



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

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Department of Foreign Languages and Literature

**Exploring Factors that hinder Students' Speaking Skills: The Case
of Safari Academy and ROFAM High School (Addis Abeba)**

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Addis Ababa Ethiopia

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of Safari Academy and ROFAM High School (Addis Ababa)**

**A Thesis submitted to the Department of Foreign languages and Literature in
Fulfillment of Master's Degree in English Language Teaching**

By

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ELA: English Language Arts

FOFAM: ROSCHLI FAMILY, The founder of Selam Children's Village

ELPQ: English Language Proficiency Questionnaire

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine grade 12 high school students' English language speaking proficiency and thereby explore factors that hinder or facilitate students' speaking skills. Participants of the study were 64 grade 12 students from Safari and ROFAM private high schools in Addis Ababa. The statistical data obtained from one sample t-test ($t = -5.87$, $SD = .28$, $SE = .04$ and $p = .000$) showed that English speaking skills were not developed by students. This implies that the English language speaking proficiency of 12 graders in the two sample schools was on average below the expected level as the obtained mean ($m = 2.79$) is less than the expected mean ($m = 3.00$). Findings from the data revealed reasons for the lack of English language proficiency. To mention some of them, students' problem of linguistic proficiency, inadequate vocabulary, lack of grammar usage, pronunciation and literary competence. Students also had problem of fear, shyness, anxiety, attitude inhibition, confidence, and exposure of speaking English. What is more, students had tendency to use their mother tongue. Teachers were also required to be model in terms of speaking skills so that they could influence their students. They were responsible to encourage their students which could help the students to improve their speaking skills using their potential. The study investigated gender distribution, age, years of service, educational qualifications, and factors affecting English language teaching and students' speaking performance among 29 teachers. Results showed a significant gender imbalance (89.7% male) and a predominance of mid-career teachers with 11-20 years of service (93.1%). Most teachers held a First Degree (62.1%) or an MA Degree (37.9%). Key factors influencing students' speaking skills included teacher encouragement, socio-economic backgrounds, and psycho-social issues like anxiety. Correlations revealed that students' backgrounds and challenges significantly impacted their speaking abilities and awareness. The findings highlight the need for targeted strategies to address these influencing factors. According to interviews from the student textbook's speaking topics often lack real-world relevance and cultural diversity. Activities could be more engaging with more practical, everyday scenarios and interactive, group-based tasks. Incorporating current events and diverse perspectives would make speaking exercises more engaging and applicable to real-life conversations.

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CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

This study dealt with the factors which hindered students speaking development. Speaking is known to be the productive language skill which makes use of pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and even accent. It helped students to express their feelings, ideas, emotions, experience, etc. For such important reasons, they needed to develop their speaking skills. However, high school students were found to be inactive speaking in English. The study dug out the factors why students were not able to articulate properly. The researcher of this study presented background of the study, problem of the study, significant of the study, objective of the study, the research questions in this part of the study. The study stated points about the problems of students' spoken language. Furthermore, the study also explained the significance of dealing these problems and the work itself. The researcher also saw the previous researched works of other people and made use of the findings to substantiate this study.

The study was a descriptive study which used both qualitative and quantitative methods. Descriptive research was set as a research method used to describe the existing situation in a clear manner. The phenomenon observed in descriptive research was already available. The researcher defined the methods by which he gathered information about the issue of students' speaking inadequacy as well. He had also planned to gather information at ROFAM High School as the area/site of his research. The research for the area selection was its proximity to the area of his work place. In order to gather data, the researcher employed the three research instruments-observation, interview, and questionnaire. The researcher was expected to go to the research area and contact the school leaders who were key people in giving access of information to the researcher. Then, he had time with the students, teachers and support staff for holistic data. Using the research instruments, he collected adequate information. Using the data collected, the researcher analyzed the information and thoroughly discussed and interpreted the findings.

1.1 Background of the Study

Speaking English language was important in many ways. For example, it helps students to interact with their students and peers which enhances their learning. Tannen (2017) states that it is one of the powerful tools to express ourselves and to be connected with others and it creates good relationship with others. Angelou (2013) also pointed out the power and significance of spoken language as it conveys information and emotion. Speaking as verbal communication is the most used one among the other skills. This is because it is spoken both by literate and illiterate people. Numonjohnova (2019) stated that speaking is the primary means of communication in human interaction which allows students to have good relationship make friendship. As the productive skill, it helps students to produce ideas, exchange thoughts with others. It enables them to produce message which helps them to learn better from their teachers and their peers.

Moreover, speaking was essential in the students' future career. For example, it can make them to be competitive in achieving job opportunity. Since fluency and accuracy in their speaking express their professional ability, they win the requirement for jobs. They are able to fully explain their knowledge confidently. Khairul (2023) had this to say, "The ability to speak English proficiently has become increasing important in the job market. The ability to speak and communicate effectively in English is a crucial skill highly valued by employers."

For such essential uses of speaking in English, the researcher dealt with factors that hinder students' skills. It is obvious that students face challenges to express their ideals, emotions or opinions confidently. The gap that was seen with English teachers with regard to using English as a medium of instruction. At times, question and answer in English class weren't done in English which hinders students' skills. When a teacher used English in the classroom and outside students could be influenced by him and imitated him. The researcher tried to answer the questions pertaining to affecting factors.

The purpose of this study, therefore, was to explore factors which hinder students' speaking skills at Safari Academy and ROFAM High School located Civil Service and CMC respectively. The purpose of selection of these schools was for a couple of reasons. First, where most students of the schools lack linguistic proficiency due to various reasons. For example, economic and social background which discourage their motivation and interest of speaking. Situations in the

classrooms, such as size or students' number didn't allow every student to have active participation. Second reason was the proximity of the high schools to the working place of the researcher. This helped the study effective as the researcher could easily collect valid and reliable data. The study was concerned with exploring areas where the students were hindered from speaking English both in the classroom and outside. The study also tried to see the speaking level of students in the high schools. The researcher also tried to find out the instructional gaps which needed to be observed seriously.

1.2 Statement of the problem

As the productive language skill, speaking had become crucial in this age of verbal communication which played significant role in the academic and working areas. However, high school students were not seen using it in their classrooms and day to day communication for they had speaking gaps. It was obvious that the problem of speaking affected class interaction as it was medium of instruction. Therefore, the researcher seriously looked into the problems and brought out insights that had not been seen in the previous researches in this issue. Learning a language was successfully conducted when students were able to speak smoothly with their teachers and peers. Liu (2006) stated that students who participate actively in classroom tend to have better academic achievement compared to students who do not participate. Consequently, the study tried to see the gaps seen not only with the students but also with their English teachers. The study focused on the fundamental factors that hindered students speaking development. It also tried to see whether the school management had leadership gaps with relation to teaching speaking. Therefore, this research tried to deal with the problems of students in speaking English fluently. It revealed the gaps in teaching speaking and investigated background of problems of speaking. It was obvious that not only high school students, but also university students, though not all, were not able to articulate the language in a fluent way. To this end, the researcher worked on identifying problems of students in speaking English language in their classrooms and outside of their classrooms.

1.3. Research Questions

1. Why were students not interested in speaking English?
2. What were the students' gaps seen in speaking in the classrooms and elsewhere?
3. What were the major factors that are hindering speaking skills of students?

4. What were roles of teachers in motivating students and enhancing English speaking activities?

1.4 Objectives

1.4.1 General objective

The general objective of this study was to explore factors that hinder students' speaking skills.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of this study are:

- To identify the major factors which affect students' speaking skills.
- To assess students' participation and performance in the speaking class.
- To investigate the gaps seen in students speaking performance.
- To scrutinize teachers' role in the speaking classrooms.

1.5 Significance of the study

These schools were chosen based on the significance of the area with relation to importance of speaking English in a fluent way. Speaking English language in an accurate way is benefiting to students as its coverage in communication is huge worldwide. Barney Meekin states that there is no other language in the world which facilitates communication as much as English language (Barney Meekin, 2023). Therefore, speaking English was rewarding for students in many ways. It was essential for students in enhancing and simplifying their learning process since speaking accurately and fluently enables them to get opportunity to gain more information and understanding of lessons. Speaking English language was also crucial in working world for the students in the long run. Consequently, the study enabled students of English benefit from it since it revealed both its importance and better way of improving speaking skills of English language. Moreover, it alarmed the teachers, administration staff and even parents to give adequate attention to speaking classes.

1.6 Scope of the study

This study was concerned with the factors that hinder grade 12 students' speaking skills at Safari Academy and ROFAM. The data comprised English teachers at Safari Academy and grade 12 students in Safari Academy and ROFAM only.

1.7 Limitation of the study

This study was limited to only the two high schools: Safari Academy and ROFAM Academy High School. Data were collected from students of both schools, but the researcher collected questionnaire from Safari Academy only. The researcher had problem with relation to data collection from the observation at Safari Academy. The was not willing to let the researcher to observe grade 12 classes. However, the observation data was collected from ROFAM Academy High School.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Review of Related Literature

In this chapter of the study, related literature was reviewed that support the essentiality of the present study. The researcher saw the similarities and differences between the previous research and the present study. Consequently, the researcher looked into various speaking skills and their significance in verbal communication which the students were required to use in their interaction with their teachers and peers. Following this, the roles of students and teachers were observed. Then, factors that hinder grade 12 students were reviewed. Finally, various speaking activities will be reviewed.

2.1. Definition of speaking

People defined speaking in different ways. Cameron (2001) stated, “There are three important points of speaking skills. First, by productive skill is meant the ability of a person to actively produce the language by coordinating the organs of speech. Second, to express meaning means that the purpose of producing language in verbal communication to deliver ideas so that the speaker can convey meaning to the listener. Third, being able to be directly and empirically observed means that the implementation of speaking can be directly heard or seen in the speaking process by looking at the correctness and effectiveness of the speaker”.

Speaking is also a multi-sensory activity because it involves paralinguistic features such as eye-contact, facial expressions, body language, tempo, pauses, voice quality changes, and pitch variation which affect conversational flow.

2. 2. Components or aspects of Speaking

2.2.1 Fluency

The term fluency refers to an ability to produce or comprehend utterances smoothly, rapidly, and accurately. It is shown when someone speaks with normal speed like native speaker. Furthermore, speed is a factor of speaking language fluently (Thornbury, 2001), some perception about being fluent also about pausing word. It is important to know appropriate placement of pauses. Another significant factor in the perception of fluency is the length of run, such as the number of syllables between pauses.

Although, there are some signs that we can hear when they do common pause fillers are uh and um or use of repeats that is the repetition of a single word at the point where they have been temporarily paused. These signs indicate that the speaker does not spend a lot of time searching for the language items needed to express the message. However, fluency means an ability of people in delivering their idea quickly and with understanding. This capacity occasionally contrasted with accuracy, correctness of language use, especially grammatical correctness and complexity or a more encompassing understanding of vocabulary and discourse techniques. Fluency, accuracy, and complexity are distinct but interrelated components of language acquisition and talent. In addition, communication is a process of sending the idea to people until they receive what we want.

2.2.2 Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the production of syllables or words according to some accepted standard, as identified in any good dictionary. Among the most widespread pronunciation problems are putting the accent (stress or emphasis) on the wrong syllable and pronouncing sounds that should remain silent. Both of these pronunciation problems may result from learning English as a second language (Devito, 2015). For example, a person may use the accent system of his or her first language to pronounce words in English that may have a different accent system.

Similarly, in many languages, all letters that appear in a word are pronounced in speech, whereas in English some letters are silent. Therefore, pronunciation is the manner wherein a word or a language is spoken. This will refer to commonly agreed-upon sequences of sounds utilized in talking a given phrase or language in a specific dialect accurate pronunciation, or truly the manner a selected individual speaks a word or language.

2.2.3 Grammar

Grammar is theoretically possible to have short conversation where each utterance consists of nothing but a single word or short phrase (Thornbury, 2001). However, the grammar of speech is identical to the grammar of written text. The function refers to time of producing speech in real time. Furthermore, it is the meaning conveyed in a sentence by word order and other grammatical signals to provide structural meaning.

2.2.4 Vocabulary

Vocabulary is an important aspect in learning a language. A language learner is unable to communicate or express his or her ideas either in spoken or written form if he or she does not have sufficient vocabulary. Vocabulary is divided into two kinds; active and passive. Active vocabulary is the word that the students can understand, pronounce correctly, and use constructively in speaking. Passive vocabulary is the word that the students can recognize and understand when they are in the context (John, 1988).

2.2.5 Comprehension

Comprehension can be defined as the potential to understand something. In speaking, comprehension is definitely required in order that the speaker can initiate the communication and the listener can respond it. Comprehension is important to avoid misunderstanding among a speaker and a listener. certainly, communication can cross smoothly.

2.3. The importance of speaking skills

Even if there are three other language skills, speaking skill is the most effective ones among them as a majority of communication is done through speech. Unfortunately, speaking, the productive skills, is these days, given less attention and awareness is not given to English learners in the national media. More emphasis is rather given to first language. The study proves this according to Richards and Rogers, “In the traditional methods of teaching language, the speaking skills had been neglected massively whereas much attention had been paid on writing and reading skills. The Grammar-Translation method is a good example of that claim. In spite of the fact that speaking skill is crucially important for language learners to converse and communicate, much attention has been paid to other elements of language.” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

In the traditional methods of teaching language, the speaking skills had been neglected massively whereas much attention had been paid on writing and reading skills. The Grammar-Translation method is a good example of that claim. In spite of the fact that speaking skill is crucially important for language learners to converse and communicate, much attention has been paid to other elements of language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Speaking is important to achieve fluency, accuracy and complexity. The distinction can be made among fluency, accuracy and complexity (Skehan, 1998). Fluency is typically measured by speed of access or production and by the number of hesitations; accuracy by the amount of error; and complexity by the presence of more complicated constructions, such as subordinate clauses.

Speaking is crucial in students' life. To mention some of the areas where speaking is paramount: pursuing higher studies in foreign countries, Interacting with people all around the globe, promoting the sale of products in the business, making, living abroad simpler and easier, getting better employment opportunities, communicating effectively with others, increasing the income of the individual, boosting up the speakers' self-confidence, knowing the different cultures of the world, and interacting with people all around the globe. (Shehan, 1998)

2.4. Role of Students in Communicative class

Having clear awareness of speaking English, students are expected to take part in speaking activities. They need to be motivated intrinsically and release their potential in order to develop their speaking skills. Once they convince themselves to speak English with their peers and teachers, it becomes their culture of communication. The students ought to be involved in different class activities such as role play, telling story, debate, drama and jock.” Students cannot achieve their speaking fluency without interaction in EFL classroom. Kouicem (2010) explored the role of interaction that takes place among students in the classroom on developing learners' speaking skills.

Scharle and Szabo (2000) point out that autonomous learners are those who accept the idea that their own efforts are crucial to progress in learning language and behave accordingly. When doing their homework, or answering a question in class, they are not aspiring to please the teacher, or to get a good mark. They are simply making an effort in order to learn something. They are willing to cooperate with the teacher and students in the learning group for every one's benefit (Ibid). Hedge (2000) agrees that an autonomous learner is one who is self- motivated, one who takes the initiatives, one who has a clear idea of what he/she wants to learn and one who has his/her own plan for pursuing and achieving his goal.

Students are expected to face challenges that occurs during speaking in the class. They should feel confident to ask and answer questions and ignore the mistakes they commit while speaking. Students are also expected to use English with their friends outside the classroom as it helps them to improve their speaking skills. Maclellan's (2004) suggested that Learners should engage in social learning environment to promote their non-academic and self-concept. These ideas can help learners to raise their self-confidence. Salma (2021) states that learning environment and practicing English speaking skills are certainly very influential. When teachers teach in a friendly manner and provide opportunities to speak, students will feel free to express themselves. Students also enjoy practicing when the teacher teaches them to speak without expressing disappointment every time they make a mistake and has a very positive impact on improving students' abilities.

2.5. Role of Teacher in communicative class

Without teachers' motivation and facilitation of speaking class, students cannot have the opportunity to exercise their speaking capacity in the classroom. According to Harmer (2007; 107) a teacher is like "a gardener, because s/he plant seeds and watchs them grow". Students are the field and the seed is the knowledge planted by their educators. As a gardener takes very good care of the plants, the teacher also plays different roles in their life. However, English teachers neglect speaking skills as the focus is on teaching grammar and vocabulary. According to Joanna and Heather (2006) many teachers worldwide have to teach mainly grammar and vocabulary; because these areas are tested in examinations. This means that speaking is a neglected language skill in many English classrooms. Students may have a good knowledge of grammar and a wide vocabulary because they can use the knowledge to pass examination, but they face challenges to speak English outside the classroom.

According to Anuradha et al (2014), teachers play significant role in stimulating interactional developing speaking skills. The teacher needs to be fluent and accurate in spoken elements of language so as to be a role model for the learners. S/he create platform for the students to practice speaking confidently before class. Language teacher is expected to demonstrate speaking in front of his or her students as he or she is taken model by his or students.

In ELT classes teachers are expected to teach effectively, to guide students and to keep order in the classroom. However, the main role teachers are expected to play is providing and maintaining good and quality education (Leu, 2005). In order to achieve quality, teachers need to have the courage to use their energy, knowledge with motivation. So that teachers can play various roles according to the skills and needs of the learners.

The teacher should be clear of his tasks where he must not act as controller in both cases. To this effect, the teacher should always be committed in terms of securing such as interactive classroom by way of acting less dominantly. To this effect (Ellis, 1997)) says “teacher-centered classrooms are not interactive classrooms in their nature, and this is what language teachers need to learn. Interaction can be two ways, three ways, or four ways but never one way.”

2.6. Factors that hinder students speaking

Many language learners find it difficult to express themselves in spoken language. They are generally facing problems to use a foreign language to express their thoughts effectively. One of the major factors which hinders students’ speaking skills is psychological factor as stated by Dorris and Jesica (2007) lack of self- confidence, shyness, fear of making mistake, anxiety, mother tongue language and lack of motivation to learn. The other major factor is linguistic factor as it is stated by Dorris and Jesica (2007), lack of vocabulary, grammatical errors, and poor pronunciation generally facing problems to use a foreign language to express their thoughts effectively. The following are among factors which hinder students’ speaking skills.

2.6.1 Fear of Mistake

The primary reason of fear of mistake is that students are afraid of looking foolish in front of other people and they are concerned about how other will see them, (Kurtus, 2001). Chen (2010) explain that students feel afraid of the idea of making mistakes as they are worried that their friends will laugh at them and receive negative evaluations from their peers if they make mistake in speaking English. Students’ fear of making mistakes in speaking English has been a common issue especially in an EFL context specially in Indonesia.

2.6.2 Students’ background

Another problem of students in mastering speaking is their background. Students of the rural areas are not exposed to speaking English as much as those in the urban areas. Latha (2012)

discusses that rural background of learners where English is generally not used is another cause affecting the leaning process.

2.6.3 Shyness

Shyness is an emotional thing that many students suffer from at some time when they are required to speak in English class. This indicates that shyness could be a source of problem in students' learning activities in the classroom especially in the class of speaking. Therefore, paying attention on this aspect is also quite important in order to help the students do their best in their speaking performance in the classroom (Gebhard, 2000). Furthermore, Baldwin (2011) further explains that speaking in front of people is one of the more common phobias that students encounter and feeling of shyness makes their mind go blank or that they will forget what to say. According to Ur (1996), there are many factors that cause difficulty in speaking, and they areas follows; students are worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism, or simply shy, nothing to say. Students have no motive to express themselves, Low or uneven participation,

2.6.4 Lack of confidence

Speaking a language has to be motivated by confidence as it drives students to release their potential or capacity of speaking. Students can also be unconfident because of their low performance of speaking. Chen (2010) states the main cause of students' confidence is their low ability in speaking English. In this case, as they add, many students think that their English is bad and feel that they cannot speak English well. The other cause of students' lack of confidence also deals with the lack of encouragement from the teacher (Brown,2001). In this context, many teachers do not think that convincing students that they are able to speak English is important.

2.6.5 Focus on mother tongue

Students of the same area are usually seen use their mother tongue or native language because it allows them talk with their friends fluently and easily. Mohammed (2021) states that Learners who share the same mother tongue tend to use it because it is easier and because learners feel less exposed if they are speaking their mother- tongue. According to Ur (1996), Students have no motive to express themselves, Low or uneven participation, Mother-tongue use. As a result, it becomes difficult for them to use English without interference of native language because the use of L1 has an impact on students speaking skill achievement (Schmitt, 2002; O'Neill and McMahan, 2005). One cannot speak articulately unless one possesses adequate knowledge of the

target language, and this is an external factor. Students need a firm understanding of sound production, including phonemes and their combinations, in order to utter them correctly (Canale & Swain, 1980). Interference from L1 creates difficulties for learners to pronounce certain words.

They have to learn stress, rhythm and intonation. Goh and Burns (2012) found that scant vocabulary and no grip on grammar prevent learners from expressing their thoughts accurately. To sum up, learners must put in utmost efforts to enhance vocabulary, improve phonological knowledge, and rectify their grammatical errors. Similarly, teachers need to use effectual techniques to enhance their students' language competency.

One can, therefore, understand that students' mother tongue interference that may come as a result of the way they have been taught in lower classes could affect the practice of learner-centered approach.

2.6.6 Lack of motivation

Students cannot release their potential unless they are motivated by teachers, peers and parents. Motivation is driving force in learning speaking which should come extrinsically and intrinsically. Intrinsic motivation is a motivation within the student which internally motivates him whereas extrinsic motivation comes from outside, either from the teacher, parents or friends. Motivation can also be instrumental and integrative. Gardner and Lambert (1972) identified two types of motivation when it comes to language learning: instrumental and integrative. Instrumental motivation is the drive to learn the L2 for some sort of material gain or advantage, such as improving one's job opportunities or an increase in salary or income; integrative motivation is when people want to learn the L2 with a view to "participating in the culture of its people. With regard to the issue of motivation in learning, Nunan (1999) stresses that motivation is important to notice in that it can affect students' reluctance to speak in English. In this sense, motivation is a key consideration in determining the preparedness of learners to communicate

2.6.7 Lack of turn taking

Class size is increasing from time to time which affects students in their learning speaking. The more students are in a class, there less the speaking chance for each students to take part. Tuan (2015) argues that the problem in speaking class is that participation is low or uneven. In a large

group, each student will have very little talking time because only one participant can talk at a time so that the others can hear him/her. There is a tendency of some learners to dominate while others speak very little or not at all.

2.7 Various speaking activities in English classroom.

In order to improve students' speaking skills, teachers can prepare different speaking activities in the speaking class. Students can also demonstrate the activities accordingly. The following are important speaking activities according to Rao.

2.7.1 Information Gap Activities

This spoken interaction activity that takes place in the English language classroom is 'Information Gap Activities'. Harmer (2002: 88) says, "Where two speakers have different parts of information making up a whole, because they have different information, there is a gap between them". Gap activities are the most useful activities to promote a foreign language or second language acquisition (Rao, 2019).

2.7.2 Role Plays

Incorporating role play into the classroom adds different varieties, and changes the pace of language production. The enjoyment in role play is that learners are able to enact as anyone as they wish for a short period of time. To develop language skills familiar roles are chosen by the students so they can't hunt for ideas. (.Dhivya R B, Dr. M. Ilankumaran, 2022). Role plays are activities adopted by the language teachers when they want to vary the kinds of the spoken situation experienced in the English classroom. Through role plays, learners get opportunities and revise their understanding and perspective by enhancing their thoughts and feelings of certain characters in the given situation. Ur (1984) says that role plays are used to refer to all sorts of activities where learners imagine themselves in a situation outside the classroom.

2.7.3 Talking Circles

'Talking Circles' is another strategy to promote learners' speaking skills. Talking circles create safe environment through confidence where learners are given opportunities to share their points of view with their peers using the target language without fear of judgment or criticism. These activities are of immense use when the learners are feeling, sharing, considering moral or ethical issues. These activities are effective strategies for real life solving problems and reaching group

consensus. Here the main concern of the teachers is to encourage the learners to share their views and opinions in talking circles. (Rao, 2019).

2.7.4 Debates

Debates are one of the most useful activities implemented by the English language teachers to develop the learners' speaking skills. According to Collins English Dictionary, "A debate is a discussion about a subject on which people have different views". According to Vocabulary.com Dictionary, "A debate is a kind of respectful, well-reasoned argument over opposing points of view, although tensions can run high and voices can be raised". It further says, "A debate is a discussion in which reasons are advanced for and against some proposition or proposal" According to Krieger (2005: 25), "Debate is an excellent activity for language learning because it engages students in a variety of cognitive and linguistic ways. In addition to providing meaningful listening, speaking and writing practice, debate is also highly effective for developing argumentation skills for persuasive speech and writing".

2.7.5 Group Discussions

Group Discussions are one among the best ways of speech presentation and it is considered as an interesting form of oral practice in the English classroom. According to the Cambridge English Dictionary, the definition of 'discussion' is, "The activity in which people students talk about something and tell each other their ideas or opinions". Ilankumaran (2022) points out the importance of group discussion, Group discussion requires a quick presentation on the topic. Language fluency is improved through this activity. Here students are divided into groups and they are encouraged to discuss on the given topic. In this context, Harmer (2001: 46) says, "This can provide some of enjoyable and productive speaking in language classroom".

2.7.6 Seminar

Seminar, one of teaching speaking is useful for language proficiency improvement. Ilankumaran (2022) has this to say about seminar, Through Seminars, the language proficiency of the students increases. It enhances the confident level of the students. In student-centered classroom, teacher allots the topic to the students based on their efficiency and they have to present the seminars in an interactive way.

2.7.7 Pair work

Pair work in speaking class helps shy, weak and unconfident students to be motivated and improve their speaking skills. Ilankumaran (2022) also states the motivation created through pair work, Pair work has a vital role in language classrooms. It motivates collaborative learning and students are very much encouraged while working in pairs. The teacher makes the seating arrangement that facilitate pair work.

2.7.8 Extempore speeches

This type of speaking activity increases students' creativity since a topic for speech is given to students all of a sudden. Ilankumaran (2022) points out, In the extempore speech activity, teachers have to provide the topic for the speech without any prior knowledge of the students and the topic must be a familiar with them.

2.7.9 Telling stories

Telling story initiates class activities and makes the class more attractive. Ilankumaran (2022) also puts the following, Story-telling is the effective method as it triggers activities that are basics in language learning process. Also, this activity keeps the classroom alive and it is vital to select stories that aids the learners to acquire new language structure especially in the view of practical use of that language.

2.7.10 Mock interview

Mock Interview also known as Practice Interview, is a simulation of an actual job interview. It gives an opportunity to the job seekers to practice for the real interview and gives proper feedback to them. It is just like a practice interview held with a professional career counsellor. With the advent of mock interviews, the job aspirants have many advantages like answering difficult questions, improving their communication skills, developing interview strategies and even reducing their stress before they face the real or actual job interviews. (Rao, 2019).

2.7.11 Presentations

The English teachers should train their learners well to prepare them to give presentations in the English classrooms. For this purpose, the language teachers should teach their learners the necessary ways to improve their presentation skills. The teachers have to teach some tips like practising it multiple times, arriving early to the place, attending other presentations, taking deep breaths, adjusting to the surroundings, keeping their faces always smiling, using positive visualization, using only the important, insightful, useful and actionable information, engaging the audience actively and entertaining them through the presentation and so on. (Rao, 2019).

CHAPTER THREE

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The aim of this study was to explore factors that hinder students' speaking skills. The study was a descriptive study which used both qualitative and quantitative methods. Descriptive research was set as a research method used to describe the existing situation in a clear manner. The phenomenon observed in descriptive research was already available. What was necessary for a researcher to do was collecting the available data through the use of research instruments such as questionnaire, interview, and observation. The main goal of descriptive research was describing the existing situation systematically under the study (Gall, & Borg, 2007).

3.2 Research instruments

The research instruments were questionnaire, observation and interview. The researcher aimed at triangulation to establish the validity and reliability of the data and to achieve the desired outcome.

3.2.1 Questionnaire

The researcher prepared well-thought questionnaire for students and teachers to investigate the factors that hinder students' speaking skills and how the factors affect their speaking skills and made effort to see how teachers were tackling these factors. In addition, the researcher tried to see the effort made and motivation of English teachers by means of the questionnaire. Questionnaire was first conducted and the researcher made thirty teachers and sixty-five students fill the questionnaire. All teachers were from the Safari Academy but fifteen of the students were from ROFAM Academy High School Since both schools are the research settings.

3.2.2 Classroom observation

The researcher had class observation at ROFAM Academy High School in three grade 12 classes of which one was social science class. The teacher gave the students his own topic to discuss in group and present in the class. The researcher was able to carefully observe the way the students were presenting the topic individually.

3.2.3 Interview

The researcher had interview with grade 12 students to get first-hand information. The interviews was aimed at triangulating to establish the validity and reliability of the data from the questionnaire and observation.

3.3 Sample size and Sampling Technique

Safari Academy and ROFAM Academy High School were chosen as setting of the study for two main reasons. The first reason was the two schools were near to the area where the researcher was working. As proximity was essential for the study to be consolidated with reliable and pertinent data. The second reason was students in the two schools were not proficient when they were compared to the students in the neighboring schools such as School of Tomorrow, One planet, Flipper and Diamond Academy. To this end, from the total population of 718 grade 12 students, 10% of the students was randomly selected. Accordingly, 67 grade 12 students and 30 English teachers were respondents in the research work.

3.4. Data collection procedure

To collect the data, the researcher went to the schools and talked to the school leadership and teachers concerning to the data collection process. In the second place, the researcher introduced the purpose of the study to the students. Then the researcher decided the selection from teachers and students based on the size of the population. The researcher then had discussion with the directors with regard to the time table the researcher could have time with respondents. After the consent from the leadership, the researcher made arrangement of suitable time of data collection with the participants, the researcher went to the two schools to collect the data. Firstly, the thirty teachers were given the questionnaires and twenty-nine of them returned the questionnaires during the collection time. Completion of the questionnaire by the students took place in the in the office with the director's choice.

During the administration of completion of the questionnaire, the researcher carefully conducted the process and collected the essential data. The process of collecting the questionnaire was in such a way the students came to the office five at a time and thirty students completed the questionnaire on the first day. Next day, the other twenty students filled the questionnaire in Safari Academy. A week later, the researcher went to ROFAM High School and distributed the

questionnaire to the fifteen students and collected the questionnaire as the students completed them. On the following week, the researcher went to ROFAM High School and conducted the interview with the seven students. Finally, the researcher went back to the school for observation supervision. Three grade twelve classes were observed during speaking class.

3.4.1. Ensuring the trustworthiness of the data

First, one way of ensuring trustworthiness of my data was by using the triangulation method. That was data were collected from students, and teachers. Second, the data that were gathered using questionnaire were substantiated through interview and observation. Third, verification was made to achieve the validity. That means, prior to the interview and the administrations, interview protocols and questionnaires were given to colleagues and experts (such as one measurement and evaluation expert and one English lecturer) to check the face validity of the items. Then, to examine the reliability of the questionnaire items pilot study was made.

3.4.2. Ethical considerations

To be faithful about the study, the researcher described the purpose and the expectations to the participants (through information sheet- see Appendix C). The participants were also provided with the informed consent form (see Appendix D). Once the informed consent was signed and obtained from the participants, further rapport was established. And then, time and place for the interview and observation was scheduled on the convenience of the participants. Besides, pseudonyms and codes were used instead of participants' real name to keep the confidentiality.

3.4.3. Expert Comments

The scales were given for two experts. One was an expert in measurement and evaluation and PhD candidate in educational psychology who provided me valuable comments on the nature and relevance of the items to answer the research questions. The second one was an English lecturer from Woldia University and a PhD candidate at Addis Ababa University who helped the researcher check relevance and clarity of the language that the questions were written. For the first draft, 37 items of English Language Proficiency Questionnaire (ELPQ) were given to these experts. Most of the valuable comments and suggestions obtained were related to clarity of the language, ideas and contents of the tool. Thus, the instruments were improved upon the feedbacks received from these experts. After critical evaluation, 5 items in the scales were

rewritten and one item which did not have content relevance was cancelled. Then, the items were reduced to 36 and made ready for the pilot test.

3.4.4. Pilot Study

After checking the face validity of the items, pilot studies were conducted to check reliability of the items. The student questionnaire was pilot tested on a randomly selected 10 students at Diamond Academy where students were not participants of the main study. As the participants completed the instruments, they were asked some questions to make sure that they understood the items and the items measure the intended purpose. The responses of the pilot test groups seemed that they understood the questions and the contents.

Finally, the pilot study was analyzed using Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient. Based on the responses of the pilot groups, most reliable items, whose reliability measures are good ($\alpha = .70$ and above), were selected and used for the study whereas 3 items which had poor reliability coefficient were deleted.

3.5. Administration

First, participant students were asked assent and school principals were asked the consent for the research participants. Second, once the assent from students and consent from teachers and principals was obtained, orientation was given to the participants on how to fill the questionnaire. They were also informed about the anonymity of their names and positions. Finally, questionnaires were administered at students' free time and in a free classroom. Similarly, interviews and FGD sessions were held at participants' free time and convenient place for recording and discussion.

Then, the main study was conducted in the two private schools of Addis Ababa namely, Safari Academy and ROFAM secondary schools. The participant students and teachers were from these sample schools.

3.6. Methods of Data Analysis

The quantitative data gathered through questionnaire were coded in the SPSS version 27 and analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and one sample *t-test*. More specifically, one sample *t-test* was employed to examine the general status of the students' and

teachers' speaking proficiency. Test of significance was set at .05 level and all tests were two-tailed. Moreover, assumptions of normality and equality of variance were used as the methods require them.

The data collected through interview were analyzed by coding, categorizing, thematically organizing and narration. As per the request of the key informants included in the study and ethical principles of qualitative research (Seidman, 2006; Saldana, 2011), pseudonyms are used in reporting findings of the qualitative data.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. RESULTS

This chapter was concerned with the preliminary analysis of the data and the main findings of the study. Thus, it dealt with the results obtained from the analyses. The sequences of results were presented as follows. First, data cleaning/screening was made as a preliminary analysis phase. Following the data cleaning step results of data about English language speaking proficiency scale and subscales of students were presented in the form of descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to examine which subscales were above the mean, and then one-sample *t*-test was followed to see whether the differences between the expected and the obtained means were statistically significant. Finally, results of the qualitative data were presented following the quantitative data analyses and interpretations.

4.1 Preliminary Data Analysis

Out of the 67 questionnaires administered, 3 were not returned. So, the rate of return was $(64/67*100= 96)$ that was very acceptable. Moreover, data cleaning was made for missed codes and erroneous encoding.

4.2. Main Data Analysis Results

4.2.1 Students' Data Analysis Results

Sixty-four students participated in filling the questionnaire. The mean age of students in the two sample schools was 18.23 with standard deviation of 5.45.

One-sample *t*-test was employed, which was computed by averaging the maximum and minimum scale values (i.e., $1+5/2= 3$) to answer the central research question which asked “To what extent do grade 12 students speak English language fluently?”

4.2.1.1. Students' general level of English language speaking proficiency

Table 1 below showed that on average, there was difference in means between the expected mean ($m=3.00$) and the obtained overall grade 12 average score on speaking in English language proficiency ($m= 2.79$) at the Safari and ROFAM secondary schools. This difference in means was statistically significant with *t*-score of ($t= -5.87$, $SD= .28$, $SE= .04$ and $p=.000$). This implies that the English language spoken proficiency of 12 graders in the two sample schools was on

average below the expected level as the obtained mean ($m= 2.79$) was less than the expected mean ($m=3.00$).

Table 1. One-sample *t*-test of students’ general level of English speaking proficiency (N= 64)

Variables	Expected mean	Obtained Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Students’ general level of English language speaking proficiency	3.00	2.79	.28	.04	63	-5.87	.000

Specific data analyses were made based on the six subscales of the English language proficiency questionnaire (ELPQ). One-sample *t*-test result in Table 2 below depicts that the obtained mean

($m= 2.80$) of students’ performances of speaking in English was below the expected mean ($m=3.00$) with statistically significant *t*-score of ($t= -3.08$, $SD= .50$, $SE= .06$, and $p=.003$). There were not many frequencies of speaking sessions in English classes in the sample schools in that the obtained mean ($m= 2.52$) was less than the expected mean ($m= 3.00$) with a statistically significant *t*-score of ($t = -6.77$, $SD= .57$, $SE= .07$, and $p=.000$).

The level of students’ concern and awareness for speaking skills was low as the obtained mean ($m=2.12$) was significantly ($t= -12.31$, $SD= .56$, $SE= .07$, $p=.000$) less than the expected mean ($m=3.00$).

The subscale that measures the factors which affect or facilitate students’ speaking skills was also statistically significant ($t= 2.16$, $SD= .40$, $SE= .05$, $p=.035$). That is, on average, the obtained mean ($m=3.11$) is greater than the expected mean ($m=3.00$).

On the other hand, there was not significant difference between the obtained ($m=3.13$) and expected means ($m=3.00$) for the subscale duty of English teachers with *t*-score ($t= 1.77$, $SD= .59$, $SE= .07$, $p=.081$). Thus, the apparent mean difference (0.13) might be due basically to measurement or chance error.

There was not statistically significant one-sample *t*-tests in the students’ linguistic, economic & social background ($t = .90$, $SD= .64$, $SE= .08$, and $p=.372$). This means that students’ proficiency of speaking in English language is optimum regardless of their background.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and one-sample *t*-test of English language proficiency (N= 64)

Variables	Expected mean	Obtained Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>
1. Students' linguistic, economic & social background	3.00	3.07	.64	.08	63	.90	.372
2. Students' performances of speaking in English		2.80	.50	.06		-3.08	.003
3. Duty of English teachers		3.13	.59	.07		1.77	.081
4. Frequency of speaking in English class		2.52	.57	.07		-6.77	.000
5. Factors which affect or facilitate students' speaking skills.		3.11	.40	.05		2.16	.035
6. Level of students' concern and awareness for speaking skills		2.12	.56	.07		-12.31	.000

4.2.1.2. Major factors that hinder or facilitate proficiency of speaking in English

The lack in grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation made speaking English difficult for grade 12 students at Safari Academy and ROFAM secondary school. That is, the quantitative data analysis revealed ($t=3.08$, $SD= .50$, $SE= .06$, $p=.003$) that there is lack in grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation that in turn hinders students' proficiency of speaking in English. (See Table 3)

Another factor that embeds students' speaking proficiency is lack of encouragement by English teachers. Table 4 below showed that the obtained mean ($m= 2.52$) was less than the expected mean ($m=3.00$) with statistically significant *t*-score ($t= -6.77$, $SD= .57$, $SE= .07$, and $p=.000$). This implies that high school students were not encouraged to speak in English by their English teachers. A statistically significant finding ($t= -6.77$, $SD= .57$, $SE= .07$, and $p=.000$) substantiated the above premise in that the obtained mean rated for the sentence "I love speaking English more than my mother tongue," ($m=3.31$) was greater than the expected mean ($m=3.00$). This implies

that the students could had been spoken proficiently had the teachers encouraged them given other hindering or facilitating factors.

Another interesting finding was that students needed their parents to support them to improve their speaking skills. This was evident with obtained mean ($m= 2.12$) less than the expected mean ($m=3.00$) with statistically significant t-score ($t= -12.31$, $SD= .56$, $SE= .07$, and $p=.000$). Since the statement was negative their acceptance of support was interpreted by giving low scores to the negative statement which really showed their demand for support.

Table 3.Descriptive statistics and one-sample t-test of factors that hinder students from or facilitate speaking in English (N= 64)

Variables	Expected mean	Obtained Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>
1. Lack of exposure has an influence on my English proficiency.	3.00	3.07	.64	.08	63	.90	.372
2. Speaking English is difficult for me because of lack in grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation.		3.20	.50	.06		3.08	.003
3. My effort to improve speaking is adequate.		3.13	.59	.07		1.77	.081
4. I am encouraged by my English teacher to speak in English.		2.52	.57	.07		-6.77	.000
5. I love speaking English more than my mother tongue.		3.31	.40	.05		2.16	.035
6. I do not really need my parents support to improve my speaking skills.		2.12	.56	.07		-12.31	.000

The above quantitative data obtained through questionnaire were further substantiated by the qualitative data obtained through observation and interview.

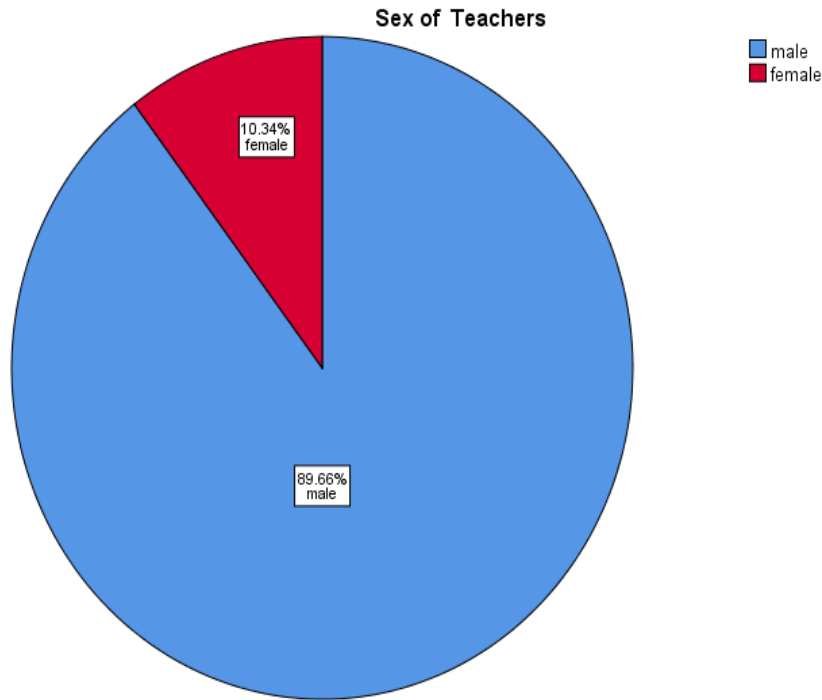
The qualitative method was mostly intended to respond the second question which dealt with the factors that facilitate or inhibit proficiency of speaking in English. The data from interview and open-ended questions were thematically analyzed. To that end, three themes merged. These themes included: *lack of exposure and frequency of spoken sessions*, less motivation and concern for speaking English, and *English teachers lack of encouragement for students to speak in English*.

4.2.2. Teachers' Data Analysis Result

4.2.2.1 Sex of Teachers

The table indicates a substantial gender imbalance among the teachers in the sample, with a significantly higher proportion of male teachers (89.7%) compared to female teachers (10.3%). This disparity suggests the need for further investigation into the underlying causes and potential strategies to promote gender diversity within the teaching workforce.

Sex of Teachers					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	26	89.7	89.7	89.7
	Female	3	10.3	10.3	100.0
	Total	29	100.0	100.0	

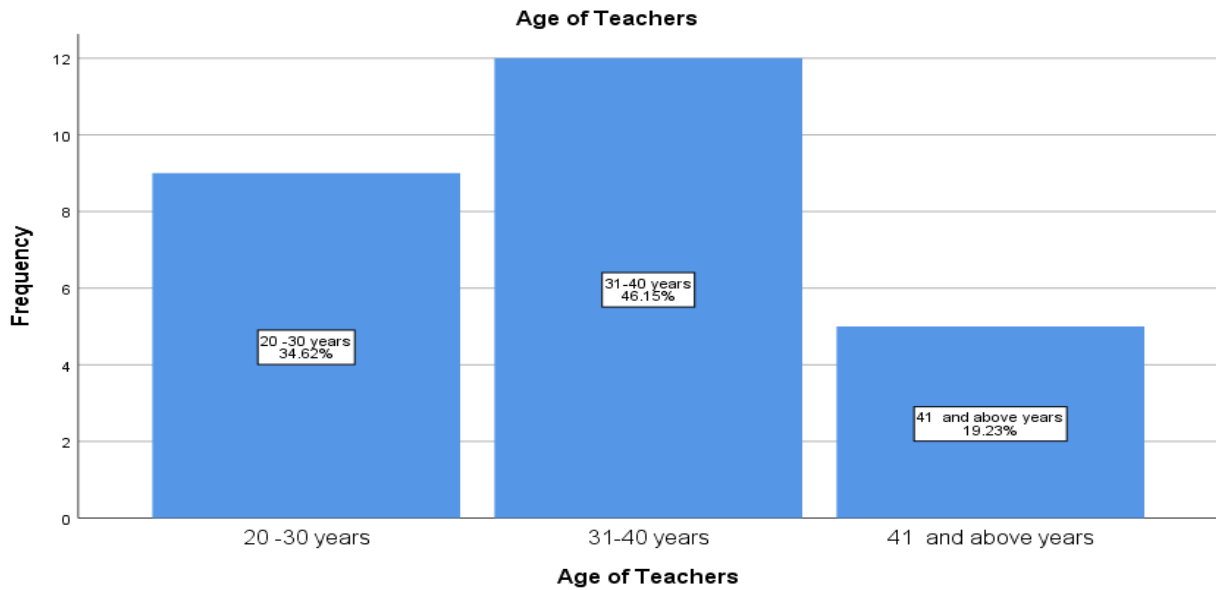


4.2.2.2 Age of Teachers

Age of Teachers					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20 -30 years	9	31.0	34.6	34.6
	31-40 years	12	41.4	46.2	80.8
	41 and above years	5	17.2	19.2	100.0
	Total	26	89.7	100.0	
Missing	System	3	10.3		
Total		29	100.0		

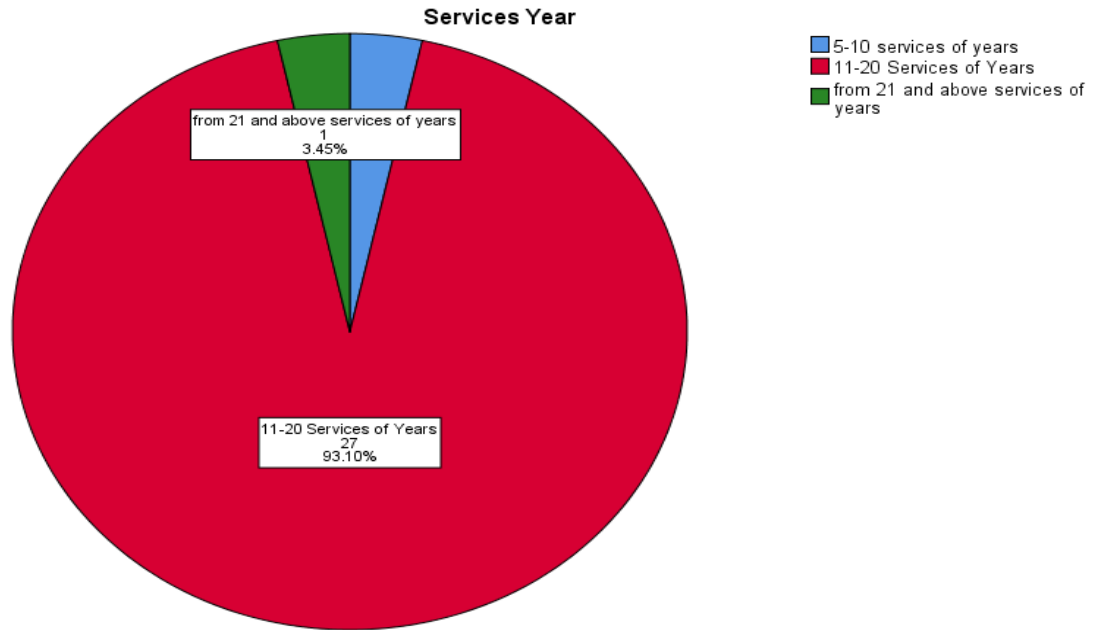
The table presented the age distribution of 29 teachers. Among them, 26 provided valid age data, while 3 responses are missing (10.3%). Of the valid responses, 34.6% were aged 20-30 years, 46.2% were aged 31-40 years, and 19.2% were aged 41 and above. The largest group was the 31-40 years range, indicating a relatively youthful workforce. The cumulative percentage showed a

progressive accumulation, with all teachers accounted for by the age group of 41 and above. The data highlights a balanced mix of younger and more experienced teachers, with a slight skew towards mid-career professionals.



4.2.2.3 Services of Years

Services Year					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	5-10 services of years	1	3.4	3.4	3.4
	11-20 Services of Years	27	93.1	93.1	96.6
	from 21 and above services of years	1	3.4	3.4	100.0
	Total	29	100.0	100.0	



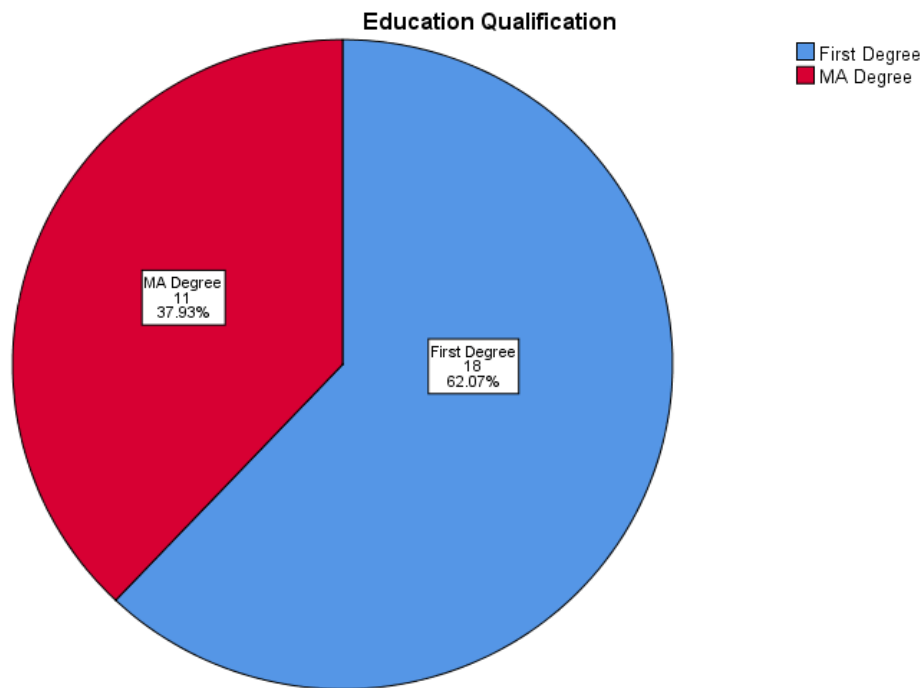
The Figure showed the distribution of teachers' years of service. Among the 29 teachers, the vast majority, 27 (93.1%), have between 11-20 years of service. This indicates that most teachers had significant experience in their roles. Only 1 teacher (3.4%) has 5-10 years of service, and similarly, only 1 teacher (3.4%) had over 21 years of service. The data suggested a concentration of teachers with a decade or more of experience, highlighting a seasoned and possibly stable workforce. The cumulative percent column showed that by including the teachers with 11-20 years of service, 96.6% of the teachers are accounted for. This distribution underscored the predominance of mid-career professionals within the teaching staff, with very few at the early or late stages of their careers. This could have implications for workforce planning, professional development, and succession planning within the educational institution.

4.2.2.4 Education Qualification

Education Qualification					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	First Degree	18	62.1	62.1	62.1
	MA Degree	11	37.9	37.9	100.0
	Total	29	100.0	100.0	

The table presented the educational qualifications of 29 teachers. The majority, 18 teachers (62.1%), held a First Degree, indicating that a substantial portion of the teaching staff had attained undergraduate education. Meanwhile, 11 teachers (37.9%) possess an MA Degree, demonstrating that a significant number of teachers had pursued advanced, graduate-level education. The cumulative percent column revealed that by including teachers with First Degrees, we account for 62.1% of the total, and including those with MA Degrees brought the total to 100%.

This distribution suggested that the educational institution benefits from a well-qualified teaching workforce, with over one-third having advanced degrees. The presence of teachers with MA Degrees could enhance the quality of education and provide more specialized knowledge in their respective fields. The data reflected a commitment to higher education among the teaching staff, which can positively impact student learning outcomes and overall academic standards.



4.2.2.5 Descriptive Statistics on Duty of English Teacher

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Duty of English Teacher	29	10.00	25.00	18.4483	2.89811
A teacher uses English all the time both as a medium of instruction and communication.	29	1	5	3.17	1.071
A teacher encourages his students to use English in class and in the school.	29	1.00	5.00	3.8621	1.09297
A teacher knows his students needs and learning styles.	29	2.00	5.00	3.9310	.92316
Teacher's weakness affects students' speaking skills greatly.	29	2.00	5.00	4.0690	.92316
Some teachers use Amharic while teaching English.	29	1.00	5.00	3.4138	1.23974
Valid N (listwise)	29				

The descriptive statistics table presented an analysis of various aspects of English teachers' duties and their teaching practices, based on responses from 29 teachers. The "Duty of English Teacher" showed a range from 10 to 25, with an average (mean) score of 18.45 and a standard deviation of 2.90, indicating moderate variability in how teachers perceived their duties. Regarding the use of English as a medium of instruction and communication, the mean score was 3.17 with a standard deviation of 1.07, on a scale from 1 to 5. This suggested a moderate level of consistency among teachers in using English exclusively, though there was some variation.

Teachers encouraging students to use English in class had a mean of 3.86 and a standard deviation of 1.09, indicating a relatively high level of encouragement, with some variability. Teachers' awareness of students' needs and learning styles had a mean of 3.93 and a standard deviation of 0.92, suggesting that most teachers were quite aware of their students' needs and learning preferences. The impact of teachers' weaknesses on students' speaking skills had a high mean score of 4.07 and a standard deviation of 0.92, indicating a strong agreement among teachers that their weaknesses significantly affected students' speaking abilities.

Lastly, the practice of using Amharic while teaching English had a mean score of 3.41 with a higher standard deviation of 1.24, reflecting greater variability in this practice among teachers. Overall, the data indicates that while there is a general trend towards encouraging English usage and understanding student needs, variability exists in practices such as exclusive use of English and the occasional use of Amharic in instruction.

4.2.2.6. Descriptive Statistics of Students performance of speaking

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
Students performance of speaking	29	17.6897	.50393	2.71377	7.365
Most of the students participate in speaking class.	29	3.8276	.19265	1.03748	1.076
Students use English both in the class and school compound	29	2.8276	.16512	.88918	.791
Students use drama, debate, role play,	28	3.1429	.16031	.84828	.720

storytelling, etc in class.					
Students are always encouraged by their English teacher.	29	3.7241	.20995	1.13063	1.278
Class size affects students' participation in a fair way.	29	4.2759	.22687	1.22172	1.493
Valid N (listwise)	28				

The descriptive statistics table provided insights into various factors influencing students' speaking performance based on responses from 29 participants. The mean score for "Students' performance of speaking" was 17.69 with a standard deviation of 2.71, indicating moderate performance with some variability. "Most of the students participate in speaking class" had a mean of 3.83 and a standard deviation of 1.04, suggesting good participation levels with some diversity in responses.

"Students use English both in the class and school compound" had a lower mean of 2.83 and a standard deviation of 0.89, indicating less frequent use of English outside the classroom. The use of activities like drama, debate, and role play in class had a mean of 3.14 and a standard deviation of 0.85, reflecting moderate engagement in these activities. Students being encouraged by their English teacher had a mean of 3.72 and a standard deviation of 1.13, showing that teachers frequently encourage students, albeit with some variation. "Class size affects students' participation in a fair way" had the highest mean of 4.28 and a standard deviation of 1.22, indicating a strong agreement that class size significantly impacts participation.

4.2.2.7 Descriptive Statistics on Background of students

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
Background of students	29	21.1034	.65153	3.50861	12.310
Most of them are from rich families.	29	3.5517	.18293	.98511	.970
Most parents motivate their children to speak English.	29	3.2414	.20853	1.12298	1.261
Every parent is highly educated	29	2.5517	.18293	.98511	.970
The students have different native tongue.	29	3.9655	.20751	1.11748	1.249
Economic status affects student's speaking skills.	29	3.3793	.22966	1.23675	1.530
Lack of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation really matter.	29	4.4138	.13607	.73277	.537
Valid N (listwise)	29				

The descriptive statistics table provided an overview of various background factors influencing students' speaking skills, based on responses from 29 participants. The "Background of students" had a mean of 21.10 with a standard deviation of 3.51, indicating a diverse range of backgrounds. The statement "Most of them are from rich families" had a mean of 3.55 and a standard deviation of 0.99, suggesting that a moderate number of students came from affluent backgrounds.

"Most parents motivated their children to speak English" had a mean of 3.24 and a standard deviation of 1.12, showing variability in parental encouragement. "Every parent was highly educated" had a mean of 2.55 and a standard deviation of 0.99, indicating that not all parents were highly educated. The statement "The students had different native tongues" had a mean of 3.97 and a standard deviation of 1.12, reflecting linguistic diversity among students. "Economic status affected student's speaking skills" had a mean of 3.38 and a standard deviation of 1.24, suggesting that economic status played a significant role in speaking skills. Finally, "Lack of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation really matter" has a high mean of 4.41 and a lower standard deviation of 0.73, indicating a strong consensus that these factors were crucial for speaking skills. The data highlights the impact of socioeconomic and educational backgrounds on students' English-speaking abilities.

4.2.2.8. Descriptive Statistics on Frequency of speaking class

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
Frequency of speaking class	29	18.4483	.69761	3.75677	14.113
Speaking class is always student-centered.	29	3.6897	.17266	.92980	.865
The good students usually take part in speaking class.	28	4.1071	.18785	.99403	.988
The weak students are most of the time listeners.	29	3.6207	.22966	1.23675	1.530
Speaking class is not conducted as frequently as the others are.	29	3.6207	.22423	1.20753	1.458
Students do not always use English in the class and the school.	29	3.5517	.20812	1.12078	1.256
Valid N (listwise)	28				

The table provided descriptive statistics for various aspects of speaking classes among 29 participants. The "Frequency of speaking class" had a mean of 18.45 with a standard deviation of 3.76, indicating moderate variability. "Speaking class was always student-centered" had a mean of 3.69 and a standard deviation of 0.93, suggesting general agreement on student-centered classes. "The good students usually took part in speaking class" showed a high mean of 4.11, indicating strong participation from proficient students. Both "The weak students were most of

the time listeners" and "Speaking class was not conducted as frequently as the others" had means of 3.62, highlighting that weaker student often remained passive and speaking classes were less frequent. "Students did not always use English in the class and the school" had a mean of 3.55, reflecting inconsistent use of English. Overall, the data indicated variability in speaking class practices and participation.

4.2.2.9. Descriptive Statistics on Challenges or factors that hinder students from speaking

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
Challenges or factors that hinder students from speaking	29	23.9310	.66014	3.55499	12.638
Lack of exposure has influence on students' proficiency.	29	4.2069	.15199	.81851	.670
Socio-economic and environmental factors can hinder speaking English.	29	4.1379	.14659	.78940	.623
Parents' educational background does affects the students' speaking.	28	3.4286	.26442	1.39917	1.958
Mother tongue principally affects their speaking abilities.	29	3.5862	.19550	1.05279	1.108

Psycho-social problems such as: Fear, shyness, anxiety and sense of confidence affect students' speaking skills.	29	4.5172	.12770	.68768	.473
Lack of parents' support and motivation affect students' fluency.	29	4.1724	.15748	.84806	.719
Valid N (listwise)	28				

The table presents descriptive statistics for challenges or factors hindering students from speaking English. "Challenges or factors that hindered students from speaking" had a mean of 23.93 and a standard deviation of 3.55, indicating variability in perceived hindrances. Participants strongly agreed that "Lack of exposure had influence on students' proficiency" and "Socio-economic and environmental factors could hinder speaking English," with means of 4.21 and 4.14 respectively. "Psycho-social problems" such as fear, shyness, anxiety, and lack of confidence had the highest mean of 4.52, suggesting significant impact on speaking skills. "Lack of parents' support and motivation" also scored high, with a mean of 4.17, indicating its influence on students' fluency.

4.2.2.10 Descriptive Statistics on Level of students concern and awareness of students about learning

The table provided descriptive statistics for the level of students' concern and awareness about learning. "Level of students concern and awareness of students about learning" had a mean of 18.34 and a standard deviation of 2.92, indicating variability in students' perceptions. Most students seemed unaware of the importance of speaking English, as indicated by a mean of 3.03. However, there was a moderate level of concern, with means ranging from 3.38 to 3.89, suggesting that some students were attentive to their speaking proficiency. Generally, there was a perceived need for greater awareness about speaking skills, evident from the high mean of 4.24.

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
Level of students concern and awareness of students about learning	29	18.3448	.54202	2.91885	8.520
Most students do not know how useful speaking English is.	29	3.0345	.23003	1.23874	1.534
Many students seem somehow careless for spoken class.	29	3.3793	.16016	.86246	.744
Only some students are concerned with speaking proficiency.	29	3.7931	.19463	1.04810	1.099
Students get adequate awareness from their English teachers.	29	3.8966	.15962	.85960	.739
Generally, students need awareness about speaking.	29	4.2414	.18999	1.02313	1.047
Valid N (listwise)	29				

4.3 Observation

According to the plan, the researcher had class observation in two grade 12 natural science classes and one grade 12 social science class at ROFAM Academy High School. Each class has 49 and 47 respectively. In all the classes, the teacher had organized the students in groups of five to six members. In natural science class he gave them his own topic about globalization and in social science the topic was the advantages and disadvantages of social media to the young generation. During the discussion, the researcher observed the use of Amharic in the groups. After the discussion, students were invited to present what they learnt from the discussion.

During the presentation, the researcher observed speaking ability of each presenter. Some of the presenters used good grammar and vocabulary with good fluency. However, most of the

presenters lack grammar, vocabulary and they presented little idea about the issue. Some of them were even forced to use their mother tongue, Amharic. While they were speaking English, Amharic words interfered suddenly which was out of their control. Generally, the problem of speaking was observed in the presentation. According to researcher's observation, natural science students are better than social science in terms of language usage and content of the subject.

Problems observed:

- ✓ Use of correct grammar (accuracy).
- ✓ Limited vocabulary.
- ✓ Short of idea or content.
- ✓ Fluency or flow of idea.

4.4 Interview

The researcher also conducted an interview with seven ROFAM students. According to their responses, the students have problem of lack of extrinsic motivation from the teacher and their peers. As a result, they did have fear anxiety and lack of confidence. They said that English was not used as medium of communication, but their peers use Amharic in the school. They said that there was fear of speaking in English because there was scoffing or scorning among the students. They said that speaking classes were not adequate for them to improve speaking. In addition, there is shyness with students. They also said that they participated speaking class rarely. They also said that their English teacher didn't encourage them sufficiently.

As the class size was large, they said that there was no chance of speaking for each student in the class and some students were involved in oral presentations. According to them, in their previous grade they had not good exposure in speaking in their classes. They said that they used to watch movies and listening music which helped them to improve speaking. They wanted their English teacher make them be involved in the speech activity and work more on grammar and vocabulary drills. They said that they wanted to take part in debate free talk, discussion and storytelling. They wanted speaking class to be inclusive. The other problem which was seen among students was the perception that Amharic as a mother tongue was more important than foreign language. Generally speaking, the students were not satisfied with speaking class as to improve their speaking skills.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary of Major Finding, Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Summary of Major Findings

The analysis of the data from Safari Academy and ROFAM High School reveals several key factors influencing students' speaking skills in English. There is a notable gender imbalance among teachers, with 89.7% being male, highlighting a need for greater gender diversity in the teaching workforce. The age distribution indicates a relatively youthful teaching staff, predominantly within the 31-40 age range (46.2%).

Most teachers (93.1%) have 11-20 years of service, suggesting a seasoned and stable workforce. In terms of educational qualifications, 62.1% hold a First Degree, while 37.9% possess an MA Degree, indicating a well-qualified teaching staff.

Descriptive statistics on English teachers' duties and practices show moderate variability. Teachers moderately use English exclusively (mean 3.17) and encourage its use (mean 3.86), yet there is variability in the use of Amharic during instruction (mean 3.41). Students' speaking performance exhibits moderate participation (mean 3.83) but less frequent use of English outside the classroom (mean 2.83).

Students' socioeconomic and educational backgrounds significantly impact their speaking skills. Economic status (mean 3.38) and lack of parental support (mean 4.17) are influential, with psycho-social issues like fear and anxiety having a high impact (mean 4.52). Additionally, students' awareness and concern about speaking skills vary, with a high mean (4.24) indicating a need for greater awareness.

Correlation analysis reveals moderate positive relationships between students' background and both the challenges they face and their level of concern about speaking skills. Challenges hindering speaking are also correlated with the frequency of speaking classes and students' concern levels. The duty of English teachers positively correlates with students' awareness of speaking skills, suggesting that teachers' roles significantly influence students' engagement with speaking proficiency.

Overall, the findings indicate that students' speaking skills are hindered by a combination of socioeconomic factors, psycho-social challenges, and inconsistent use of English, necessitating targeted interventions to improve language proficiency and classroom practices.

5.2 Conclusion

The study revealed that students' English-speaking proficiency at Safari Academy and ROFAM High School was below the expected level with a significant mean difference ($m=2.79$ vs. $m=3.00$, $p = .00$). Key factors hindering students' proficiency include lack of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation skills ($t=3.08$, $p= 0.003$), revealing insufficient encouragement from teachers ($m= 2.52$, $p= .000$), and inadequate parental support. ($m=2.12$, $p=.000$). Despite the students' enthusiasm for speaking English, these barriers prevented them from achieving fluency. Additionally, the consistency in speaking sessions and limited exposure contributed to low proficiency levels. Qualitative data further underscored these challenges, highlighting themes such as lack of exposure, low motivation, and insufficient teacher's encouragement. Addressing these issues through enhanced teacher training, increased speaking opportunities, and stronger support systems is essential to improve student' English speaking skills.

This study investigates the factors hindering students' speaking skills in English at Safari Academy and ROFAM High School in Addis Ababa. The descriptive statistics and qualitative data reveal several key insights. The gender imbalance, with 89.7% male and 10.3% female teachers, indicates a need for greater gender diversity. A more balanced gender representation could bring varied perspectives and teaching approaches, beneficial for enhancing students' speaking skills. The age distribution shows that 46.2% of teachers are aged 31-40 years and 34.6% are aged 20-30 years. This predominantly youthful workforce is likely in the prime of their careers, potentially bringing energy and contemporary teaching methods that could positively influence students' speaking abilities.

The years of service data indicates a highly experienced workforce, with 93.1% of teachers having 11-20 years of service. This extensive experience is crucial for effective teaching, as seasoned teachers likely possess refined communication skills and effective pedagogical strategies. Furthermore, 37.9% of the teachers hold MA Degrees, indicating advanced knowledge and expertise. These qualifications suggest that teachers are well-equipped to provide high-quality education, supporting the enhancement of students' speaking skills.

Descriptive statistics on teachers' practices show moderate consistency in using English exclusively for instruction, with variability in encouraging student use of English and understanding students' needs. Teachers acknowledge that their weaknesses significantly impact students' speaking skills, highlighting the critical role of teacher proficiency. However, the occasional use of Amharic during English instruction presents a challenge in maintaining language consistency.

Students' performance in speaking classes shows moderate participation and engagement in activities like drama and debate, but highlights a significant impact of class size on participation. There is a notable inconsistency in using English outside the classroom, which may hinder overall language proficiency. Background factors such as socio-economic status, parents' education, and linguistic diversity significantly influence students' speaking abilities. Psycho-social issues like fear, shyness, and anxiety are prominent barriers to effective speaking, underscoring the need for supportive and encouraging classroom environments. Challenges such as lack of exposure, parental support, and motivation critically affect students' proficiency. Students' awareness of the importance of speaking English is limited, indicating a need for increased emphasis on the practical benefits of language skills. Class observations and interviews reveal that large class sizes and limited extrinsic motivation from teachers contribute to students' reluctance to engage in speaking activities. Students express a desire for more inclusive, relevant, and engaging speaking classes, highlighting the need for interactive and culturally diverse teaching methods. Improving students' speaking skills requires addressing these multifaceted challenges through consistent use of English, tailored pedagogical approaches, increased frequency of speaking classes, and fostering a supportive and motivating environment. Enhanced teacher training, smaller class sizes, and cultural shifts towards valuing English proficiency are essential steps for both Safari Academy and ROFAM High School.

5.3 Recommendation

Based on the analysis of factors hindering students' speaking skills at Safari Academy and ROFAM High School in Addis Ababa, the following recommendations are proposed to address the identified issues:

Integrate Speaking Activities: Incorporate more speaking activities such as debates, role-plays, storytelling, and group discussions into the curriculum. This will provide students with regular practice and opportunities to improve their fluency.

Speaking Clubs: Establish English speaking clubs or conversation circles that meet regularly to give students additional practice outside the classroom.

Professional Development: Provide ongoing professional development for teachers focused on modern language teaching methodologies that emphasize interactive and student-centered learning. Training should also include strategies for encouraging students to speak more in English.

Language Use Policy: Implement a strict policy requiring the exclusive use of English in the classroom to enhance immersion and fluency.

Awareness Campaigns: Conduct workshops and awareness campaigns to educate students about the importance of speaking English for their academic and professional futures.

Confidence Building: Implement programs that build students' confidence, such as public speaking courses, drama classes, and peer mentoring systems where students can practice speaking in a supportive environment.

Regular Assessments: Implement regular assessments to monitor students' progress in speaking skills and identify areas needing improvement. By addressing these key areas, Safari Academy and ROFAM High School can create a more conducive environment for students to develop their English speaking skills, ultimately improving their overall language proficiency and confidence.

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APPENDICES



APPENDIX – A

Addis Ababa University

College of Humanities Language Studies,

Journalism and Communication

Department of Foreign Languages and Literature

Questionnaire for Secondary school grade 12 students at Safari Academy and ROFAM High School

Dear participant,

The main purpose of this questionnaire is to explore factors that hinder grade 12 students' speaking skills at Safari Academy and ROFAM High School in Addis Ababa.

The questionnaire has three parts: the first part deals with the general background information of participants, part two contains close-ended items designed to measure students' speaking skills. Part three is about open-ended items.

Be sure that your responses will only be used for this research purpose and it will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your kind cooperation.

Part I: Students' Background Information

Direction: Please, put a tick (✓) mark in the box you chose or write your answer in the spaces provided.

1.1 Sex: Male Female

1.2 Age: _____

1.3 Grade: _____

Part II. Questions Related to closed-ended items

Direction: This questionnaire has statements that describe what your level of fluency in speaking in the English language looks like. Please read each statement carefully and decide levels of agreement or disagreement as indicated in the statements below. Put a tick mark (✓) in front of each item under the alternatives that best fit your immediate reaction.

The scales are: 1= **Strongly disagree**, 2= **Disagree**, 3= **Slightly agree**, 4= **Agree** and 5= **Strongly agree**.

Do not worry about projecting a good image. Your answers are CONFIDENTIAL.

APPENDIX B

Questions for students

Scale One: Duty of English teachers

No.	Duty of English teachers	1	2	3	4	5
1	I usually speak English in class and in the school.					
2	My English teacher fairly make me to take part in speaking class.					
3	My English teachers know my speaking skills.					
4	Teacher's weakness affects my speaking skills greatly.					
5	Some English teachers use Amharic while teaching English.					

Scale Two: Students' performances of speaking

No.	Students performance of speaking	1	2	3	4	5
1	English teachers encourage me to speak in English.					
2	I am interested in speaking English in classroom.					
3	I participate in drama, debate, role play, or storytelling, in speaking class.					
4	I know English language is useful for learning and career.					
5	Class size has negative effect my speaking skills.					

Scale Three: Students' linguistic, economic and social background.

No.	Background of students	1	2	3	4	5
1	I usually focus on my native language more than English.					
2	My parents motivate me to speak English in school and at home.					
3	I believe Amharic language is more important than English language.					
4	I am influenced by my native language when I speak English.					
5	I use English when I talk with my friends in the school.					
6	Lack of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation affect my fluency.					
7	Anxiety, shyness and fear of mistakes affect my speaking skills.					

Scale Four: The speaking class coverage in teaching English

No	Frequency of speaking class	1	2	3	4	5
1	Teacher's method of teaching is usually student-centered.					
2	I usually take part in speaking class.					
3	I am listener in speaking classroom most of the time.					
4	I am disinterested in English speaking class.					
5	I don't know always use English in the class and the school.					

Scale Five: Factors which affect the students' speaking skills.

No.	Challenges or factors that hinder students from speaking	1	2	3	4	5
1	Lack of exposure has influence on my English proficiency.					
2	Speaking English difficult for me because of lack in grammar vocabulary and pronunciation.					
3	My effort to improve speaking is not adequate.					
4	I am not encouraged by my English teacher to speak in English.					
5	I love speaking English more than my mother tongue.					
6	I really need my parents support to improve my speaking skills.					

Scale Six: Level of students' concern and awareness for speaking skills

No.	Level of Concern and awareness of students about learning	1	2	3	4	5
1	I am not aware of usefulness of speaking English.					
2	I feel careless for improvement my speaking skills.					
3	My English teacher doesn't give me chance to speak in class.					
4	My English teacher always motivates me to speak in class.					
5	I need peers with whom I speak in English language.					

Scale Seven: Speaking proficiency (Mother tongue): 5 = excellent, 4 = very good, 3 = good, 2 = fair, 1 = poor

No.	Language	1	2	3	4	5
1	Amharic					
2	Afaan Oromo					
3	Tigrigna					
4	Guragigna					
5	Hadigna					

APPENDIX C

Questionnaire for English teachers at Safari Academy and FORAM High School

Dear participant,

The main purpose of this questionnaire is to explore factors that hinder grade 12 students' speaking skills at Safari Academy in Addis Ababa.

The questionnaire has three parts: the first part deals with the general background information of participants, part two contains close-ended items designed to measure students' speaking skills. Part three is about open-ended items.

Be sure that your responses will only be used for this research purpose and it will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your kind cooperation.

Part I: Teachers' Background Information

Direction: Please, put a tick (✓) mark in the box you chose or write your answer in the spaces provided.

1.1 Sex: Male Female

1.2 Age: _____

1.3 Service Year: _____

1.4 Qualification: Degree MA/MEd PhD

Part II. Questions Related to closed-ended items

Direction: This questionnaire has statements that describe what your level of fluency in speaking in the English language looks like. Please read each statement carefully and decide levels of agreement or disagreement as indicated in the statements below. Put a tick mark (✓) in front of each item under the alternatives that best fit your immediate reaction.

The scales are: 1= **Strongly disagree**, 2= **Disagree**, 3= **Slightly agree**, 4= **Agree** and 5= **Strongly agree**.

Do not worry about projecting a good image. Your answers are CONFIDENTIAL.

Scale One: Duty of English teachers

No.	Duty of English teachers	1	2	3	4	5
1	A teacher uses English all the time both as a medium of instruction and communication.					
2	A teacher encourages his students to use English in class and in the school.					
3	A teacher knows his students needs and learning styles.					
4	Teacher's weakness affects students' speaking skills greatly.					
5	Some teachers use Amharic while teaching English.					

Scale Two: Students' performances of speaking

No.	Students performance of speaking	1	2	3	4	5
1	Most of the students participate in speaking class.					
2	Students use English both in the class and school compound.					
3	Students use drama, debate, role play, storytelling, etc in class.					
4	Students are always encouraged by their English teacher.					
5	Class size affects students' participation in a fair way.					

Scale Three: Students' linguistic, economic and social background.

No.	Background of students	1	2	3	4	5
1	Most of them are from rich families.					
2	Most parents motivate their children to speak English.					
3	Every parent is highly educated					
4	The students have different native tongue.					
5	Economic status affects student's speaking skills.					
6	Lack of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation really matter.					

Scale Four: The speaking class coverage in teaching English

No	Frequency of speaking class	1	2	3	4	5
1	Speaking class is always student-centered.					
2	The good students usually take part in speaking class.					
3	The weak students are most of the time listeners.					
4	Speaking class is not conducted as frequently as the others are.					
5	Students do not always use English in the class and the school.					

Scale Five: Factors which affect the students' speaking skills.

No.	Challenges or factors that hinder students from speaking	1	2	3	4	5
1	Lack of exposure has influence on students' proficiency.					
2	Socio-economic and environmental factors can hinder speaking English.					
3	Parents' educational background does affects the students' speaking.					
4	Mother tongue principally affects their speaking abilities.					
5	Psycho-social problems such as: Fear, shyness, anxiety and sense of confidence affect students' speaking skills.					
6	Lack of parents' support and motivation affect students' fluency.					

Scale Six: Level of students' concern and awareness for speaking skills

No.	Level of Concern and awareness of students about learning	1	2	3	4	5
1	Most students do not know how useful speaking English is.					
2	Many students seem somehow careless for spoken class.					
3	Only some students are concerned with speaking proficiency.					
4	Students get adequate awareness from their English teachers.					
5	Generally, students need awareness about speaking.					

APPENDIX D

Questionnaire (Open-ended questions)

1. How do you explain your speaking skills?
2. What are the main challenges that grade you face in speaking English in the classroom?
3. What are the factors that hinder your speaking in the classroom?
4. Explain your participation in speaking class or what presentations you take part.
5. How is speaking English class conducted?
 - A. To what extent do you take part in the speaking activity?
 - B. How does English teacher support you to speak well?
 - C. How often do you get chance to speak in English with others?
6. What methods of teaching speaking does your English teacher normally use and how do his methods help you?
7. What are the factors that contribute to the difficulty of you speaking English in the classroom?
9. What are the roles of English teachers in motivating you in speaking classrooms?
10. How do you want your English teacher teach you to improve your speaking skills?

11. How do the following hinder you from speaking smoothly?
- A. Linguistic background.
 - B. Economic status of parents and their motivations to their children.
 - C. Prior abilities of speaking (childhood experience of speaking).
 - D. How do behavioral problems: fear, shyness, unawareness, anxiety, attitude, sense of confidence affect students' speaking skills.
12. According to your opinion, what are the gaps in the topics of speaking in the textbook or the material that the teacher uses?
13. What is your native language (mother tongue)?

APPENDIX E

CLASS OBSERVATION

THE SCALES ARE: 1 = poor, 2= unsatisfactory, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = good, 5 = very good.

Rating scale 1: Students' speaking activities

No.	Category	Description	1	2	3	4	5
1	Fluency	Does the student have suitable speed and discourse?					
2	Grammar (Accuracy)	How accurate and appropriate the student's grammar is.					
3	Vocabulary	Does the student use wide variety of words, phrases or structures?					
4	Communicative ability	Does the student's presentation include length of utterances					
5	Pronunciation	Does the student make effort to use correct intonation, stress and individual sounds?					
6	Content	Does the student's presentation has coherence, cohesion and suitable connectives?					

Rating Scale 2: Quality of presentation

No.	Category	1	2	3	4	5
1	Grammar (Accuracy)					
2	Pronunciation					
3	Vocabulary					
4	Audibility					
5	Fluency					
6	Content					
7	Body movement, gesture and eye contact					
8	Clarity (vividness)					
9	Confidence					
10	Animated					