psychological factors. The only shortcoming found was the absence of material reward from most of the teachers. By material reward, it means providing a kind of gift which is only affordable in that context.

### **4.2.3 Classroom Organization**

The other point of the study was classroom organization used by the teacher to decrease anxiety provoking situations. Classroom organization which promotes cooperation and positive interdependence between learners can serve as a tool to alleviate students' negative affective variables (Ellis, 2003 & Dornyei, 2001). Regarding this, teachers in FGD asserted that different kinds of organization like pair work, group work, mixing students of different competency level can lower students' fear and develops confidence. The observation result also revealed that teachers used different organizational method such as pair work, group works, debate, interviewing, etc. Students also replied that their teachers used different techniques, like pair work, 72% and group work 86%. According to the result, students' classroom organization is anxiety reducing and can be considered as compatible with the theory.

### **4.2.4 Mode of Error Correction and Feedback Provision**

The mode of error correction is frequently cited in the literature as one of the factors that influence learners' affective filter (Ohata, 2005; Krashen, 1982 & Tanveer, 2007). The way teachers address students' mistakes during speaking in FL/SL, either raise or lower the affective filter. In relation to this, teachers who were the subject of this study claimed that errors are not the sign of failure but the sign of success. When errors occurred, according to the discussants', learning can happen. Different issues of error correction were discussed up on, for example, the idea of teachers' and peer correction. Concerning this, teachers remarked as teacher correction is more advisable than peer correction. But the theories in literature do not support this idea. Different theories claim that teachers' systematic correction and peer correction are equally important for the reason that they use to lower learners' fear of making mistakes.

When teachers' mode of error correction is observed, there was no method used by teachers which facilitate affective filters to rise up. Teachers' systematic correction was observed in 8(80%) sessions which was anxiety reducing approach. The respondent students also confirmed that teachers are treating their error in accepted manner.44 (88%) respondents claimed that error making is a sign of learning and it is natural in any FL class. This view of students believed to be developed from their teachers' way of viewing making error in SL/FL learning. Most of the respondent students also replied that they do not fear of making mistake and their teachers were not aggressive while errors are made.

Young (1991) suggests that teachers should advise their students as error is natural which is done by everybody in learning process. Teachers, in the discussion session, frequently raised this idea. They underscored that they should not insult or discourage their student, and that they should advise, encourage, and show the direction. This view of teachers has been the view of students which is inconsistent with idea of the scholars.

#### **4.2.5 Teachers' Behavior**

Another important factor that influences students' learning in general and affective filters in particular is teacher's behavior. When teachers are friendly, supportive and humorous students' affective filter decreases. But when they are aggressive, serious and fault-finder rather than being facilitator, students' affective filter increases.

This was checked through observation and questionnaire. The result shows that most of the teachers were friendly and helpful to their teacher. Students' responses to the questionnaire also witnessed that their teachers are friendly that they feel free while trying to speak in TL whether their English is right or not; 36 (72%) replied in this way. Concerning humor what Ketabi and Simin said is worth quoting.

*Humor is one of the effective means of enhancing students' motivation to study English. It promotes students' interaction, eases the constant tension in the class and encourages students to take part in various activities....Humor creates a positive classroom environment, reduces anxiety, manages undesirable behavior and builds self-confidence.(2009:435)*

#### **4.2.5 Students' Behavior**

Students' behavior was checked during observation sessions. This was done to know whether students were motivated, self-confident and free from anxiety. The observation result shows that the students were free from the negative effect of affective filters: observed in 7(70%) sessions. Most of the students were eager to participate in every activity and attempt to speak in English. This indirectly shows that their teachers approach, selection of content methods of treating learners' errors were compatible with students' needs.

#### **4.2.6 Challenges Teachers Encounter in Teaching Speaking**

Teachers in FGD raised the challenges they encounter when they attempt to practice the students to use English in and out of the classes. Challenges they raised were students background experience of using English, the way they had been learned, lack of sufficient time to let students practice speaking using different techniques like drama, debating, interviewing and reporting, and lack of audio visual materials were the main points raised. This idea could not be transcribed because of run off the cassette and it was only registered in the researchers' note book.

In general, the result obtained through the three tools revealed that the belief teachers have about affective filter is almost in line with theories being claimed by different language educators. Their practical activities also show the teachers under this study are doing well and know their indispensable roles in lowering affective filters in students speaking of TL. But some considerable gaps were found in relation to content designing and modifying

view about peer correction and in using different motivational strategies. This does not mean that all teachers' beliefs and practices were equally judged. There was individual difference among teachers in understanding the theory and identifying and playing their role.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusions and Recommendations

#### 5.1 Conclusions

The major objective of this study was to investigate and describe the beliefs teachers of English language have in lowering affective variables and to know the real practical activities they carry in their classes to reduce the negative effects of affective variables in speaking classes. To achieve this major purpose, the following research questions were formulated. These were: (1) the extent to which teachers have an awareness about the affective filters and their influence in teaching speaking, (2) to what extent they strive to reduce their negative effect on students speaking?, (3) what practical techniques were used by the teachers to lower the affective filters?, (4) the challenges the teachers encountered when trying to use this techniques. The researcher tried to answer the questions using FGD, classroom observation and questionnaire as an instrument of this study.

According to the study teachers beliefs about affective filters was revealed in two ways. First, their knowledge about the concept was one of the focused areas. It was proved that the term “affective filter” was not familiar with their prior knowledge. But the teachers in FGD had discussed deeply on the components of affective filters mainly on motivation, self confidence, error correction, teachers’ behavior and students’ behavior. When they raised their idea on these issues it was possible to conclude that the teachers were aware of the concept even though the term was new. In the discussion the participants agreed on important issues like the role of motivation in teaching speaking, using different motivational strategies, the role of teachers in error correction, and the role of teachers’ behavior in lowering affective filters. In line with this, their belief as revealed in their discussion can be considered as it was correspondent to the underlying literature. The

second possible way of viewing the teachers' beliefs was from their practical activities which were observed during observation sessions, and from students' responses to the questionnaire. This idea could be attributed to the theory that claims the teachers' classroom practice is highly influenced by their belief about language teaching. This means, teachers applied some practical techniques of lowering affective filters in the way they believe in. With regard to this what had been obtained from this research could be concluded as follows.

To begin with, the way teachers designed the tasks of speaking was the area of interest to investigate. According to different scholars, as mentioned in chapter 2, part 2.5.1.2, the design or the kind of the tasks can either lower or heighten the affective filters. Even though the activities were from the text books, they need some modification by the teacher in order fit students interest and context. It was seen that almost all of the tasks were adapted by considering students' situations and area of common interest. For example the debate session was highly authentic and contextual to the students experience that all students were eager to take part in. On contrary, there was anxiety provoking topic which was about "using Phrasal verbs in speaking". This topic needs teachers' modification in order to fit into students' interest. But the teacher didn't do the job of modifying this task. Therefore students' participation was poor.

The teachers were doing an encouraging job in creating the atmosphere that made students motivated to learn more. They used different motivational strategies like making learning cooperative rather than competitive, providing oral and material rewards. These strategies were useful in reducing students' anxiety and promoting self confidence.

Classroom organizations teachers used were anxiety reducing and they were observed highly promoting students' speaking the target language. The good

example was debating; interviewing foreigners were volunteer teachers at the time, and cooperating in different group and pair oral work activities.

Error correction, which is one of the factors in affective filter, was dealt deeply. The methods of error corrections used by the teachers and their beliefs about error correction were seen related. The views they mentioned and the techniques they used were almost compatible with what educators of language suggest. While correcting students' error, they used systematic error correction after activities without eliciting the students' names that made the errors while speaking. They also did not focus on accuracy but on fluency which promotes lower affective filters. Concerning error correction, the teachers were having opposite idea with the educators' suggestion which proposes that students' peer correction reduces anxiety. Regarding this, teachers' beliefs and practices mismatched with the literature.

The other area of study was teachers' behavior. Their behavior plays significant role in either decreasing or increasing affective variables. When teachers are humorous, friendly and supportive for their learners, the students' negative affective variables decreases. But when they are aggressive, unfriendly, fault finders and authoritative, the magnitude of affective variables increases enormously. Regarding this, the finding revealed that the teachers behavior was anxiety reducing. This was checked through observation and questionnaire provided to students. They, in their response, confirmed that their teachers were friendly and helpful. They do not afraid of their teacher while speaking whether their English is perfect or not. The researcher also observed in the classes as there was no aggressiveness of teachers, usage of some discouraging rebuffs and there is no specific behavior of teachers that inhabits learners from using the target language.

Students' behavior was also checked through observation to know the prevalence of heightened affective filter from another angle. Concerning this no unique behavior of students observed. There was no students' fear when

trying to speak and no hesitation of participating during speaking activities. Rather they try to speak in the TL as much as they can. Through questionnaire they were asked about being anxious. They replied that they had no fear, for example, of making mistakes, of their teacher's aggressiveness and of their peers' laugh at them.

In general, the findings obtained from this study revealed that the teachers' beliefs and practices match each other and were also cognizant of the theory of affective filters and they were using the right practical techniques to minimize the negative effects of affective filters. This does not mean that the teachers had fully completed their roles of reducing anxiety. There were differences between teachers in using the techniques of selecting topics different motivational strategies and classroom organization. It does not also mean all teachers were equally successful in lowering negative affective filters. This indicates that there should be recommendable solutions in order to tackle the negative effects of affective filters in speaking English and improving students' proficiency

## **5.2 Recommendations**

Research on improving students' language proficiency is not seasonal duty rather it is continuous activity. The teachers of foreign language need to conduct an action research which helps them know the ultimate causes of their learners' problems and to find the solutions. The teachers should also strive to develop their knowledge of teaching the FL. This research, however, revealed that there were promising teachers' efforts in improving students' English speaking skill in the school under the study. But still there were gaps to be filled by teachers themselves and other concerned bodies if the students' proficiency of using English in oral communication is concerned. Therefore, the researcher would like to recommend the following specific points.

- The researcher found an advisable for teachers of this school to always understand as there are naturally affective filters provoking situations exist in the class, or might be out of the classes which are related to cultural or social background, and or students' attitude toward learning the TL. Therefore, teacher should be alert to address these psychological factors in the class.
- Constructive peer error correction is very important in language classes to control the anxiety provoking situations. But, surprisingly it was denied by the teachers who were the subject of this study. Different scholars recommended students' constructive peer correction that promotes students' acquiring knowledge from each other which again reduces affective filters and heighten self confidence. If teachers use this technique, it will be useful in increasing students' fluency in using the TL.
- According to the study, one of the challenges teachers raised during discussion was lack of extra time by which they can make their students practice speaking English. So, the department in collaboration with the school management bodies should arrange extra time which is out of formal class time. This can also create an opportunity to get access to native volunteer English teachers which are currently available in the school and the nearby teachers' college based on their will.
- The other important point to be recommended is the school should provide different spoken English teaching materials like supplementary books, audio recorded materials which students can simply use in the school and out of the school by duplicating for themselves. Such kind of techniques are also anxiety reducing.
- Department of English in the school should facilitate an improvement of English as a foreign language by arranging different occasions like English days, English mini media, and drama in English for some special occasion, etc.

- The other most important issue the researcher of this study wants to recommend is English teachers should exchange the experiences among themselves and teachers in neighboring English schools, and in addition they should conduct action researches to address their students' need of learning English as a FL.

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## **Appendix I**

### **Focus Group Discussion**

No of participants - M———F———T———Type of  
participants- English teachers of Mettu secondary and

Preparatory school

Moderator – (Researcher)

Duration of discussion time 2 hrs

The following points will be raised by the researcher (moderator) to the participants. These points help to generate or to probe teachers' belief about the role of affective filters in second language teaching and the teachers' roles in reducing these affective filters in speaking class.

#### **Points of discussion**

1. Knowledge (awareness) about affective filters in SL/FL teaching
2. The extent to which these variable affect students, speaking English according to the beliefs of the participants
3. The remedies to be taken to lower affective filters
4. Practical techniques used by participants to lower the affective variables in their respective English speaking classes
5. The causes of students' fear of speaking in English  
The challenges that hinder teachers form teaching speaking English effectively
6. The solution to minimize the negative effects of the challenges

## Appendix II

### Observation Checklist

Session \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Observed Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Duration of Observation Time \_\_\_\_\_

Topic of the speaking  
Activity \_\_\_\_\_

Points to Be checked	Yes	NO
<b>I. Analysis of the task designed</b>		
1. Was the task suitable for the speaking task ?		
2. Was the task interactive that most of the students can speak ?		
<b>II. Analysis of teachers' motivational strategy</b>		
1. Promoting interactions and cooperation		
2. created pleasant and supportive atmosphere		
3. Promoted learner autonomy		
4. Offered oral rewards		
5. Offered material rewards		
6. made use of discouraging rebuffs		
<b>III Classroom Organization</b>		
1. Individual work using teacher's fronted approach		
2. Pair works		
3. Group works		
<b>IV Mode of error correction and feedback provision</b>		
1. Constant error correction by interrupting students' speaking		

2. Constructive peer correction		
3. Teacher's systematic correction of errors after tasks and giving feedback		
<b>V. Teachers' behavior</b>		
1. Helpful to his learner		
2. Aggressive when learners make mistakes		
3. Friendly to his students that they do not experience fear		
4. develops a sense of humor		
<b>VI. Students' Behavior</b>		
1. eager to participate in every task		
2. Do not experience fear when trying to speak in English		
3. Dominance of few talkative students is observed		

**VII. Other anxiety reducing activities or behavior observed:**

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**VIII. Other anxiety provoking activities or behaviors observed**

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### **Appendix III**

**Addis Ababa University  
School of Graduate studies  
Faculty of Language studies  
Department of English  
Questionnaire for students**

**Dear students,**

This questionnaire is designed to gather information for thesis that is conducted for fulfillment of MA degree in TEFL. The findings of the study is hoped to contribute to improvement of students' English speaking skill. The truthfulness of your responses will make the study valid. You are, therefore, kindly requested to provide accurate information and to be honest in your responses.

I would like you to inform you that the information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. It is only meant for this study.

Thank you for sparing your valuable time and effort to fill in the questionnaire.

#### **Personal Information**

1. Sex \_\_\_\_\_

2. Grade \_\_\_\_\_

3. Age: put "√" in the box.

<16

18-19

more than 21

16-17

20-21

**Instruction I. for question 1-4 please chooses only one alternative and write in the box.**

1. How often does your English teacher let you practice English speaking?  
 Always                      sometimes     rarely                       never at  
all
2. To what extent you found your speaking exercise which you teacher makes you practice interesting?  
 Very interesting                       least interesting  
 Interesting                                       Not interesting

**Instruction II.**

**For the following requests, you can choose more than one alternatives and put "√" in the box in front of your choice**

3. Among the following speaking activities, in which activities you ever participated? (you can select more than one)  
 role plays  
 drama  
 presenting report to the class after interviewing some one  
 oral group work  
 debate
4. your English teacher, while making you practice speaking English:  
 Is friendly I always try to speak in English  
 Is unfriendly that I always fear speaking in English  
 Is aggressive while corrective my mistakes so I feel afraid  
 Is friendly while correcting my mistakes so that I feel free

5. In your speaking class you think making mistake is

Punishable and it is impossible to commit mistakes

A part of learning that I try to speak though my English is not accurate

Shame that my peers (partners) laugh at me

Shame that my teacher feels angry when I use wrong English

**Thank You**

## **Appinix IV: Afan Oromo Version of the Questionnaire**

### **Yuniiversiitii Finfinneetti**

#### **Mana barnootaa digrii Lammaffaa**

#### **Faakaltii Qa'annoo Afaanii Muumme Ingiliffaa**

##### **Gaafannoo Barattootaaf**

Kabajamaa barataa;

Gaafannoon kun kan dhiyaateef barnoota barsiisummaa Ingiliffaa digirii 2 ffaa guutachuuf barruu qophaa'uuf odeefannoo sassaabuufii dha. argannoon qorannoo kanaa dandeettii barattootaa Afaan Ingiliffaa dubbachuu fooyyeessuuf abbalamee kan geggeeffamuu dha. Deebiin ati kennitu galma ga'insa kaayyoo kanaatiif murteessaadha. Kanaafuu, deebii dhugaa fi amanamaa ta'e akka kennitu ni abdadha. Deebiin ati kennitus iccitiidhaan kan qabamuu fi qorannoo kana qofaaf kan fayyaduu dha.

Yeroo kee aarsaa waan naa gooteef baayyeen si galateefadha.

Maqaa kee barreesuu hin barbaachisu.

##### **Odeefannoo Dhuunfaa**

1. Saala \_\_\_\_\_
2. Kutaa \_\_\_\_\_
3. Umurii-kanneen armaan gadii keessaa umurii kee kan bakka bu'u mallattoo "√" sanduuqa keessa kaa'i.

16-17

20-21

23 ol

18-19

22-23

**Qajeelcha 1: gaafannoo 1-4 tiif filannoo tokkoqofaa filannoo mallattoo “√” sanduuqa keessa ka’i.**

1. Barsiisaan Ingiliffaa kee hagam tokko akka ati Ingiliffa dubbattu si shaakalsiisa?

Yeroo mara       darbee darbee       yeroo muraasa  
 Gonkuma nu hin shaakalsiisu

2. Shaakala Ingiliffa dubbachuu barsiisaan siif kennuu hagam gammachiisaa dha?

Bayyee gammachiisaa dha       gammachiisaa dha  
 Xiqqoo gammachiisaa dha       gammachiisaa miti

**Qajeelcha 2: Iyyaafannoo armaan gadiitiif deebii tokkoo fi tokko olifilachuu nidandeessa;fuldura filannoo kee mallattoo “√” kaa’i.**

4. Gilgaalota ykn gochaalee Ingiliffa dubbachuu armaan gadii keessaa kam kekessatti hirmaattee beekta?

Ga’ee taphachuu       Diraamaa       Hojii garee afaaniffa  
 Gabaasa afaaniffaan kutaa keetiif dhiyeessuu

5. Gocha isa kamitti caalaa gammadde?

Ga’ee taphachuu       Diraamaa       Hojii garee afaaniffa  
 Gabaasa afaaniffaan kutaa keetiif dhiyeessuu

6. Yeroo barsiisaan kee Ingiliffaan dubbachuu si shaakalsiisu:

Akka hiryaatti akka an dubbadhu na jajjabeessa  
 Akka hiryaatti waan nah in jajjabeesineef dubbachuu nan sodaadha.  
 Yeroon dogaggoru waan na dheekkamuuf baayyeen sodaadha.

Yoon dogogores waan hin dheekkamneef bilisa ta'een dubbadha.

7. Akka ati yaaddutti,kutaa keessatti Ingiliffa dogoggoruun:

Kan nama adabsiisuudha,kanaafuu dogoggoruun gonkuma dhorkaa dha.

Dogoggoruun qaama barachuuti jedhee waan yaaduuf ingiliffi koo sirrii ta'uu

Qaba jedhee hin yaadu.

Hiryooni koo waan natty kolfanuuf dogoggoruun na qaanessa.

Barsiisaan koo waan haaruuf dogoggoruu nan qaana'a.

### **Galatoomi**

## Appendix V: Transcription of Focus Group Discussion

**Keys:** M-Moderator  
T1-Teacher one  
T2-Teacher Two  
(...)-pause  
T3-Teacher three  
T4-Teacher Four  
T5-Teacher Five  
(\*)-incomprehensible word)  
  
(\*\*)-incomprehensible phrases (\*\*\*)-incomprehensible sentences

M` I would like to say "Thank You" from the bottom of my heart, really, it is a great sacrifice ,there were many inconveniencies and you tolerate...and this is a session for group discussion with English teachers, as you can see from the paper delivered, there are some preliminary information before  
5 discussion. There are points and an objective is also raised. The points are simply guidelines and the discussion is more open and these are frameworks for our discussion and...and as you know I was with you and conducting a kind of observation and **now we are going to discuss on the issues of speaking skill, and there are different psychological and emotional factors which I am interested to study about. So, as you can see from the points, the point raised on number one is about the knowledge of the "Affective Filter" in second or foreign language teaching..W hat are affective filters? (.....)**

14 M: When we teach every kind of teachings there are affective variables,  
15 psychological factors, which affect learning process .They affect negatively or positively, but in my case the special focus is the negative one. So in language teaching...eh...there are what we call, these terms...I think new for you...but the idea is not new. **Affective filters are psychological factors which affect students' learning .According to the known English educator, Krashen; affective factors are divided in to three or four. These are motivation, attitude self confidence in the classroom, we know obviously, and the other is anxiety. Anxiety is a kind of felling we have toward some thing, fear, eh... we can express by the word 'fear'.** So these are factors ,if these are the factors, to what extent we know these things  
20 in our class? This is the main issue to be raised by the participant rather than raising by my self. (...).Is that clear?

You can raise the knowledge that you have regarding this issue. you can raise freely.

30 T4: To me, the main problem of learning English, especially speaking, **they think their partner laugh at them,** and the other basic problem is ...eh...they do not have base at the ground level...eh...I mean elementary school and at this level they do not have any knowledge and this is the big problem as to me.

M: Ok (...) just our understanding or our belief about this issue...we can raise .

35 T3: First of all, I would like to express my deep gratitude to you, that you prepare this session to discuss on our students' problem...and when I come to the point, to say something on the first issue the first problem ...of our

student (un hearable) when they start grade 1, grade 1 – 3, when they learn English, they learn English as what ?...eh...not in English. **Our former teacher taught us in Afan Oromo and this is our serious problem; next when we teach them ,they do not participate ,because the former teachers didn't initiate them in order to speak in English, they didn't give them correction when they make mistakes, at a time we start to initiate them ,they fear as my colleague mentioned, that is the problem because if she or he starts to speak in English, his or her friend laugh at her ,therefore instead of speaking in English they want to keep their mouth shut.**

**M:** Especially, the idea o be raised...eh...it is better if we express our understanding about the issue; our belief...is it in our class (the problem)? Is it present in our class, really present? First of all, how we ourselves understand, that is the question...

**T1:** Okay...to say some thing, as others said **the problem exists in our class room when we teach English, there is fear...in culture...when speaks English, we laugh at. Language learning is through practice, through effort we improve our speaking...eh...not only teachers prefer I mean students, even we teachers prefer to use our first language when we teach English. Other subjects...eh...in high school are taught in English, but it is only when we write on the blackboard that we use the language Even, we English teachers, use our mother tongue... (\*\*\*)...traditionally we prefer to teach grammar aspect, because it is easy to teach, when we teach tutorial or a make up class we usually teach grammar .We do not make our students practice speaking, as a result fear is common.**

**M:** I think... eh...your points mainly concerned No 1 &2, and you can raise your idea even again. But let's go to the 3<sup>rd</sup> idea, There are problems as you said, and these psychological problems are prevalent in the class..eh...you observed in reality. So these are the problems. If these are the problems in your students' speaking activity, what will be the remedy to solve these problems? Or what solutions have you been taking in your class to...to lower these problems?

70 **T4:** The problems have been raised need solution. The first thing will be to train teachers of English grade 1-4 up to 8. If we train them the problem may be solved. The other one is, in the class, when we face this problem we use different techniques. All students do not afraid to use this language, there are some actives; by mixing these actives with the passive ones we can motivate  
75 the others to use this language. So mixing in the groups is a solution when we teach in the class rooms.

**M:** Okay...

**T2:** Okay...**what is common in our students speaking class is they are unmotivated to take part when speaking session; this is a problem.** The  
80 problem is...I think...they do not have base from lower class and they don't have an exposure and because of this they have difficulty in speaking English. **So to improve this problem teachers are expected to encourage them and advise them. In such ways they can improve ...mean that...they are expected to read dialogue and conversation as well as participate in group**  
85 **discussion, students can speak to each other** and during our... (\*\*\*)...**we are expected to make opportunity in which they can discuss, on that time we supervise them and try to involve every students in class participation, as well as,... of course...you see we are expected to advise them to speak, utter words or forward words whatever grammar it may be. We shouldn't**  
90 **give due attention to grammar wise. You see they fear that when ever they speak the grammar might be broken. So this should be avoided. When they think about grammar they experience fear.** In this way, through process, in the long run it can be avoided of course. The students can improve their language, I man speaking foreign language. That is what I have.

95 **T5:** I would agree in what he said. **I agree specially in encouraging even if they make mistakes, and just talk, talk, talk and the more they talk they can improve** and the teacher have to be perfect in helping them.

**M:** You raised important point. One of the causes of fear is fear of making mistakes. So ...eh how ... mistake is in a sense the source of fear we are saying so how  
100 can we deal with a mistake as a teacher according to your experience? Or from

your experience how do you deal with this problem, error correction? In speaking class, especially?

**T3:** we, English teachers, we teach the basic skills, not only the speaking skills but the four skills: writing, reading, speaking and listening. With the first three they are familiar but with speaking they are not familiar, **now our objective is to improve speaking skill. To do this, we have to give them more practical exercises, in order to practise in the classroom with their partner and outside the class...(\*\*\*)...** If we advice them in order to speak with their partner. When we do such practical exercises out of the class, they can what? ... they can develop their speaking skill. By this, time they remove or avoid what?... fear. When they make mistake, instead of insulting them we have to do what? We have to initiate them, we have to show the **direction**, the way or how to speak or how to say something because to say something in a correct manner they have to practice. It takes time, therefore we have to give chance to... ehm... do more exercise. The second, **encourage them when they give response to the given question.** Next, showing them direction in order they speak with their mothers, fathers or other persons, because learning by it self is what... It is error... **when we make error we learn more. If we fear to make mistake we won't improve our speaking skill there fore learning by it self is what?... we learn a language by making mistake,** there fore we try to do this things patiently or by enduring or by tolerating, because our goal is eh...eh...to...to improve their speaking skill, there for to reach our goal we have to do all these things... eh... gradually... if we do step by step we can solve or we can change the problem.

125

**T2:** you see, there is a saying which says "**errors are not sign of failure rather they are sign of success**". **When ever you are mistaken you are learning. So that we should expect it and we should tolerate.** Of course when I say this I do not mean we totally leave out when ever they are mistaken. It is made commonly.

130

(\*\*\*\*\*)

**There should be major errors and minor error, we shouldn't punish for minor error because if we punish for every errors, students might be demotivated and affects their participation**

135 **So through process, you see, practice makes human perfect, for the matter of perfection. If students might be mistaken we shouldn't judge as their problem, this is a kind of speaking to express feeling freely and gradually correcting their errors is better, eh... I think.**

**M:** Okey, he is saying that, we should correct mistakes selectively, he is saying so, 140 meaning selectively, would you comment on this idea? Especially correcting mistakes selectively?

Our students make mistakes during speaking, pronunciation, grammatical error, and so on... and he is saying that errors or mistakes [mistakes & errors are different any ways], but for our purpose let consider as they are the same, 145 eh... How you can comment on his idea? [the speaker raised his hand to re explain].

Your idea is clear, but I want to other to react.

**T4: May be when the students make mistakes we do not focus on but their error, and should be selective to correct their errors, we correct their 150 mistakes using different techniques,** not direct but in indirectly way we have our techniques, using that we can correct all their mistakes

**T1:** Okey, for example, when students make error of words, phrases or sentences, we tolerate, right?, but, verb to be for example if the way they used change the way they want to say and makes problem we give correction. This is what I want 155 to say, but here to add my opinion the other cause of fear is when we teach the lesson, if it is not familiar to their experience it causes fear and boredom. So instead of sticking ourselves to the text, we should simply using other examples. For examples if the text talks about computer, they may not say something but we will change to the content they know in their local area, at 160 least we initiate them to say something. This is the way we teach them, the way we present lessen to our student (xxxx) the students can be interested and take part in discussion, and giving more focus to production aspect...

**T4:** Our issue is I think not on the content, but correcting the mistakes. Whatever the content they can make a mistake, so that what we do as that time for  
165 correction matters.

**T5:** The one thing I had to say is... ehm... I agree on (T1) idea. Some ,when there is practical situations students try to say something in English whether they make mistake or not. **But in the classroom situation students experience suppression and sometimes they located back wanting not to make**  
170 **mistakes. So we ought to make the lessons practical to their situation.**

**M:** Let's come to our actual classroom, what is the cause of fear? In our actual context.

**T2:** Of course, I raised the issue at the very beginning the main problem is their back ground, they don't have experience to speak in English there are, some  
175 active students were freely participating in previous class, but here **at this stage because of their age, they don't want to answer questions in English, they fear.** In addition they don't have experience of practicing.

**M:** Yeah, that is what is real in our classroom...eh... experience is one cause but what is the other cause? It that only the cause? Why I am asking this is if we  
180 know the cause, we can solve the problem.

Can we say the problem lies only on the previous experience? Lower grade problem?

Knowing the cause of the problem is the part of solution. Any ways, let's come back to the practical techniques as language professionals. What are the  
185 practical techniques you use to lower this problem? I.e. fear, anxiety (what we have said), to motivate our students just using in the class? From your experience, in your classroom what was happening? (Pause) There are practical techniques that you know...

**T2: One of the method or techniques is to group students and let them**  
190 **discuss. Instead of giving different topic for individual students we give topics for learners. Then they discuss together using English. As this time they develop confidence**

**M:** Others...

**T4:** In addition to Discussion, giving value for their activity is one technique. If they  
195 are given mark they can participate.

**M:** the issue of motivating is, of course, crucial how can we motivate? For example,  
by giving credit for their work, another.

**T1:** Praising when they take part can motivate, them, giving reward, for example  
saying excellent, very good, etc... when they attempt to speak in English,  
200 encouraging and advising are some of the methods.

**T2:** In addition to an advice providing extra practical exercise is very important.  
Student can take part when we change activities. Advice itself dose have its own  
contribution.

**T5:** I'm just to say, is there any difference concerning confidence between girls and  
205 boys in your class. Boys or you think girls speak as mush as boys in your  
English subject?

**T4:** No, not they are the same, boys speak more and girls fear.

**M:** Ok: girls fear more that is your situation.

**T4:** But... (Pause)

21**T1:** I am different; there are situations or girls that can speak more than boys.  
When I was teaching lower grades girls speak more than boys Here in my class  
(grade 12) in two sections girls participate much. It is difficult to generalize.  
Some girls come from educated and a well do family speaks English well,  
because they have different facilities than the others.

215 To come to practical techniques, peer teaching is one technique. Through peer  
teaching they can develop their confidence. When they practice peer teaching  
again and again their affective folter can be reduced and they can be confident.

**M:** Ok let we bring back you to the issue of error correction, what do you think  
about peer correction and teacher correction in lowering the affective filter? In  
220 lowering fear, and lack of confidence. How do you react to this idea? Peer  
correction and teacher correction? Or which one is better to reduce affective  
filter?

Ppp\*\*\* you can say they are the same, your belief...your own view

**T1:** When peer correct their error, students do not accept. They believe that the  
225 teacher knows all things, what they are told by their teacher, they accept I  
think, if they are corrected by their teacher it is better. I prefer teacher  
correction.

**M:** That his belief, what do you think? How do you entertain this idea or if you have  
the same view, raise, which one is help full to lower the affective variable or to  
230 lower fear (for example)

**T2:** It depends up on that teacher, means, the way that teacher handles (xxxxx)

**M:** Ok, new idea?

Ok, we have discussed...eh... the cause of the problems and the solution, of  
course? So you think that there are challenges to perform these solutions in the  
235 class. We have raised some practical techniques, for example, let the students  
oral Presentation in the class, eh... praising them, providing reward and so on...  
Do you think that there challenges to perform these techniques according to  
your class? Or constraints these can be class size constraint, financial  
constraints and so on... we can say many things or culture aspect if you take?

24**T1:** There are problems, right? We ran to cover the portion and large class size  
(xxxx)

**T2:** As I have said earlier they have no experience. So when we use grouping  
techniques they use their native language but we encourage to increasing their  
English. But still they prefer to use the local language.

24**T3:** In addition to his opinion our students have no experience or exposure. But  
when they start to speak English, we have to initiate. Still some students have  
as interest.

**M:** what I want you to say for example time constraint? I have seen the teacher  
conducting debate between students. So all students can participate in such  
250 kind of activities in 40 or 45 minutes? So I think there should be same extra  
time to just make our students practice speaking English. What do you think,  
for example, you do have a mini media in the school. Have you made same  
arrangements in order, English media and so on...? Or English clubs in which

they can improve their speaking skill, reading skill by itself, rather than  
255 speaking. But for our case, speaking. That is my question

**T4:** First semester, there was English club, but now it is not active. By making students participate in this club...

**T2:** Of course this can't be good solution. Because, you see, you know some parents might not be educated. This can be for few students.

26**T3:** The best thing we can do is advising them. When they pretend some dialogues or conversation first we advise them to read, and close by reading again and again they can improve their English though practicing they can improve their skill. Now, our objective is initiating them or advising them. If they practice by themselves, it is possible to speaking, by reading some sentences and close  
265 their exercises books or texts, they can speak orally. If they act in this way, in long term they can what? They can avoid fear and they can act this speaking. We teachers are not speaking English in school compound, therefore if we try, if we ourselves start to speak in English we can initiate them. We are not volunteer to speak in English in school compound, because if we start to speak  
270 in English, our colleagues may laugh at us. For this reason we to speak in English rather we prefer to what our mouth and we use our mother tongue. If we started our students we energize them or initiate them and they act as us. If we start our students will start to improve their speaking skill or other skill and we must advise them to do more by themselves. You know these days our  
275 learning method is what? Student centered not teacher centered. We give more chances for them. If they practice more with their partners and they can remove fear and they can improve their skills. Giving opportunities, if we give them opportunity they can improve it without boring.

**M:** Final question, the last one.

280 There are different partners to promote this skill, not only teachers. If there something you expect from department, from the managing bodies or from the ministry of Education, something to improve concerning the materials, and so on? If there is a kind of assignment that can be raised by you? If this is done by dep't... and so on...

28**T1:** What I want to remind our department is it should bring about change starting from itself and arrange department meeting to be conducted in English. If we do this other can share our experience and the director can do the same. Our student can learn from us and can have confidence.

**T2:** The other very important thing let the school management arrange some extra 290 time (out of normal time table) in which students practice English. Fortunately we have foreign teachers here and with these volunteers it will be the best way of helping students.

**M:** Let's come to an end. I really thank you again and again. Have a good time.

## Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and it has not been presented for a degree in any other universities. Hence, all sources and materials used for this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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**Date:** 20/05/2011

**Place and date of submission:** Addis Ababa University, May, 2010.

This thesis has been submitted for the examination with my approval as a university advisor.

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**Date:** 22-5-2011