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Investigating English Speaking Difficulties that Encounter ESL Learners

دراسة صعوبات التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية التي تواجه
متعلميها كلغة ثانية

by

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Abstract

This study investigates English-speaking difficulties encountered by high school students in some private schools in Abu Dhabi. It aims to find out the factors that influence on the students' English speaking performance negatively and highlight some recommendations to enhance the English-speaking competency of students. To achieve the mentioned objectives, qualitative research that includes class observations and interviews was employed. The findings demonstrate that students face several speaking difficulties such as linguistics problems, using mother tongue and oral communication apprehension. Furthermore, it was revealed that there are some influential factors that cause speaking deficiency such as: Teachers' perceptions toward speaking instruction, teaching methods and lack of exposure to English. Hopefully, current study would be beneficial for educators, researchers, students, English supervisors, curriculum and syllabus designers in Ministry of Education. In addition, further studies should be implemented to highlight speaking English strategies that increase interest and willingness of students to participate in oral discussions.

مستخلص

تبحث الدراسة الحالية في صعوبات التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية التي يواجهها طلاب المرحلة الثانوية في بعض مدارس أبو ظبي الخاصة. تهدف الدراسة إلى معرفة العوامل التي تؤثر سلبًا على أداء الطلاب في التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية واقتراح بعض التوصيات لتعزيز كفاءة الطلاب في التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية. لتحقيق الأهداف المذكورة، تم استخدام نموذج البحث النوعي الذي يشمل المشاهدات الصفية وإجراء المقابلات. أظهرت النتائج أن الطلاب يواجهون صعوبات عديدة في التحدث باللغة الانجليزية مثل المشكلات اللغوية، استخدام اللغة الأم والخوف من التواصل الشفوي. علاوة على ذلك، تم الكشف عن وجود بعض العوامل المؤثرة التي تسبب مشاكل التحدث مثل: تصورات المعلمين تجاه تعليم التحدث باللغة الانجليزية، طرق التدريس و عدم ممارسة اللغة الإنجليزية. نأمل أن تكون الدراسة الحالية مفيدة للمعلمين ،الباحثين ،الطلاب ، مشرفي اللغة الإنجليزية ومصممي المناهج الدراسية في وزارة التربية والتعليم. بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، يجب إجراء المزيد من الدراسات لتسليط الضوء على استراتيجيات التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية التي تزيد من اهتمام الطلاب واستعدادهم للمشاركة في المناقشات الشفوية.

Keywords: speaking difficulties, lack of motivation, mother tongue, anxiety, shyness

Dedication

This dissertation is devoted to my great parents and loving family. Many thanks and appreciation to them for their continuous encouragement throughout the entire Master's program. A special feeling of gratitude and recognition to my beloved husband, Amer, for his constant support, limitless giving and motivation to work hard during the challenging times of my study. I really appreciate having you in my life.

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List of abbreviations

SLA	Second Language Acquisition
ELF	English as Lingua Franca
L1	First Language
UAE	United Arab Emirates
ESL	English as Second Language
ESLL	English Second Language Learners
SL	Second Language
EFL	English Foreign language
ELA	English Language Acquisition
SLL	Second Language Learners
CO	Comprehensive Output Hypothesis
COVID 19	Coronavirus Disease
ADEK	Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge
LR	Literature Review

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

Individuals usually communicate with others through a specific communication system, this system is called a language system. Language is a fundamental linguistic method that is exclusive for humans' communication. It consists of using the spoken or written words in a systematic and standard way. This communication system is essential for all individuals to easily express their feelings, thoughts and desires (Mulyati 2013). Language system is also an effective way for interacting with others to share knowledge and experiences. Officially, there is no final statistics which indicate the exact number of languages used by individuals globally. However, Ethnologue is a catalogue which includes a comprehensive research about the language's usage internationally since 1951. Surprisingly, Ethnologue shows that 7.106.865.256 individual on the earth use about 7.102 language (Lewis, Gary & Charles 2015). These statistics indicate that there is a considerable number of used languages by individuals across the globe. Some of these languages are found suitable to be used internationally to unite individuals from various cultures in order to interact, work together and share their knowledge, feelings or thoughts. This kind of languages refers to what is known as lingua Franca. The following six languages are officially classified as lingua Franca in the world: Chinese, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, and English. These languages also recognized by United Nations. English as lingua Franca (ELF) means that using English among individuals who do not have the same first language (L1) (Leyland 2011). ELF is considered one of the most commonly used languages in several countries as first and second language. English is spoken by 377 million native speakers and about 375 million second language speakers in the globe as mentioned by (Crystal 1997). Furthermore, English is an international language that is almost taught in most of the countries and it is the most usable mean for communication between humans all over the world. English language plays an integral role in different dynamic fields such as education, economy, tourism, politics, industry, diplomacy, international trade, science and finally technology (Crystal 2003). Generally, English language acquisition (ELA) is essential for all individuals due to its great significance in several aspects, such as enhancing the opportunity of getting a job, increasing career's success, communicating with others worldwide, recognizing new and different civilizations, as well as promoting experiences and share knowledge. In United Arab

Emirates (UAE), English is considered one of the compulsory subjects in academic sectors from primary cycle to the university level. Several universities consider English as one of the core academic modules (Murray & Christison 2019).

In English language field, there are four major skills which are required to be enhanced and mastered to obtain high levels of proficiency. These skills are basically listening, speaking, reading and writing. Other skills such as pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and spelling play also an important role in promoting English speaking skills. Oral communication skill is viewed as an important skill especially for ESL learners. It indeed improves the learners' social abilities to interact with others professionally, and enables them to reflect their opinions and beliefs clearly and accurately. Several Educational institutes and schools in UAE are teaching English language as core subject. Society of UAE has a variety of cultures and different nationalities. Therefore, it is crucial for all students to improve their English competency in order to achieve their educational goals, and obtain high proficiency level of oral and written communication skills. These skills are important and needed to communicate with colleagues, teachers and community members. However, using oral communication skill by second language learners(SLL) requires more attention and effort to reflect their thoughts accurately as stated by (Jiwandono & Rukmini 2015).It was concluded by Dalem (2017) that speaking skill is the most significant skill in second language learning field and essential for several ESL Learners to acquire. Some English second language learners (ESLL) strongly believe that competency in oral skill leads to their success in SLA. Indeed, speaking skillfully enhances the learner's ability to reflect his/her thoughts and opinions clearly. It also allows learner to convey meaningful, informative and effective messages to the listeners. Tuan and Mai (2015) mentioned that the main purpose of teaching English language is to enable the learners to speak English fluently and effectively. However, oral communication in fluent and accurate way is not an easy task for second language learners (SLL) especially for the school's students. Most of SLL usually struggle when they communicate or speak in English in front of others. Hence, speaking problems became common issue in the language learning field. It is also observed that students of several high schools face many obstacles in speaking English(Al Hosni 2014).Furthermore, Sarwar et al. (2014) and Alharbi (2015) confirmed that the majority of high school students who have excellent writing skills struggle to speak fluent English. They are incapable of expressing their desires and thoughts during the spoken discussions in appropriate way.

Several researches have been conducted about oral communication skill. Bozorgian (2012) conducted a study to investigate the correlation between listening and other skills. The findings showed that a good listening comprehension leads to better level of speaking performance. In other words, listening and speaking are connected to each other strongly. Another study was implemented by Park and Lee (2005) to investigate the relationship between SLL' self-confidence ,anxiety and their speaking proficiency during English conversation class. This study proved that anxiety plays a major role in speaking problems. Furthermore, Salem and Dيار (2014) carried out a study to explore the rapport between anxiety and speaking fluently for Arab students in a secondary school. It has been found that there is a significant relation between anxiety and students' oral performance. Anxiety can affect on the students' speaking ability negatively and cause speaking fluency's problems. Based on the researcher's extensive reading about speaking's challenges for ESLL, it was found that developing speaking skill is mostly neglected in English classes. Moreover, oral language is more often used by English teachers compared with students. This excessive and long usage of oral language by teachers leads to reducing the chance of students to practice the oral language, and as a result, will cause several speaking difficulties for them.

1.2 Overview

With widespread of using English as an international language in educational sectors and daily life situations, it becomes essential from all English second language (ESL) learners to master English speaking. Speaking is a communication process between individuals that uses verbal symbols to share ideas and thoughts. In second language acquisition (SLA) field, speaking has occupied the greatest importance among other three skills (listening, reading and writing). Recently, several ESL learners strongly believe that proficiency in speaking skill can increase their opportunities to find new future careers and acquaint with various cultures. Furthermore, speaking fluently enables ESL learners to become competent speakers, express themselves in social, cultural or any other context and use appropriate speech sounds and utterances based on the social situations. Hence, one of the United Arab Emirates long term educational goals is enabling students to communicate in English effectively and naturally.

It is widely known and accepted that speaking is learned by humans before reading and writing. The individuals usually spend more time and effort in interacting orally compared with reading and writing' skills' learning. Indeed, speaking is a complicated skill that requires more emphasis and concentration by ESL learners. In English communication field, all English language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) are definitely significant. Nevertheless, speaking is the most important skill due to its essential role in communication and interaction among individuals. Several ESL learners believe that using language in oral situations is more important than only understanding the language itself, hence they are highly willing to learn speaking skill before any other skill (Ur 2013;Pinem 2014; Nuraini 2016).Several scholars and researchers have discussed the importance of speaking skill and its effect. Speaking has been viewed as the main learning source that enables learners to process information, opinions and intentions, then transform them into a fluent spoken speech in order to exchange these opinions and ideas orally between the speakers (Efrizal 2012;Gilakjani 2016).

Nazara (2011) stated that mastering English speaking is an essential issue due to several reasons: Firstly, teaching speaking strategies and techniques are usually one of the commonly discussed topics in conferences and researches. Secondly, several conversational course books, online speaking programs and even audios are regularly published in English. Thirdly, most of ESL learners evaluate their lingual knowledge based on their oral proficiency. Andrews (2011)added that speaking is the best oral communication method available for all individuals who are able to speak and use their body movements. Speaking has been considered as one of fundamental aspects in English foreign language (EFL)field as mentioned by (Knight 1992).It is also the most effective skill and commonly used among other three skills (Tsou 2005). Additionally, speaking has a high positive influence on students in terms of educational and professional aspects. From the education perspective, speaking promotes the students' abilities in using grammar and functional language appropriately. Through speaking, students can apply the language in various contexts and enhance their level in oral communication. Speaking is also regarded as an approach for studying other subjects such Math, science and social science. Professionally, speaking fluently increases the learners' opportunities to obtain better offers of jobs and promotions. Recently, most of the companies and governmental sectors prefer to employ the staff who are fluent in speaking English and effective in communication socially and culturally(Al Nakhalah 2016;Tuan & Mai 2015).

Harmer (2001) explains that oral skill is important to understand what others say or discuss. Without having speaking skill, the individuals will express their thoughts and believes with hesitation and confusion due to their deficiency and weakness in this skill. Generally, speaking requires specific attention and focus especially in English second language classes. Acquiring or learning speaking is considered the most difficult task for ESL learners. It is a widespread problem that hinders the learners from speaking fluently and having a very low performance in this oral skill. Such speaking problem mostly refers to different psychological problems such as shyness, lack of motivation and low self-esteem. Using different advanced strategies and techniques such as role plays, group discussion, group work and effective classroom's environment can solve this problem. Such simple techniques can greatly promote the speaking competency of students and gradually eliminate the speaking psychological problems.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Based on the researcher's experience in English language teaching's field in Abu Dhabi-UAE, it was found that most of English second language learners in several private high schools face many common speaking problems. Despite the fact, that students have been studying English language for 13 years, they are still incapable to use the oral language naturally inside or outside classroom's environment. In addition, there is a common issue between individuals in UAE that the students who study in British or American schools which have English native teachers are usually more fluent in English than those who study in Arabic schools. Students in these Arabic schools encounter speaking problems with their learning environment. Usually, they have difficulties to express themselves in English, hence, they prefer to keep silent and avoid participation during the lesson. As a result, when students are asked to speak, their speaking level is mostly limited to say few words only or at best, they produce short incomplete sentences that lack grammar accuracy. Those students often speak with hesitation, lots of repetition, pauses and several mistakes that lead to stress and lack of confidence in using the language appropriately. In my view, this speaking problem is definitely a serious issue especially for grade11th students. Students at this stage are very close to join the university where it is expected from students to complete several subjects in English language and interact effectively with their surrounding community. When the students

were asked about the causes of their speaking deficiency, they believe that the teachers usually focus more on teaching them structural and lexical aspects rather than speaking. Teachers also tend to stay talking for the whole session leaving students in a passive listener mode with minimal chances to get involved in oral discussions. In addition, teachers use the Arabic language sometimes to explain advanced topics which reduces the chance to improve the oral communication skills. Other students believe that the text books contain advanced topics that are irrelevant to daily life situations. Moreover, some of these causes are related to psychological factors such as shyness, fear of making mistakes, anxiety and lack of self-confidence and motivation.

1.4 Significance of the study

During the course of researcher's teaching experience in different private schools in Abu Dhabi Emirate. It was clearly observed that students of several high schools encounter considerable difficulties in speaking English fluently, and hence, lack of participation in oral activities during English lessons. The major purpose of this study is to investigate English speaking difficulties encountered by students of some private high schools. Additionally, this study aims to find out the dominant factors that influence the English-speaking level of students and lead to such difficulties. The research also targets to highlight some useful strategies and recommendations to enhance the English-speaking competency of students. The study will attempt to clarify the reasons that prevent effective English speaking for students of high schools, which can be used to adopt and enhance currently implemented educational policies and strategies towards improving the overall language acquisition experience for students. The research can also represent a base for other researchers and scholars who are interested in implementing further researches in the English Language speaking field. Hopefully, the findings of this research can contribute and assist official educational authorities, policy makers, curriculum's designers, English supervisors, educators, researchers, students and theoreticians. Besides, it might offer a good contribution for syllabus designers in Ministry of Education. For students, this study enables them to understand their speaking problems and influential factors that lead to low performance in oral skill. Some suggestions and solutions to overcome this problem can be implemented by teachers and students. This study has also motivated students to express their thoughts and impressions about their speaking difficulties.

Regarding curriculum designers, this study is important to grab their attention to recognize the significance of speaking and its effectiveness in oral field. Also, it helps them to focus more on teaching the speaking skill by writing specific goals that should be achieved. It is also important to help curriculum designers to rephrase the speaking activities in different way that fits all levels of students and encourage them to participate actively in oral discussions. With respect to authorized staff in Ministry of education (policy makers), present study suggests them to re-evaluate influential factors that impact on students speaking performance negatively such as huge number of students in each class. There is an essential need for distributing students evenly based on their academic levels and dividing them into groups to assist and motivate each other. It is unreasonable to have most of the high-performance students gathered in one class while leaving other classes with low achiever students. Moreover, researchers need to identify variables that promote performance in speaking skill of students. The present study also can assist theoreticians to build up a typical model of speaking problems and accordingly lead to comprehensive understanding of this deficiency. In addition, current study stresses on the importance of using proper teaching strategies and facilitating a positive learning environment for students in order to improve their speaking abilities and make them more enthusiastic toward participation in oral activities. It has been clear that thoughts of teachers and students can be synthesized to recognize the reasons of speaking obstacles and change negative perceptions of students toward speaking skill. Improving second language learning experience and achieving significant learning outcomes can be considered as one of the main objectives for this research.

1.5 The main purpose of research

The current dissertation attempts to investigate the speaking-related difficulties and the dominant factors that are responsible for these difficulties in an ESL context. It also seeks to suggest some recommendations to overcome these speaking difficulties. Based on this purpose, the following research questions and objectives were developed:

1.5.1 Research questions

This research is conducted to answer the following questions:

1. What are the major speaking difficulties encountered by grade 11 students in some private schools in Abu Dhabi?
2. What are the primary influential factors that lead to such English-speaking difficulties?
3. What are some suggestions and recommendations to overcome speaking difficulties?

1.5.2 Research objectives

Following are the major objectives for this study:

1. To explore the main English-speaking difficulties encountered by ESLL in some private schools.
2. To investigate the influential factors that lead to these speaking difficulties.
3. To suggest some recommendations for improving the students' speaking skill.

1.6 Outline of the dissertation chapters

This dissertation contains five chapters. Each chapter is arranged under subsections. Chapter one is an introduction, which describes the comprehensive framework for what will be investigated by the researcher. It includes background of the study, overview, statement of the problem, significance of the study, research purposes objectives. Then, chapter two is literature review. It covers detailed description about, conceptual framework, theoretical framework, teaching English as a second language, oral language acquisition, definition of speaking based on different viewpoints of the researchers. This chapter also covers the relation between speaking and other English skills such as writing and listening. In addition, chapter two discusses the main psychological factors that prevent students from speaking effectively such as lack of motivation, fear of making mistakes, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence, teaching strategies and finally use of mother tongue in an ESL context. Besides, review of some related studies. The final subsection in chapter two discusses the influential factors that lead to speaking difficulties for young ESL learners. Chapter two is followed by the research methodology, which is detailed in chapter three. This chapter covers, research background, sampling, achieved and abandoned objectives, reasons behind applying qualitative research, research participants, research instruments that include classroom observations and interviews. Furthermore, chapter three discusses research's credibility, data analysis, research's chronological stages and ethical account. Chapter four deals with findings

and discussion. Several categories have been assessed in this chapter. These categories are vocabulary knowledge, fluency, pronunciation, grammatical aspects, physical attitudes, voice volume, time limit, teaching strategies and teachers' performance. Chapter four also contains interview findings with teachers and students. Furthermore, this chapter discusses in details the primary speaking difficulties faced by high school students, which are: lingual obstacles, using mother tongue language, oral communication apprehension (fear, anxiety, shyness) and lack of regular speaking assessments. In addition, causing factors for speaking difficulties are also discussed in chapter four. These factors are: perceptions of teachers and their beliefs about teaching, teaching strategies and techniques, lack of exposure to English, nothing to say, limited participation during English class and finally curriculum. The researcher also goes through some general insights and limitation of this study in chapter four. In the last chapter, which is chapter five, summery and implications of the conducted study will be briefly discussed. Moreover, recommendations for both English teachers and students will be suggested to overcome speaking difficulties. Finally, general suggestions and recommendations will be provided as well.

Chapter Two: Literature review

2.1 Introduction to literature review

Speaking is one of the most fundamental elements in SLA field (Gudu 2015). ESL learners usually encounter different speaking obstacles. If not solved, these obstacles can gradually increase the weakness of oral communication skills in classes, reduce ESL leaners' progression and exclude them from the effective learning process. The following literature review (LR) aims to shed some light on important issues and difficulties in English speaking. To begin with, a conceptual framework will be the first subsection. It contains definition of the main used terms in the current study. Then, a theoretical framework will be discussed to overview the theory that underpins effective way of acquiring SL. After that, the researcher will discuss in details English teaching as a second language, oral language acquisition and speaking definitions based on different researchers' views. Furthermore, the relation between speaking and other skills such as listening and writing will be discussed. More importantly, the main psychological factors that prevent students from speaking effectively and influential factors that Lead to speaking difficulties for

Young ESL Learners will be illustrated in depth. Last part of LR will highlight some related studies to provide reader with a comprehensive image about the reasons and factors behind speaking problems.

2.2 Conceptual framework

- 2.2.1 English as lingua Franca (EFL) refers to using English among individuals who do not have the same first language (Leyland 2011).
- 2.2.2 First Language (L1) refers to the individual's first acquired or native language. It is also known as mother tongue language (Mizza 2014).
- 2.2.3 Second Language (SL) is any other language except the first language that is acquired by individuals. It also refers to a target language (TL) (Stefánsson 2013).
- 2.2.4 Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is a process of acquiring any other language in addition to the first language. It can be second or third language (Stefánsson 2013).
- 2.2.5 Comprehensible output hypothesis (CO) is a theory that is related to a way of acquiring second language. It suggests that the learners acquire knowledge of a new language when trying to deliver messages to others. At the beginning, they almost fail to achieve this task due to their deficiency in lingual knowledge for SL. Gradually, when the learners recognize existence of this gap, they keep practicing and analyzing their output till achieving high level of performance in pronunciation. During this process, understandable and clear messages will be delivered to the listener and accordingly, acquiring second language will occur eventually (Krashen 1998).
- 2.2.6 Oral language acquisition (OLA) is a process of acquiring the spoken language subconsciously and naturally by children without any practice or particular efforts (Al Hosni 2014).
- 2.2.7 Speaking skill is defined as an oral productive skill that requires effort to pronounce words and produce correct sentences (Bashir, Azeem & Dogar 2011). Speaking is a complex process that contains receiving, processing and producing information to build up correct meaning in different contexts (Florez and Cunningham 1999; Torky 2006).
- 2.2.8 Motivation is an internal feeling that motivates individuals to work harder in order to achieve certain goals (Harmer 2001)

2.3 Theoretical framework

In the SLA field, many researchers have suggested several theories discussing the most effective way for acquiring second language. Comprehensible output hypothesis is one these suggested theories. Comprehensible output hypothesis was firstly introduced by Merrill Swain in 1985. It is suggested that learners will acquire knowledge of a new language while they are trying to deliver messages to others. At the beginning, they find difficulties and almost fail to achieve this task due to their deficiency in lingual knowledge for SL. Gradually, when the learners recognize existence of this gap, they keep practicing and analyzing their output till achieving high level of performance in pronunciation. During this process, understandable and clear messages will be delivered to the listener and accordingly, acquiring second language will occur eventually (Krashen 1998).

Output is the learning outcomes that is achieved by the learners. Comprehensible output is not only the responsible component for acquiring second language, it is one of the fundamental components in SLA domain. Speaking effectively requires input, repetitive interaction and absolutely comprehensible output. These three components together assist the learners in SLA process (Swain 1985 in Krashen 1998). It has been discussed by Swain (1985 in Zhang 2009) that comprehensible output has a crucial role as input in the process of second language acquisition. Employing the language in oral discussions is a good proof that the individual can learn new language. The learning process is accumulative which requires previous knowledge in order to produce new output. Swain (1995 in Alsulami 2016) argued that output assists the learners to be aware of grammatical knowledge for perfect language production. This indicates that output has a fundamental role in enhancing sentence structural forms and other grammatical aspects.

Swain (1985 in Alsulami 2016) discussed the three main functions of output in second language acquisition process which are: indication, linguistics and noticing. Firstly, output is a good indicator for the learners to assess second language hypotheses. ESL learners can simply evaluate their proficiency of interlanguage and linguistics forms based on the interaction of speakers. Secondly, output has a linguistics function. When the target language is used by SL learners to understand the linguistics aspects, their knowledge awareness for grammatical rules, sentences' forms and structures will be automatically improved. Thirdly, Swain (1995 in Alsulami 2016) mentioned that output has an effective role in noticing. This role usually takes place when ESL

learners realize their language gap and attempt to fill this gap by producing the correct form of target language.

2.4 Teaching English as a second language

Using English as a second language (ESL) in oral communication is regarded as one of the fundamental practices. However, a complex activity requires regular practice and more effort. Various teaching strategies and methods should be employed to master English speaking. Recently, speaking fluently becomes an essential aspect especially for individuals who are looking for career's advancement (Al Hosni 2014). In UAE, English language is used to teach other subjects in different schools, universities and educational institutions due to its great importance. It is also expected from the teachers to put more attention on teaching speaking skill during the class to promote the students' oral skills. Hence, using a variety of speaking activities and strategies can indeed enhance the speaking competency of students (Al Hosni 2014). Many years ago, teachers used to put more effort on teaching students the reading and writing skills, where as they almost neglected speaking skill in the classroom. This is absolutely because of the teachers' misconception that speaking skill can be improved naturally and unconsciously after improving reading and writing skills (Richard & Rodgers 1986). However, Ur (1996) confirmed that speaking is the most important aspect in English acquisition process because individuals who know the language orally are called speakers. This indeed proves that applying the language orally is more important than just understanding it.

2.5 Oral language acquisition

Al Hosni (2014) stated that oral language is usually acquired subconsciously and naturally by children without any practice or particular efforts. Speaking ability can be improved gradually while the children getting older. However, Zhang, Alex and Kortner (1995) opposed (Al Hosni 2014) by confirming that oral skill requires constant practice to be improved. Increasing oral communication situations and interacting with others meaningfully can enhance the speaking ability.

It is widely known that input has a significant role in second language acquisition. Krashen (1985 in Zhang 2009) stated that input hypothesis is the fundamental component in SLA. He explained that when the comprehensive input or "i+1" concept is received by the learners through reading

and writing tasks, SLA process occurs. Krashan also argued that when the learners understand the oral conversation, they can easily obtain the input subconsciously. Krashen's input hypothesis indeed played a significant role in second language acquisition field. However, several scholars later opposed Krashen's hypothesis arguing that comprehensible input is an important component but it is not the only fundamental component to acquire the second language. Input, interaction and comprehensible output are all required components for oral language acquisition (Swain 1991 as cited in Zhang 2009). A study was conducted for some Canadian students showed that despite of their several years in receiving input in French language, those SL students reflect low grammatical and syntactical structure's proficiency compared with their native speakers colleagues (Alsulami 2016). Swain (1985 in Alsulami 2016) discussed that the main reason behind Canadian learners' grammatical mistakes in second language is the limited production of the language output. These results reduced the effectiveness of input hypothesis.

2.6 Definition of speaking

Several sources of information and scholars have suggested various definitions for the speaking skill in the SLA field. For humans, speaking is an important communication tool to express their viewpoints, hopes, intentions and attain specific goals in educational and business scopes. Bashir, Azeem and Dogar (2011) agreed that speaking is an oral productive skill that requires effort to pronounce words and produce meaningful sentences. Furthermore, speaking is also a complex process that includes receiving, processing and producing input in order to construct correct meaning in different contexts and share ideas between individuals as highlighted by (Florez and Cunningham 1999; Torky 2006). While as Hughes (2011) viewed speaking as a way of combining sounds together systematically to produce meaningful and useful speech. Nuraini (2016) and Al Saadi (2013) believe that speaking is a cooperative activity that concentrates on moving expressions, oral messages and feelings to the learners in order to construct and deliver oral messages properly. According to Al Nakhalah (2016), speaking is transferring the vocal form of language and creating sounds from the mouth to deliver oral messages to the listeners. Many body parts are used when we start speaking, including tongue, vocal chords, lungs, vocal tract and lips. According to Luoma (2004) speaking in a second language is a very complicated skill that needs continuous practice and patience to be developed. Furthermore, speaking uses verbal and non-

verbal symbols when sending and receiving information. Cherifa (2015) confirmed that mastering second language requires using the suitable vocabulary words and being able to connect the words together in logical order and natural way. Hence, it is important for ESL learners to understand well the received information and respond to attain their oral aims.

2.7 The relation between speaking and other English skills

In the second language-learning field, the four English skills are considered important to learn. Teaching second language involves these four skills which are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening and reading skills are regarded as “receptive skills” while as speaking and writing are “productive skills”. Despite the fact that all English skills are related to each other, teachers usually teach these skills separately, paying attention to only one skill in each lesson. Such practice will lead to a weak integration among the learned skills and hence, is not effective approach to acquire SL appropriately (Cherifa 2015).

2.7.1 The relation between speaking and listening

Speaking and listening are regarded two fundamental skills in oral language acquisition field. Brown (2001) argued that the relationship between speaking and listening is relevant. When ESL learners listen carefully to the spoken language and realize what is being said, their speaking skill will improve gradually and they will become competent speakers over time. Additionally, speaking and listening are related to each other. In rare cases, speaking can be taught separately from listening skill. Speaking and listening are the basic components in any oral conversation. Furthermore, these two skills are also commonly used in classes to teach the students speaking activities as stated by (Cherifa 2015).

2.7.2 Speaking versus writing

Learning writing skill is different from learning speaking skill. Writing includes a methodical teaching and certain practice. Hence ESL teachers and students should recognize that acquisition of speaking skill does not imply acquisition of writing skill (Cherifa 2015). On the other hand, Brown (2001) stated that oral language contains short and fragmentary utterances in the pronunciation process. The term utterance is commonly used in speaking rather than using the term sentence, because full sentences are not typically used when speaking occurs. The speakers usually

use clauses and short phrases linked to conjunctions such as “but”, “and” or “that” or even not connected with any conjunction. The speech is connected with each other having some pauses.

The process of learning the speaking skill is simple compared to the writing skills. Writing has a complex structure. Speaking skill also requires using less certain vocabulary words while as writing follows an integrated form of structure, grammar, vocabulary and certain organization. More importantly, speaking is flexible, spontaneous and natural process (Cherifa 2015).

According to Harmer (2005), knowing the difference between speaking and writing is significant to understand the nature of each skill. Harmer has argued that writing does not require audience, as all the written information are available to the readers in a written form. In other words, there is no need for direct interaction between the writer and reader. On the contrary, during oral conversation, the speaker and the listener are important components in communicational process. This gives the speaker a good opportunity to enhance his/her speech based on other participant's responses. Another significant difference mentioned by Harmer (2005), between speaking and writing is durability. When the individuals write, their words may stay for many years or centuries, but in the case of speaking, the oral speech may just live for a very short period.

2.8 The main psychological factors that prevent students from speaking effectively

Psychological aspects usually play an important role in speaking performance of students. Having psychological problems can lead to have difficulties in speaking and reflect low oral performance for the students. Some of these factors have been discussed thoroughly in the following subsections.

2.8.1 Lack of motivation

Lack of motivation is considered one of the main psychological factors that hinder ESL learners from speaking English fluently. Several scholars and researchers shared the same opinions and views about motivation. They stated that motivation plays an important role in students' academic achievement. Motivation is an internal emotion that motivates individuals to work harder to achieve specific goals as defined by (Harmer 2001). Songsiri (2007) and Rahayu (2015) confirmed that motivation is the fundamental aspect in the success of students. It determines the students' willingness to learn and achieve positive academic outcomes. Similarly, Al Nakhalah (2016)

argued that several studies proved that motivated students have an increased ability to learn and achieve better scores compared with other students who have less motivation for success.

Babu (2010 in Al Nakhalah 2016) argued that lack of motivation causes hesitation in speaking English during the class and reduces the effective participation of students. Babu mentioned that the reason for having demotivated students in speaking class is almost attributed to their teachers. The teachers usually do not put effort to motivate the students in order to communicate effectively without reluctance. Therefore, Al Nakhalah (2016) emphasized that teachers should be creative, passionate and enthusiastic to encourage their students to be active learners instead of passive listeners. Teachers also need to encourage their students for effective participation and get them engaged in oral conversations. Al Hosni (2014) also highlighted that some ESL learners do not consider speaking English as added value to their English performance, and such misconception actually reduces their effective participation in the class.

2.8.2 Fear of making mistakes

Ur (1996) and Al Hosni (2014) stated that ESL learners are mostly reluctant and worried to practice speaking English in front of others. They fear of making mistakes and being criticized when they speak, hence they prefer to stay silent and avoid participation in the class. Additionally, Latha (2012) argued that fear of making mistakes is considered a common problem among ESL learners. They avoid speaking English in front of their colleagues. Additionally, Kurtus (2001) stated that making mistakes in front of peers makes the students look foolish and confused. In fact, the students would really like to leave a good impression but their fear of committing any mistake or even receiving any negative comment hold them up from taking part in the oral conversations.

2.8.3 Shyness

Al Nakhalah (2016) defined shyness as an internal feeling that hinders students and prevents them from participating in oral conversation and speaking activities during English classes. Several students lose their ability to speak well or sometimes forget what to say when the teacher asks them to speak in front of their classmates if they are influenced by shyness (Cherifa 2015). In other words, shyness is a great influencer that affects negatively on students' speaking performance. Hence, paying attention to this psychological problem is essential to help ESL learners for

achieving high performance in speaking during the class as mentioned by (Jerry 2001). Al Nakhalah (2016) stated also that some students are shy and quite by their nature. Hence, those students can not speak confidently in front of their peers and teachers, they also find difficulties in expressing themselves orally due to fear of making silly mistakes and having bad feedback from their teachers and colleagues.

2.8.4 Anxiety

Anxiety is defined as a feeling of nervousness, tension and worry that occurs for some ESL learners when they participate in oral discussions (Latha 2012). When learners are asked to speak, they look nervous, anxious, shy and do not enjoy speaking. They tend to finish their speaking part quickly when teacher asks the students to participate. Some students prefer also to be last speakers due to their anxiousness and apprehension (Januariza & Hendriani 2016). Januariza and Hendriani (2016) added that anxiety is considered one of the major blocking effective factors that negatively influence the students' speaking performance and lead them to lose their ideas and concentration during oral speech. Additionally, Al Nakhalah (2016) stated that anxiety produces low quality of oral language and makes the students appear less confident and reluctant when they use the spoken language. Hence, the teacher's responsibility is to facilitate a positive learning environment which makes students more confident and comfortable during the speaking classes.

Moreover, it has been noticed that some ESL learners suffer from anxiety during English classes and this causes hesitation while speaking and fast heart-beating. Anxiety is indeed a serious psychological problem that affects negatively on second language acquisition among learners (Zhao Na 2007). According to Horwitz and Cope (1986 in Zhao Na 2007) ; Liu (2007), several students usually experience anxiety due to three major reasons, which are fear of oral communication, negative apprehension of evaluation and test anxiety. These three reasons cause some students to feel anxious and set them confused when they use target language and hence, reduce their ability to use oral language appropriately.

2.8.5 Lack of confidence

Lack of confidence is considered another essential psychological obstacle that causes speaking difficulties among ESL learners which leads learners to lose their linguistics abilities in oral situations (Cherifa 2015). This psychological problem usually appears when the learners recognize

that their oral conversation is not understood by their partners, and they have difficulties in delivering the intended messages. In this case, they prefer to stay away from oral discussion to avoid embarrassment as stated by (Al Nakhalah 2016). Cherifa (2015) added that several students feel uncomfortable and get confused when they participate in oral conversations in front of their classmates due to lack of self-esteem. They prefer to keep silent and avoid participation instead of talking and making mistakes. They also believe that they have a low performance in English oral communication and others will criticize them. Additionally, Brown (2001) stated that lack of teachers' encouragement and motivation for students during their oral speech reduce the students' confidence and demotivate them.

2.8.6 Teaching strategies and methods

Inadequate teaching methods and techniques can be one of the major speaking obstacles. Several teachers focus more on teaching students the writing and reading skills more than the speaking and listening ones. This absolutely causes an imbalance and leads to a weakness in the students' ability in speaking English fluently (Al Hosni 2014). Several teachers also teach vocabulary items separately (Ibnian 2019). Furthermore, teaching listening is almost neglected in the class due to lack of time and enough listening materials for all teachers (Efrizal 2012). Rabab'ah (2005) found that development of teachers programs and workshops do not have any positive impact on the students' performance, several teachers still using the traditional methods in teaching that do not focus on improving speaking skill due to its easiness.

2.8.7 Use of mother tongue

Using first language for managing the classroom could be another English speaking problem as discussed by (Littlewood 1981). (Littlewood 1981) explained that using mother tongue reduces the importance of second language, and lowers the chance for students to practice the second language which is an effective mean of communication method. This accordingly leads to difficulties in oral communicational language. From my perspective, students usually tend to use second language only in specific situations such as practicing dialogue and drills, whereas using mother tongue language is preferable to discuss the essential issues during the lesson.

2.9 Influential factors that lead to speaking difficulties for young ESL learners

It is commonly known that several ESL learners face obstacles and problems in speaking English fluently as argued by (Dalem 2017). Despite of ESL long learning journey of learners in studying English language, they still remain confused and uncomfortable when speaking English. Based on several researches and studies, different influential factors can lead to speaking problems. S.Al-Saadi (2013) explained that Omani English learners are studying speaking skill only inside the class whenever stated in their course books. They usually find it challenging to speak English fluently because they have no chance to practice speaking outside the classroom's environment. It is also widespread that listening and speaking skills are connected to each other and acquired simultaneously. Hence, if listening skill is poor, acquiring speaking skill will be difficult as well (Pinem 2014). Moreover, giving the priority to teach reading ,writing and linguistics more than speaking can be considered one of the crucial influential factors that cause speaking difficulties for ESL learners as argued by (Elttayef & Hussein 2017). Many teachers tend to focus more on reading and writing skills compared to speaking by claiming that the students have always-regular assessment exams on reading and writing but mostly no speaking exams are given to them. This actually reduces speaking's significance for both teachers and students. Elttayef and Hussein (2017) added that absence of motivation reduces the willingness of students to participate in oral activities. Indeed, effective classroom environment and motivation are major elements in developing the oral communication skills (Al Hosni 2014). In addition, some teachers tend to use the mother tongue and first language excessively during English classes to demonstrating some complex topics. Such technique also develops some speaking obstacles (Gudu 2015). Arega (2017) found the same causing factors that were explored by Al Hosni (2014) emphasizing that the students usually are unwilling to participate in speaking activities and discussions especially when their teacher divide them into pairs or when they have group work to practice the oral activities together. The students also avoid oral discussions, where raising and answering questions are usually involved. Alharbi (2015) confirmed in her study that ESL learners have weakness in oral skills due to absence of real dialogues situations in daily life and lack of motivation in the class.

Furthermore, Tuan and Mai (2015) attributed poor oral conversational skills to absence of student's motivation, fear of making mistakes and low self-confidence. Additionally, teachers in several private schools teach all subjects in Arabic language except the English subject. This proves that

students' exposure to English language is very limited and the teaching environment is not supportive for the students to acquire English (Soomro 2018). Using traditional teaching strategies can also cause speaking difficulties. These strategies usually emphasize on teaching the reading and writing skills more than listening and speaking. Accordingly, Anxiety starts to appear and becomes a common problem among students due to these improper teaching methods as discussed by (Al Nakhalah 2016; Yahya 2013; Soomro 2018).

Brisk (2011) argued that when the teacher uses her/his mother tongue for managing the class and as a method of communication, speaking troubles will arise and consequently, the importance of English language will be reduced. In fact, depending on the first language in teaching English has different and contradictory opinions. Palmer disagreed with Abdo and Breen (2010) by claiming that mother language should be used during English classes to increase the students' willingness to participate in oral activities and learn better English. Palmer et al. (2007) added that the students' textbooks should be also appropriate for their linguistics needs. Abdo and Breen (2010) confirmed that employing Arabic language to explain some advanced concepts for the students in English class is mostly ineffective and will lead to obstacles in SLA process. Using English only is necessary for both students the teachers if they want to explain any new or advanced topic. By doing so, exposure to English language will be increased and the students' English ability will improve as well.

2.10 Review of some related studies

Several studies have investigated the speaking difficulties encountered by ESL learners. For instance, a study was conducted by Tok (2009) to investigate communication difficulties of Turkish ESL learners revealed that several students experienced anxiety and unwillingness during English speaking class. These two main obstacles refer to the students' fear of being criticized when committing mistakes in front of their peers. Another study was carried out by Al Hosni (2014) which reveals the main English speaking obstacles of grade five students. It has been found that excessive use of mother tongue, linguistics problems, teaching approaches and shyness are the major factors that cause such problem. Some students hesitate to participate orally in English because they lack some important vocabulary and structural knowledge. Furthermore, they get confused and feel shy from making errors in front of their teacher and classmates. Hence, they

prefer to avoid participation and stressful situations. Additionally, Ibnian (2019) shed light in his study on the speaking performance of university students. The results explored that students lack the motivation and desire to communicate orally during English classes. Fear of making mistakes in oral situations also led to students' reluctance in speaking activities and caused problems of speaking. Similarly, Sato (2003) in his study discussed the same speaking difficulties that have been revealed by (Ibnian 2019). Rahimi and Quraishi (2019) implemented a study for ESL learners in Kandahar University to find out the reasons behind students' speaking deficiency. His findings have highlighted some speaking challenges such as, feeling of anxiety when interacting with others, embarrassment and confusion during oral activities, low speaking performance and finally, lack of received motivation from the professors of students.

Dalem (2017) aimed in his study to highlight oral language challenges and their main causes for English students in one of the Universities. The results demonstrated that non-native speakers face major obstacles when they are studying second language. These obstacles include inhibition, lack of confidence, lack of motivation, anxiety and shyness. Furthermore, Sangaji (2019) conducted a qualitative study covering 14 high school students trying to evaluate their speaking performance and reveal the factors behind the deficiency of students' speaking skill. It has been concluded that students lack the grammatical knowledge and their speaking performance is affected negatively by hesitation and low self-confidence. The results also revealed that mastery of vocabulary has a positive influence on the students' speaking fluency. Alzahrani (2019) revealed in her study that inappropriate teaching methods and some psychological problems are the major reasons of students' speaking weakness for the students in Najran University. During her experience in teaching, the author has noticed that many students encounter challenges in expressing their thoughts and ideas efficiently and they mostly prefer to use Arabic language when they participate during English lessons. Some psychological problems such as shyness and fear of making mistakes can also affect their behavior during the conversational situations.

Hopefully, this study would be a good contribution in SLA field. The researcher tried to relook to English speaking problems from different aspects and views by having different nationalities of participants in current study to obtain accurate and reliable results. The present study can also help theoreticians to build up a typical model of speaking problems and consequently lead to

comprehensive understanding of this problem. As a result of this, different educational policies and strategies can be adopted to improve the overall language acquisition experience for students. In addition, this research can also represent a base for other researchers and scholars who are interested in implementing further researches in the English Language speaking field.

Chapter Three: Research methodology

3.1 Introduction to methodology

This research focuses mainly on principles of qualitative approach. The researcher employs qualitative methods in order to explore actual teaching situations that usually happen during English classes. Qualitative approach would be also beneficial to understand the real emotions and feelings for participants and gain accurate results. As a result, the researcher will be able to recognize strength and weakness points of participants in speaking skill. Two methods of data collection are employed which are classroom observations and interviews with English teachers and students. Four online English classes were observed in four different private high schools by using Zoom application and Microsoft Teams due to the spread of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Class observations aim to investigate the quality and quantity of English language communication environment, oral communication of students and their attitudes toward speaking skill. Actually, these issues can not be achieved through interviews only. Hence, it is essential to attend online classes for obtaining precise results. Next and after attending observation classes, the researcher conducted several semi-structured interviews with English teachers and students. The purpose from conducting interviews is to interact directly with interviewees and examine their opinions, feelings and facial expressions while they are answering questions. After then, collected data were analyzed descriptively. Finally, discussions and conclusions were summarized based on data analysis.

3.2 Research background

3.2.1 Sampling

The participants of study have been selected based on the system of schools whether English or non-English school. For instance, in schools that follow a Ministry of Education Curriculum (non-English), all the participants are Arab students from different nationalities including, Jordanians, Egyptians, Palestinians, Syrians, Emirati, Omanis, Yemeni, Sudanese and Lebanese. The participants are from grade eleven, who are between 17 and 18 years old. Males and Females are split into different classes due to culture of UAE community. Teachers in these schools are different in their cultural background, experience and in their qualifications. They are males and females from several nationalities (Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Sudan, and Syria, etc.). Age of teachers range

from 20-55 years. Some of them have a Bachelor degree whereas few have Master's degree. There are also few teachers who are native speakers.

3.2.2 Achieved and abandoned objectives

The "achieved objectives" indicate what is intended to be achieved by the researcher, whereas abandoned objectives refer to what was planned to be completed but was not accomplished due to exceptional circumstances. For instance, it was planned to observe different teachers of grade 11 who have a variety of qualifications and experiences. The purpose of doing so, is to examine the influencing factors that have negative impact on the speaking attitudes of students and their oral productivity. In addition, it was planned to attend online virtual classes and record them using different software applications such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams. However, it was not allowed to record or share the attended online sessions due to privacy and political reasons in these schools. Attending virtual classes can be advantageous because attending real classes might cause some tension and stress for both students and teachers. The researcher was also thinking to conduct observations and interviews on some private schools where she was teaching, but actually this was skipped to avoid being biased especially when observing other colleagues.

3.2.3 Reasons behind applying qualitative approach

As stated before, the current research investigates speaking difficulties for ESL learners in some private schools that follow a Ministry of Education Curriculum in Abu Dhabi. These private schools use various teaching contexts and strategies. Hence, it is important to examine different teaching and learning approaches as well as performance of high school teachers through observations. This leads the researcher to recognize perspective of both students and teachers toward speaking challenges and students' feelings when participating in oral activities. Interviewing is also considered an effective method to understand real emotions and facial expressions for the participants. The reason behind applying these qualitative instruments for data collection is to formulate a comprehensive understanding about this study and produce objective findings. Furthermore, there are two distinguished features for qualitative approach: Firstly, qualitative approach is a natural source of collecting data that based on actual views for the participants. Secondly, it is a descriptive approach. This descriptive qualitative research provides

the researcher with accurate findings, since it deals with speaking problems of students directly in a real communicational situation that occur to them while speaking English.

3.3 Research participants

Participants of the current study are teachers and students of grade 11. Most of the students are Arab from different nationalities whom English is their second language. Interviews were conducted online using Microsoft Teams and Zoom with twenty students in different times based on availability for those students. Selecting interviewees is mainly based on the observation. In other words, the researcher selected some students who were mostly silent and not participating during English periods. This choice aims to achieve the purpose of study and investigate in actual problems and factors that hinder students from speaking English and affect their oral performance negatively. English proficiency level for selected students range between good and limited. Selective students have been reached through their teachers. The researcher demonstrated purpose of current research to the participants and got their approval for being part of this study by interviewing them. Interviews give the students the freedom and chance to highlight their speaking problems and express their perceptions toward speaking skill. As a result, researcher can easily recognize obstacles encountered by students which prevent them from mastering speaking. It is worthy to mention that private schools in this study have been selected based on number of Arab students, who mostly have common difficulties in learning English especially in speaking skill.

3.4 Research instruments

3.4.1 Classroom observation

It has been argued that class observation has a great value (Sato 2003). Sharing experiences and understanding actual interactions and responses for students can be one of the most beneficial advantages to use class observation method as mentioned by (Bell 2005). Classroom observation is an effective method by which we can record and assess all activities of the classroom during the lessons. The purpose of doing so is, to acquire new learning experiences from other teachers, describe educational practices accurately and enhance teaching quality. Observation is also a good opportunity to observe teachers in real teaching environment and give a precise feedback. Therefore, the researcher has observed four online English classes in four different private schools.

The main purpose is to examine speaking skills for the students, their motivation, interaction between students and teachers in oral activities. In addition, the researcher analyzed findings of conducted observations by using descriptive information. Analyzing observations is mainly focused on oral performance of the students during English lessons. Using descriptive analysis method is an effective way to gather and analyze collected data. By using qualitative method, detailed information can be obtained descriptively, data analysis can be done comprehensively as well.

3.4.2 Interviews

Interview is defined as a method of collecting data. Through interview, a skilled interviewer has the ability to understand thoughts of interviewees, examine responses and explore their feelings and motives. All these issues can not be recognized through observation alone as stated by (Bell 2005). For instance, when conducting an interview, the researcher will be able to recognize facial expressions of interviewees, physical movements and voice tones. Additionally, interview can also provide the researcher with important implications. This absolutely can not be achieved in case of filling a questionnaires or observation. Generally, interview is considered a very useful way for obtaining detailed information through asking and answering questions, it also assists interviewee to extend the discussion range and raise other relevant issues. Based on the researcher's extensive reading, it has been found that interviews are widely used in educational research due to its easiness in gathering views and opinions for individuals. This occurs through direct and face to face communication between the interviewee and interviewer. It is also important for interviewer to be skillful, experienced and unbiased in order to obtain accurate findings and be able to collect data systematically. The questions of interview were in both Arabic and English languages to meet all possible preferences of interviewee preferences and to maximize the understanding process and facilitate an in-depth conceptualization for the problem. The interviews were carried out for participants (teachers and students) in either Arabic or English, based on the willingness of participants. Each interview lasted approximately between 15-20 minutes. Interviewees had been asked to describe their learning experience in English and attitudes toward learning speaking. Participants had been asked to demonstrate the main factors that affect negatively on their speaking proficiency and cause their lagging to master the oral skill. During interviews with English teachers

and students, they have been asked several questions (see appendix 2 and 3) and their answers were analyzed descriptively in the discussion chapter:

3.5 Research credibility

To ensure the credibility of instruments, good experienced teachers have been chosen from different private high schools to be observed and interviewed. Teachers have been asked questions to provide researcher with their feedback regarding designed instruments. They put positive comments and suggest to add some other points for the observation checklist. Additionally, all of the teachers agreed that questions of are obvious and have smart goals. Selected students for interviews have been chosen from different English proficiency levels and different educational backgrounds. The reason for that is to avoid biased information, and to understand in depth the causes of speaking difficulties and influential factors that lead to have low speaking performance for those students. To ensure that the obtained information from conducted interviews are authentic, ‘member check’ was performed by showing the interviewees their responses during the interviews and let them verify that what was written is actually matching what they meant.

3.6 Data analysis

Obtained data from observations and interviews were analyzed in systematic and qualitative way. Observation for high school classes was conducted by using Zoom and Microsoft Teams based on the timetable of classes. Virtual Interviews with teachers and students were also conducted through same applications in their free time due to Covid-19. Each interview took about 15-20 minutes and observations conducted for about 160 minutes in separate time. Collected data about speaking difficulties were reorganized and analyzed under relevant themes and sub themes according the conducted class observations and obtained interviewee's responses.

3.7 Chronological stages for the research paper

Based on the chronological order of research, class observation was the first method of data collection, followed by interviews with English teachers and ESL students. Initially, one random class was attended and experimented before proceeding further with planned class visits. This action was done to verify the process before it occurs, avoid any unexpected problems and make sure that information of observation sheets is relevant to the research topic. In addition, the

researcher can add any extra information based on the interactions of students and make any amendments if required.

Class observation was conducted on three stages which are “Before”, “During” and “After” classroom observations. In “Before” classroom observation, the researcher conducted short meetings and some quick dialogues with involved teachers. Researcher has intended this step to give teachers an idea about the research's nature and to know more about teaching strategies and methods that are implemented by the teacher during English classes. During classroom observation, an observation sheet (listed in Appendix 1) was used to recognize attitudes of students toward speaking and their motivation. Additionally, observation sheet can assist the researcher to evaluate the usage and accuracy of the students’ oral language. Stimulated interviews were conducted with students in both group and individual modes. Special attention was paid to students who were observed by researcher as passive listeners. The purpose from holding group interviews is enabling researcher to explore shared obstacles between interviewees thoroughly and to put participants in a real confrontation to assess their speaking ability by themselves. Furthermore, it was foreseen that speaking in groups during the interview motivates and encourages all participants to share their experiences and express their feelings without fear of being a focus point while talking. Group mode also facilitates recognition of language gaps between students themselves. Collected data through group interviews is more useful and comprehensive from individual interviews. It can provide the interviewer with a good range of feelings, ideas and insights. In addition, group interviews show different views and perspectives between the group members, and consequently enrich the research outcomes and might raise some other advanced issues (Thomas et al.1995 as cited in Rabiee 2004). Several interviews were conducted with teachers (appendix 2) and some selected students (appendix 3). Different open questions were raised to students, and some additional questions followed based on the interaction with students. By doing so, the researcher will be able to have a comprehensive image about speaking obstacles encountered by students and investigate their perspectives in details. Interview also concentrated on attitudes of students toward their teachers’ performance in the class. Besides, conducted interviews with teachers attempt basically to cover speaking challenges for the students as well as factors that hinder them from participating in oral activities in effective way.

3.8 Ethical account

On the ethical consideration side, formal consent has been taken from both ADEK and principles of some private schools for conducting this empirical study (see appendix 4,5,6). A brief description has been provided to participants by researcher about the study, its goals, components, and nature of questions during interviews. Furthermore, it was mentioned that participation of students in interview is optional based on their preference and desires. However, participants should realize the importance of their feedback in educational field because several recommendations and decisions will be taken based on feedback of participants. Moreover, participants had been informed about academic goals of the study. The researcher also assured to participants that their responses will be confidential and no negative impact will happen to their future careers.

Chapter Four: Findings and Discussion

As explained in previous chapters, the current study investigates the speaking difficulties of ESL learners along with the factors that hinder learners from speaking English fluently. Class observations and interviews are the main used tools for data collection. The study also aims to answer following questions:

- 1-What are the major speaking difficulties encountered by grade 11 students in some private schools in Abu Dhabi?
- 2-What are the primary influential factors that lead to English speaking difficulties?
- 3-What are the possible solutions and suggestions to overcome speaking difficulties for grade 11 students?

4.1 Observations findings

Based on the observations noted during the attended sessions, it was found that there are several speaking difficulties and influential factors that face grade 11 students. It was stated in previous chapters that observation is one of collection data techniques that is used in this study. Observation seeks to find the speaking problems for ESL students during English classes. Speaking aspects checklist is used to analyze performance of the participants (see appendix 1). Several notes were also written to simplify the analysis process. Obtained data from observation has been analyzed by the researcher descriptively based on some categories. Finally, data was categorized into themes and subthemes. Several categories have been assessed during observation class. These categories

are: vocabulary knowledge, fluency, pronunciation, grammatical aspects, physical attitudes and eye contact, voice volume, time limit, teaching strategies and teachers' performance. Results of each of the aforementioned categories are illustrated in the following sections.

1- Vocabulary knowledge

It is commonly known that vocabulary is considered one of the essential components in oral communication. It is a key element to understand the conversational context and be able to communicate with others appropriately. Vocabulary usually includes single words, phrasal verbs, idioms and phrases. Individuals can not communicate efficiently and express their thoughts orally or in written form without sufficient amount of vocabulary knowledge. Hence, lack of vocabulary knowledge is one of the major reasons behind speaking deficiency. It has been noticed through class observations that several students have very limited vocabulary words. They struggle to find suitable words and sometimes they choose wrong words, speak indistinctly or even stop talking for a while. These were the main indicators to tell that vocabulary knowledge of students is very limited.

2- Fluency

Fluency is the ability to speak spontaneously without hesitating or too much stopping to deliver complete meaningful sentences for the listener as mentioned by (Mufidah 2017). For second category, the researcher noticed that eight out of ten students have problems in fluency. Many students can not speak effectively due to their shyness or fear of making mistakes. The researcher also noticed that while some students were speaking, they used some written notes to read from it. By doing so, students will not be able to understand their oral speech properly and consequently this leads them to have speaking obstacles.

3- Pronunciation

Pronunciation is a phonological process that is based mainly on producing clear language when the individuals speak. It consists of components that control volume of sounds and pattern when using a language. Pronunciation consists of syllabus features, consonants, word stress, vowels, and intonation forms (Mufidah 2017). It was noticed through observation that several students were not

pronouncing phonemes accurately. Also, students were not using proper word stress and intonation in their oral speech. Moreover, during oral participation of some students, it was clear that they face difficulties to articulate some words and make correct sounds in order to create meaningful sentences. Inability to pronounce phonemes correctly can lead to many speaking problems as well as psychological problems such as anxiety and lack of self-confidence.

4- Grammatical aspects

Grammar is a set of rules that can assist to put the words in a correct form systematically in order to produce accurate and meaningful sentences. Students should be able to choose proper grammatical form when they participate in oral speech. Based on observation, it seems that there is focus on teaching students the grammatical rules because it has been considered as an important aspect in acquiring the second language. If the students understand grammar rules well, they can follow their pronunciation in oral speech and make meaningful sentences. It was also noticed that students generally were enjoying grammar lessons and interacting with their teacher effectively.

5- Physical attitude and eye contact

Around seven out of ten students avoid looking at their colleagues while answering questions orally. Gregersen (2003) explained that avoiding eye contact while speaking is considered a physical reaction for nervous students. Moreover, it has been clear that some students think for a while before start speaking and they were reluctant to express their insights clearly due to their fear of making mistakes and shyness. In addition, their body language indicate that they are uncomfortable and stressed.

6- Voice volume

It has been observed that about 80% of the students have a clear voice volume when they speak. Generally, there were no problems under the voice volume category.

7- Self-confidence

Some students lack self-confidence while speaking. Almost 60% of the students showed their nervousness and reluctance. They were repeating themselves by mentioning the same ideas

subconsciously due to shortage of their language proficiency. Several students also forget what they are going to say.

8- Time limit

Based on the class observation, it was noted that 90% of students could not manage time properly. Some of the students were speaking slowly while others were very fast. This indicates how anxious and worried they were. It seems that students did not pay attention to the time constraints. After completing the observation process, interviews were used to support and assure the results of observations about speaking problems for ESL learners. Several questions have been asked for both teachers and students to find out the negative effecting factors in speaking field and to summarize some suggestions and recommendations to solve this problem.

9- Teaching strategies and teacher's performance

In regards of teaching strategies, there was a priority to teach grammatical aspects and vocabulary words more than improving the speaking skill. Teachers mostly tried to ignore speaking skill even if there was a chance for students to speak. Instead, they tend to do other exercises related to grammar, reading or writing. Teachers claimed that time is very limited and it is important to finish the lesson requirements of which speaking is not a main part. Furthermore, it was clear that the teaching performance of teachers was very traditional. Most of the teachers were not using any of the interesting teaching techniques such as wall sheets, you tube videos and audio materials to motivate students and increase their willingness for participating in oral activities. On the opposite side, their teaching techniques were limited to using the board, course books, markers and practicing some activities that basically focus on memorization. Mistakes have been also corrected by teacher directly, without giving students chance to think or correct their mistakes by themselves. On the other hand, some other few teachers were asking students some advanced questions in different forms to stimulate their abilities for analysis and motivate them to speak. Those teachers provided students with enough time to think before start speaking, they even were correcting their mistakes indirectly and elegantly.

4.2 Interviews findings

4.2.1 Interviews with teachers

Based on responses of teachers during interviews, it has been observed that several teachers are still using traditional teaching methods. These methods do not motivate students to participate in oral activities. Teachers mentioned that they believe in the importance of speaking skill in SLA field, but they do not find enough time for teaching it. Teachers almost give the priority to other skills such as reading and writing. Furthermore, some teachers pointed to shyness, lack of opportunity to speak during English class as main factors in speaking problems. Other teachers consider that teaching grammatical aspects and vocabulary is enough to assist students in acquiring speaking skill. This indicates weakness in teaching strategies. In my perspective, focusing only on grammar and vocabulary is not an effective way for mastering speaking. Moreover, interviews had shown that teachers were using L1 sometimes during English lesson especially if they were teaching grammar to facilitate some advanced grammatical aspects. They even allowed the students to explain some difficult meanings in Arabic. This limits the exposure to English during the lesson and has a negative impact on speaking performance for the students.

4.2.2 Interviews with students

Based on feedback provided by students through the conducted interviews, the following main findings have been noticed. Firstly, students found it difficult to build complete and meaningful sentences due to shortage of vocabulary words. Secondly, several students were using Arabic language several times to discuss some advanced topics with their teachers because they can not discuss it in English. Thirdly, some interviewed students admitted that they prefer to keep silent and avoid participation due to shyness, fear of making mistakes and being criticized by their classmates or by teacher. In addition, several students reported that their teachers are not interactive with them. Students think that teachers do not encourage them to participate. Instead, teacher just want to finish the lesson due to time limitation as claimed by most of the students.

4.3 Introduction to discussion

As earlier mentioned, current study aims to investigate the speaking difficulties encountered by ESL learners in high schools in Abu Dhabi. The study also aims to examine the factors that lead to speaking problems in order to conclude some suggestions and recommendations to enhance speaking proficiency level for those students. By using class observations and interviews as data collection, two major issues have been discussed and arranged under themes and sub themes as follows in the next sections.

4.4 Primary speaking difficulties faced by high school students

Obtained data of speaking difficulties demonstrated four main speaking obstacles encountered by students in some private schools, these obstacles are: lingual obstacles, use of mother tongue language, oral communication apprehension and lack of regular speaking assessments.

4.4.1 Lingual obstacles

Collected data during the class observations revealed that weakness of students in speaking is due to shortage of appropriate vocabulary words. When students start speaking, they can not find proper vocabulary words to produce meaningful sentences. Feedback from interviews came in line with findings of observations. During group interview with 4 students, they stated that, “We are willing to speak in English, but honestly, we do not know the suitable words to use in oral speech.” Same group of students also reported their weakness to construct meaningful sentences when they try to explain their thoughts and ideas. Two of the participants assured that by saying, “We find it difficult to make meaningful sentences without grammar mistakes.” Another one said, “I can not even form a short sentence in English.” Unexpectedly, despite of the provided effort from teachers to focus a lot on teaching grammatical rules, students still can not make useful sentences without grammatical mistakes. Teachers agreed what is mentioned by students in their interviews. One of the teachers stated that, “Many students give their answers as words or fragments.” Another teacher said, “Some students answer in very simple incomplete sentences and they ask me about some words in English to be able to complete speaking.” All interviewed teachers confirmed that several students don’t have sufficient vocabulary background. This lack of vocabulary words is one of the major speaking problems. One of the teachers confirmed the same by saying, “Having sufficient amount of

vocabulary is fundamental component in oral communication, it is required from students to have good knowledge of vocabulary words.” This deep knowledge of vocabulary facilitates speaking skill acquisition. Additionally, teachers should always motivate students to increase their vocabulary and use them regularly in real life situations. The above finding was paralleled with the finding of LR regarding “lack of motivation”. It is known that motivation has a crucial rule in students' academic achievement. Hence, if students lack the motivation to acquire speaking, this will create lingual obstacles, and they will have difficulty in finding suitable words or produce meaningful sentences due to lack of proper vocabulary (see appendix8).

4.4.2 Using mother tongue language

Students who have the same mother tongue usually prefer to use it due to its easiness and flexibility. Students can speak freely without fear or hesitation and illustrate their idea clearly. But using mother language heavily during English class can affect SLA negatively. This problem is connected strongly to lingual difficulties. During observations, it was noticed that several students were speaking Arabic especially when they discuss some tasks with their teacher. In addition, teacher was answering and giving explanations for students in her first language. The researcher asked some students about using Arabic during English class, some of them answered by saying, “We found it difficult sometimes to deliver our ideas in English, it is easy to discuss some advanced concepts using Arabic language.” One of interviewee stated, “I feel more relaxed and comfortable when I use Arabic from time to time during the class.” Two other students gave justification for using their mother tongue sometimes by saying, “Why to focus on learning speaking if there is no speaking evaluation.” some teachers justified using Arabic language during class by stating, “Some advanced concepts especially grammatical ones require deep understanding, so we shift sometimes from English to Arabic to make sure that grammatical aspects are understood easily and in a flexible way.” It is clear that lack of vocabulary repertoire, weakness to build complete and meaningful sentences and using Arabic language by some teachers motivate students to use Arabic language during the lesson. This obtained finding confirmed findings of LR about using mother tongue in English class. Many scholars discussed this problem in LR section as a major speaking problem that reduces the importance of SL. Brisk (2011) assured that using mother tongue by teacher leads to several speaking troubles. Abdo and Breen (2010) also confirmed that employing

Arabic language to explain some advanced concepts is mostly ineffective and will lead to obstacles in SLA process (see appendix8).

4.4.3 Oral communication apprehension (fear, anxiety, shyness)

It is commonly known that ESL learning process is complex especially for ESL learners. It is associated with anxiety, uneasiness, reluctance and self-doubt. This learning process needs hard effort and patience to be obtained. Based on virtual visits to several classes for the purpose of observation, it was observed that participation of students during English lesson was very limited and most of them were staying quiet and avoiding participation when the teacher was asking them some questions. This limited participation is attributed to students' inhibition. Students refer their poor speaking performance during English class to the fear of making mistakes or shyness. Some of them said, "When our teacher asks us to speak, we feel anxious and stressed to make any grammar or pronunciation mistake in front of our classmates." Anxiety usually increases when ESL learners have nothing to say or if they have been chosen by their teachers to speak without planning or preparing what to say. One student said, "When I pause for a while before beginning to answer the question, teacher interrupts me and asks another student to answer." It was also noticed that the majority of students were very sensitive toward making mistakes. It seems that they care about what their colleagues say or how they judge them." One of the students mentioned, "I do not like to participate in oral discussion because my friends will laugh and criticize me." Another one expressed her feeling toward English period by stating, "English lesson is my favorite period, but I avoid participation and prefer to listen only. I'm sure that I will make lots of mistakes and put myself in embarrassing situation." Two students stated, "We are worried and anxious to make mistakes." Another interviewee justified her reluctance in participation, "I am sometimes shy and scare [sic]." It seems that fear of making mistakes and shyness are serious speaking obstacles against effective speaking that affect performance of students negatively. It can not be ignored that communication apprehension is an internal common phenomenon among all individuals, and it is not connected with English background or nationality of the learners. Actual problem appears when communication apprehension changes from natural phenomenon to phobia. This phobia usually occurs as a result of students' reaction from negative evaluation by teacher or even tough way in correcting their errors which lead the students to avoid participation. Thus, it is responsibility of teacher to create a positive classroom environment, assist students to overcome these obstacles and

motivate them to get engaged in speaking activities. When comparing this finding with LR findings about fear of making mistakes, shyness and anxiety, it is clear that there is a consistency between interviews' findings and psychological factors that prevent students from speaking effectively in LR section. This confirmed that shyness, anxiety and fear of making mistakes are major speaking problems. Tuan and Mai (2015) attributed poor oral skills to, fear of making mistakes, shyness and low self-confidence (see appendix8).

4.4.4 Lack of regular speaking assessments

Based on results of observations and interviews, it had been revealed that no continuous speaking assessments are regularly provided to students. Regular assessments are meant to follow up students' learning progress and increase motivation to practice speaking seriously. When researcher met teachers and asked them about the reasons for ignoring speaking assessments, they justified this by stating, "We do not honestly allocate specific time for English period to teach speaking. Accordingly, there is no need for formal speaking assessment to be given to students." One teacher added, "Our teaching plan is mainly focusing on teaching reading, writing and grammar." Another teacher reported that, "the used text books concentrate on reading and writing, each chapter has only one or two speaking activity and if I do not have enough time, I skip it." Furthermore, teachers pointed that speaking is not given enough time and attention during lessons because there is no formal speaking assessment. It is mentioned by teachers that their method in assessing students' speaking skill usually occurs through participation of students during the lesson by answering questions or practicing some dialogues in the textbooks. One of the teachers confirmed this by saying, "I usually assess my students in speaking during their oral participation and their conversations with their colleagues." Lack of continuous speaking assessment leads to reduced usage of oral language and accordingly causes lack of confidence when using it. These results are aligned with findings of LR about lack of confidence as mentioned by many scholars (see appendix8).

4.5 Causing factors for speaking difficulties

Some essential factors that lead to speaking difficulties have been revealed through classroom observations and interviews with teachers and students. These causing factors are further illustrated in the following sections.

4.5.1 Perceptions of teachers and their beliefs about teaching speaking

Based on obtained results from interviews, all teachers confirmed importance of teaching speaking as an essential part in SLA field. Despite of their positive attitude toward speaking skill, teachers do not actually allocate specific time for teaching this skill, justifying this by lack of time to focus on the oral skill. Four teachers from different schools explained that, “For each lesson, there are four objectives that should be achieved, and we can not be late.” One of the important questions is raised here, what is the problem if a lesson is not completed within the allocated time if teachers are sparing sometime to teach speaking skill? Two of interviewed teachers answered this question, “Our supervisors always insist on importance of completing all steps and objectives of the lesson.” This shows that teachers are actually focusing on quantity of teaching instead of quality and they just need to achieve their objectives regardless of achieving other important objectives that enhance speaking performance for the students.

4.5.2 Teaching strategies and techniques

Educational system has a direct influence on the improvement of speaking progress. Collected data from observations revealed that some of teaching strategies and methods are inadequate to enhance oral abilities of the students. Focus on teaching grammatical aspects and vocabulary words more than speaking is one of crucial factors that lead to existence of speaking difficulties. One of the teachers confirmed this by stating, “Our teaching priority is reading, writing and grammar, honestly, no given priority to speaking.” This indicates that no opportunity to engage students in speaking because the teachers mostly dedicate their time to do activities related to reading and writing. Teachers justified this to limited period time and their desire to accomplish the given objectives. Some teachers believe strongly that teaching structural rules and vocabulary is an effective way for enhancing speaking performance for students. One teacher claimed that, “When

the students have a good base of vocabulary words and thorough understanding of grammatical rules; speaking will be acquired subconsciously and naturally.” Several teachers have confirmed the importance of teaching grammar in enhancing speaking ability. For example, one of them said, “If the students do not understand grammatical rules, they will not be able to form words in logical order and produce correct sentences.” Another teacher explained, “If the students do not understand grammar rules, they will have many mistakes in their oral speech.” Some teachers justified their strong desire in teaching grammar claiming that, “Grammatical rules can be easily understood and implemented by students.” it was obvious from interviews that teachers do not teach the students grammar in oral communicative environment. In other words, there is no opportunity to practice speaking through grammatical context. Grammar has been teaching separately. I think that it is essential to apply and practice these grammatical rules in oral situations with colleagues to obtain high-level performance in speaking. It is not enough to understand only the rules. Some teachers do not believe in error correction because they think it affects the oral production of students. One of the teachers explained, “Correct students’ errors when they start speaking can disturb them and cause confusion for them and accordingly lead to cause speaking obstacles.” Hence, it is preferable to allow students practice expressing their thoughts without any interference from teacher to correct their spelling or grammar mistakes. It is worthy to mention here that, teachers should recognize the importance of motivating students to participate in oral communication situations during English classes. In this case, students will be able to use language properly in real situations and not only understanding its rules. Furthermore, it was observed that teachers were using Arabic language several times whenever they explain the grammar lesson. They attributed their usage of the first language to clarifying advanced meaning and instructions. Teachers also allow students to use their mother tongue language for asking and answering some difficult inquiries. When researcher asked about this, one teacher mentioned, “I have no problem if my students use Arabic sometimes, I need to make sure that they understood the grammar lesson deeply.” Another teacher indicated, “Grammatical rules will be easier to them, students will understand the correct meaning.” All these notes and observations confirmed that some teachers have gaps in their teaching strategies and methods, hence they employ Arabic during English lessons. Additionally, some teachers informed their students indirectly that using English language can not assist them to convey some advanced instructions or even ambiguous words. This shows that teachers realize low English level of their

students and their expectations about students understanding for English is very limited. Despite of these justifications for using first language, there is no doubt that using first language excessively leads to poor speaking performance, demotivate students to use the second language and reduce its importance.

Moreover, teaching material plays an important role in oral performance for students. If the topic is advanced or not interesting, students will be demotivated and not interested in speaking activities. One of the students stated, “I do not like to participate in oral discussion especially when the lesson is about historical issues, it is boring and I have nothing to say.” One of the teachers justified this by saying, “We need to follow curriculum and complete all lessons even the difficult ones.” Generally, effective teaching methods should be suitable for all academic levels of students, relevant and enjoyable to enable all students to be part of it and achieve their academic goals. One teacher explained, “Sometimes inappropriate English timing period has a negative impact on performance of students.” Teacher demonstrated that English subjects mostly have been given in fifth or sixth period. During this time, students were unenthusiastic and exhausted. The above collected data assured the results from LR about teaching strategies. It is mentioned that inadequate teaching methods can be one of the major speaking obstacles. This was actually found through observation and interviews (see appendix8).

4.5.3 Lack of exposure to English language

It was noted that used textbooks for students have very limited speaking tasks or activities which mostly are skipped by teachers. Instead, several tasks that have been given to students during lesson were reading and writing. Additionally, no extracurricular speaking activities are given to students. One of the teachers stated that, “Some good students can participate in weekly assembly by providing English speech or even any sketch in English.” Participating in English assembly weekly and allowing only good students to conduct extracurricular speaking activities has no positive impact on weak students. This indicates that using English is not applicable for all students and does not reflect an authentic and regular way for students to communicate outside class environment. Some teachers mentioned that their students have not been given opportunities outside the classroom to employ English language in oral situations, their English usage is limited only to the classroom. When the researcher asked some students during interview about this issue,

some of them mentioned that, “Our teacher does not encourage us to use English in real situations outside the class.” Another student said, “I does not [sic] know where are the places that I can visit to practice English.” One teacher replied to this question and said, “There are no specific places to practice oral communication with others except joining toast master classes for public speaking.” Moreover, educational background for some parents contribute also in causing speaking problems. Most of students can not communicate orally in English with their parents at home, because most parents have low speaking performance. On the other hand, it seems that there is no collaboration between students outside the school to assist their weak colleagues and help them to overcome speaking problems. The above finding agreed with what is mentioned by S.Al-Saadi (2013) in LR about studying speaking inside the class only. Students find it difficult to practice speaking outside the classroom. This proves that students' exposure to English language is very limited and the teaching environment is not supportive for the students to acquire English (Soomro 2018).

(see appendix8)

4.5.4 Nothing to say

Inability of oral speech is one of essential factor that has been observed during some English lessons. When the students can not express themselves orally in proper way due to lack of motivation and proper vocabulary knowledge, speaking problems appear in addition to some psychological problems as well. Some of students stated that they prefer to be quiet, because they have nothing to say and they do not want to lose their good looking in front of their classmates and teachers. This finding is connected strongly with shyness and anxiety which is mentioned in LR. If the students experience these psychological problems during speaking, they will have nothing to say

4.5.5 Limited participation during English class

Having considerable number of students and limited time in class can decrease opportunity for students to participate. During English lesson, one student was allowed to participate at a time while others need to listen and wait their opportunity which is very little because many students are there. This can be considered as one of effecting factors for lagging in speaking. During the interview, some of students mentioned that, “Teacher sometimes prefers to choose excellent

students and give them more chances to speak.” This is unfair actually because some students especially the weak ones need to be motivated from their teachers to participate orally, learn skills and build knowledge. Furthermore, it has been also noticed in some classes that teachers’ speech time is more than students’ time. This actually can affect participation of students and make it very limited. Overtime, students will become passive learners by just receiving knowledge from their teacher without any social interaction. Students also find it difficult to employ the target language especially in grammar lessons. Hence, they prefer to understand these rules by paying attention deductive method of teacher in explaining grammar and writing these rules. The finding here, assured the mentioned findings in LR about teacher’s beliefs about excellent students. It also seems that due to limited time of the lesson, teachers tend to speak more than students during the class (see appendix8).

4.6 Curriculum

During interviews, the researcher has been informed that English curriculum has no focus on speaking tasks. More focus in Curriculum is given to improve reading and writing skills. No specific plan timetable for teaching speaking during the whole semester. Teachers attributed this by mentioning that, “Speaking has been teaching implicitly with reading and writing.” In other words, teachers usually integrate speaking with other skills. One teacher said, “We come across speaking indirectly, when we teach students reading and writing.” Briefly, it was noticed that chances of students to speak inside the class is very limited and even if they answer questions, their answers would be very short. They almost respond by saying single words or incomplete sentences. Curriculum is mentioned implicitly in LR. It is mentioned by teachers that focusing on reading and writing skills only is derived from the curriculum itself. Many teachers during interviews assured that English curriculum neglects the speaking skill.

4.7 General insights

Current study approved that observation is an important key and it can enhance the performance of teacher. Through observation, teachers can have comprehensive objective feedback from different point view and accordingly, they can realize their teaching weakness aspects that should be improved. In addition, when teachers visit each other and attend classes, they will exchange experiences and create good reflection of their way in teaching and avoid mistakes in future. Based

on the interviews, it was clear that several teachers appreciate speaking skill compared with other skills but at the same time, they are committed to follow curriculum and traditional approach of instruction. Additionally, this study attempts to show the important role of teacher in motivating students and providing them with positive classroom environment to assist them in overcoming speaking obstacles.

4.8 Limitations of study

Some limitations have been found during conducting this study. Current study was accomplished only in one of the UAE emirates, which is Abu Dhabi, and is limited to a few private schools. This makes the findings reliable only for these particular schools. Furthermore, it would be more beneficial to observe more classes and conduct several interviews in order to get valid and reliable findings, but this could not be applied due to Covid-19. Class observations and interviews were virtual and limited. Present study is also limited to ESL learners who are usually more anxious than native speakers toward learning English. ESL learners' anxiousness is due to their negative thoughts about English and traditional teaching methods. Hence, results can not be generalized for all English language learners. In addition, arranging seats of students were fixed in most classrooms, students were sitting next to each other and not in groups. This kind of class arrangement makes students unmotivated, stressed and not enthusiastic toward participation in English class.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

5.1 Summary

This research was designed to investigate the speaking difficulties encountered by grade 11 students in some private schools. These schools follow the Ministry of Education curriculum. During the attended online sessions, it was observed that majority of students were unable to speak English fluently and naturally. Despite the many years in learning English, students are still facing challenges when speaking English in front of their colleagues. This increased my curiosity to investigate the main reasons and influential factors that hinder student from speaking English perfectly. Thus, it was decided to conduct virtual visits in some private schools located in Abu Dhabi using Microsoft teams and zoom. These visits aimed to observe speaking performance of

grade 11 students, their oral participation, and teaching methods in addition to other issues as listed in appendix 1. Furthermore, different interviews have been conducted with both English teachers and students. Reason for conducting virtual visits to schools is the spread of Covid-19 which forced the learning process to shift into online mode for several schools and universities during first term in this academic year 2020-2021. In addition to interviews, class observation was second instrument for data collection, which helps in evaluating current teaching techniques and having a clear image about what is happening inside classes. Hence, observations list was prepared with specific categories to know more about speaking problems and effective factors. Additionally, interviews were held with teachers and students to recognize their real thoughts toward this problem, collect accurate data and finally gain extra information that can not be obtained by observation. The main findings of interviews and class observations can be summarized as follow.

1-ESL learners face several speaking difficulties that prevent them from improving their oral speech such as linguistics problems, use of mother tongue, fear of making mistakes, shyness, anxiety and lack of regular speaking assessments.

2- Despite that most Arab teachers are well experienced in the educational field; they still employ traditional teaching methods in their classes. They ignore advanced teaching strategies that motivate student to participate especially in speaking activities.

3-Some influential factors that cause speaking deficiency can be summarized as follow.

- Teachers' perceptions toward speaking instruction
- Teaching strategies and methods
- Lack of exposure to English
- Curriculum
- Low participation in class
- Nothing to say.

5.2 Implications of the study

Hopefully, current study would be beneficial for educators, researchers, students, theoreticians, English supervisors and curriculum designers. Besides, it might offer a good contribution for syllabus designers in Ministry of Education. For students, this study enables them to understand their speaking problems and influential factors that lead to low performance in oral skill. Some

suggestions and solutions to overcome this problem can be implemented by teachers and students. This study has also motivated students to express their thoughts and impressions about their speaking difficulties. Regarding curriculum designers, this study is important to grab their attention to recognize the significance of speaking and its effectiveness in oral field. Also, it helps them to focus more on teaching the speaking skill by writing specific goals that should be achieved. It is also important to help curriculum designers to rephrase the speaking activities in different way that fits all levels of students and encourage them to participate actively in oral discussions. With respect to authorized staff in Ministry of education, present study suggests them to re-evaluate influential factors that impact on students speaking performance negatively such as huge number of students in each class. There is an essential need for distributing students evenly based on their academic levels and dividing them into groups to assist and motivate each other. It is unreasonable to have most of the high-performance students gathered in one class while leaving other classes with low achiever students. Moreover, researchers need to identify variables that promote performance in speaking skill of students. The present study also can assist theoreticians to build up a typical model of speaking problems and accordingly lead to comprehensive understanding of this deficiency. In addition, current study stresses on the importance of using proper teaching strategies and facilitating a positive learning environment for students in order to improve their speaking abilities and make them more enthusiastic toward participation in oral activities. It has been clear that thoughts of teachers and students can be synthesized to recognize the reasons of speaking obstacles and change negative perceptions of students toward speaking skill. Improving second language learning experience and achieving significant learning outcomes can be considered as one of the main objectives for this research.

5.3 Recommendations for English teachers to overcome speaking difficulties

After analyzing responses of teachers and students descriptively through observations and interviews, following proposals and resolutions are suggested by researcher. First and foremost, teachers have a great role in improving students' English performance, hence, they should have a comprehensive image and accurate understanding of the factors behind speaking deficiency for the students in English classes. Based on their understanding, teachers should modify their teaching methods in different way that meet expectations of their students. It has been found that shyness is

considered one of the factors that prevent ESL learners from progressing in speaking skill and oral participation. Therefore, it is highly recommended that teachers take certain actions to assist students in overcoming this psychological problem. Group work can be another effective way of reducing shyness for timid students. Group work enables students to think and discuss in some advances topics comprehensively and give different ideas rather than speaking immediately without thinking. Group work needs to be associated with other helpful factors such as encouraging students to participate orally, providing them with positive feedback when participating and avoiding tough errors correction. In addition, teachers are required to facilitate a positive learning environment for the students, build a good and friendly relationship with students to reduce their anxiety and increase their willingness to participate in oral activities. It is also important to employ meaningful oral activities, these activities should be varied and suitable for academic levels to all students and their interests. Using real objectives such as stories and pictures is perfect to expand imagination of students and motivate them to speak without hesitation.

Committing to teaching material as exactly listed in the curriculum might be stated as one of negative factors that affect speaking. It is commonly known that most Arab teachers follow the exact curriculum which focuses mainly on reading, writing and grammar with little focus of speaking skill. Teachers need to be balanced in their teaching way for English skills. They can add or delete some of teaching materials based on the students' needs. They also should use various teaching methods that contribute to enhancing speaking performance for students such as discussing some topics orally from magazines, newspapers and novels. Furthermore, teachers should be aware that speaking is an essential skill in educational field, and this skill should be taught properly similar to other skills. Lack of speaking opportunity has been stated as a negative influencer factor. It has been demonstrated that limited time of English period and dominance of some excellent students, reduced the opportunity of other students to participate orally during English class. Teachers are required to recognize that all students especially weak ones have the right to get engaged in oral discussions in order to express their views and thoughts. Teachers should be keen to provide students with regular and equal opportunities to practice speaking inside the class besides using pedagogic strategies that motivate oral participation of students and correct their mistakes in friendly and indirect way.

Oral tasks that are assigned by teachers should encourage students to demonstrate the meaning rather than focusing on the grammatical forms. By doing so, students will be able to acquire second language in a better way. Moreover, shortage of necessary vocabulary knowledge has been regarded as a speaking difficulty that affect the oral performance of students negatively. In order to solve this problem, it is highly advised that students build up considerable number of vocabulary background knowledge. Hence, it is responsibility of their teacher to enrich minds of students with proper vocabulary knowledge by including new vocabulary words on daily basis. Teachers needs to encourage their students to use these new words in different grammatical contexts and arrange meaningful sentences. By doing so, students will be able to understand vocabulary thoroughly. Besides, teachers need to have more creative and dynamic speaking activities to assist their students getting engaged in such activities. Students need to be motivated by their teachers so they can participate without hesitation, shyness and fear of making mistakes. This will contribute to enhance speaking performance for those students and increase their oral abilities. Teaching methods that are usually used by teachers should be regularly improved and updated based on lingual needs of students. Class should be student-centered rather than being teacher-centered in order to increase opportunity of students to learn actively. Different teaching methods, strategies and activities should be applied continuously. It is also required to follow and evaluate these teaching activities to check whether learning objectives are obtained or still progressing. Moreover, teachers are required to suggest having proper timing for speaking periods especially in the morning when students are active, energetic and willing to learn instead of the end of school day when they are tired and restless. Having English periods during first hours of a school day assists students in having an effective learning process. Early morning learning also facilitates achieving the required learning goals which solving speaking difficulties is one of its essential goals. In addition, it has been also recommended to prepare a variety of interesting teaching methods for speaking to grab students' attention, get them engaged in oral participation and let them enjoy being part of oral group activities. Teachers also need to motivate students for using second language regularly by keep practicing it. It is important to change the conventional concept of speaking especially in Arab schools. Speaking should be viewed as the ability to interact with others socially in all communicative contexts based on speaking rules and social context. Furthermore, speaking should be appreciated more by teachers due to its significant contribution in improving educational and

professional aspects. It plays an important role in enhancing vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, functional language and increasing opportunities to get better future careers. Arranging students in small groups is important to reinforce the sense of responsibility and social relations among the students. It also helps all group members to cooperate and motivate each other for participating orally without fear or shyness of making mistakes. Including the students in different extracurricular activities can increase their chances of using the target language and getting exposed to English language outside classroom environment. In order to assist students to reach high level of English proficiency, all English teachers, supervisors, schools' administrators and responsible staff in Ministry of education are advised to work cooperatively to reach an agreement on what is provided in textbooks and how it should be implemented in a way that suits the academic needs of students. Attending training and educational workshops are highly recommended for English teachers. It will enrich teachers' educational experiences, provide them with new teaching strategies that link speaking teaching with other three skills and put more focus on teaching oral skill through advanced teaching methods. More importantly, teachers should prevent students from using Arabic language in the class. This can be easily implemented when the teacher facilitates a supportive classroom environment which promotes their self-confidence and willingness to participate in oral communication situations. Maximizing usage of second language by students enrich their minds with several vocabulary words and enhance their speaking abilities.

Increasing students' awareness about the importance of learning speaking and its valued benefits for them to gain better future is the responsibility of the teacher. Teachers should be also aware of various strategies that mitigates the usage for L1 during English class. In order to assist the students to get rid of psychological problems while communicating orally, teacher needs to know how to deal positively with this psychological side in order to increase self-confidence of students and their ability of learning oral language accurately. Teachers are also expected to engage all students in all English-speaking activities by providing them with simple activities that increase their chances to participate and collaborate. Besides, avoiding advanced activities that lead students to fail or feel frustrated is also important. Hence, being sure that students are ready for the assigned activity, having enough ideas and good vocabulary knowledge are fundamental to accomplish the task perfectly.

It is important for teachers to maintain a positive relationship with students and surround them with care and positivity. This will let students to feel comfortable even if they make mistakes because they know that their teachers will support and help them to correct these mistakes and will be able to speak without borders.

5.4 Recommendations for students to overcome speaking difficulties

In regards of practicing speaking outside the classroom, it seems that students recognize the great significance of speaking skill in their future career. However, they are still not keen to practice this skill outside classroom environment. Students should overcome this laziness by creating social relationships with their friends outside the class and communicate orally with them. They can even practice speaking in front of mirrors with themselves consistently. Indeed, this way is effective to enhance speaking performance for the students. Moreover, students can enhance their speaking abilities by regular watching English speaking videos and speaking tutorials that are conducted by experts. These activities can enhance vocabulary knowledge and correct pronunciation. It is also worthy to mention that students need to encourage themselves by thinking positively without underestimating their skills. They should believe in their abilities, put much effort on learning oral skills and avoid fear of making mistakes because we learn perfect when we make mistakes.

5.5 General suggestions and recommendations

More studies and researches about speaking difficulties should be conducted regularly to understand the needs of students in second language field and correct direction for teaching English skills among ESL learners. Further studies should be implemented to highlight speaking English strategies that increase interest and willingness of students to employ English vocabulary words in daily life routine. Furthermore, scholars and researchers are advised to focus more in their researches on the student-centered learning process. Role of teachers should not be limited to supervising students while speaking, but it also should include correcting errors of students to enable them overcoming their shyness and increase their self-confidence. Parents can contribute in the learning process as well by encouraging their children to practice English speaking at home as possible and explain to them the importance of acquiring speaking skill.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

The observer observation's checklist

Important note: The observer will use this sheet in her observation and put [√] in the proper box based on her observation. For some items, the observer can put [√] in different boxes.

Teaching and learning aspects	Examples	Description of observation
learning and teaching context	Arrangement of seats for the students	Individuals[] - Pairs[] – Groups []
	Learning material	Focus on grammar [] – Focus on skills []
	Teaching strategies and techniques	Traditional [] – Advanced [] Mix []
	lesson topics	Interesting [] – Boring []
	Used teaching methods in classroom	White board [] Textbooks[]– Pictures [] Video [] Audio [] Markers [] Others [] e.g. [-----]
	Classroom environment	Motivational []– Non motivational [] Others [] e.g. [-----]
Teacher's performance	Types of questions	Closed questions[] – Open questions [] Mix [] – Probing questions [] Other [] e.g. [-----]
	Level of questions	Descriptive [] – Analytical []

		Critical [] – Simple []
	Quantity of questions	Very few [] - Some [] - Several [] Acceptable []
	Teacher talking time	Much [] – Normal [] – Little []
	Teacher's position	Movable [] - Front- centered [] Other [] e.g. -----
	Level of teacher seriousness	High[] – Normal [] – low [] Non []
	Error correction	Always [] – Sometimes [] Seldom [] – Non []
	Using mother tongue	Always [] – Sometimes [] Seldom [] – Non []
	Level of Motivation	High [] – Middle [] –few [] – Non []
	Teaching activities	several [] – medium[] –few [] – Non []
	Teachers' feedback on responses of students	Always [] – Sometimes [] Seldom [] – Non []
Students' performance	Level of answers	Words [] – Sentence [] – Fragment [] – Non []
	Number of questions	Several [] - Average [] – Few [] Non []
	Types of questions	Lesson-related [] – Clarification [] – Additional []
	Student's talking time	Much [] – Normal [] – little [] Non []

	Social relations with colleagues	Close [] – Moderate [] - Formal [] – Unclear []
	Self-confidence	High [] – Medium [] – low [] – Non []
	Participation	Excellent [] – Very good [] – Good [] – weak []
	English proficiency level	Excellent [] – Very good [] – Fair [] – Poor []
	Physical attitude and eye contact	Excellent [] – Very good [] acceptable [] – Poor []
	Psychological problems	Fear [] – Anxiety [] shyness [] Others [] e.g. -----
Speaking aspects	Speak clearly(fluency)	Always [] – Sometimes [] -Seldom [] – Non []
	Vocabulary knowledge	Extremely high [] – High [] – Medium [] – low []
	Using mother tongue	Always [] – Sometimes [] -Seldom [] – Non []
	Pronunciation	Excellent [] – Very good [] Acceptable [] – Poor []
	Grammar knowledge	Excellent [] – Very good [] Fair [] – Poor []
	Using grammar knowledge in oral discussions	Always [] – Sometimes [] -Seldom [] – Non []
	Voice volume	Extremely high [] – High [] – Normal [] – low []

	Attitude toward speaking	Positive []– negative[]–Neutral [] Non []
	Speaking assessment	Always [] –Sometimes [] -Seldom [] Non []

Appendix 2



دائرة التعليم والمعرفة
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
AND KNOWLEDGE

<p>Date: 20 September 2020</p> <p>To: Private Schools</p> <p>Subject: Research Permission Request</p> <p>Dear Principals,</p> <p>The Department of Education and Knowledge would like to express its gratitude for your generous efforts and sincere cooperation in serving our researchers.</p> <p>You are kindly requested to allow the researcher Wesam Fathi Nazmi Suliman to complete her research on:</p> <p>Investigating English speaking difficulties that encounter ESL learners at high schools in Abu Dhabi</p> <p>Please facilitate the researcher in conducting the research for the topic mentioned above by allowing her to conduct survey and/or interviews for a sample group of teachers and their students using online platforms.</p> <p>Thank you for your cooperation.</p> <p>Yours respectfully,</p> <p> Raphael Mendes Stein KMDA Division Director</p>	<p>التاريخ: 20 September 2020</p> <p>السادة / مديري المدارس الخاصة</p> <p>الموضوع: تسهيل مهمة باحث</p> <p>تحية طيبة وبعد،</p> <p>يطيب لدائرة التعليم والمعرفة أن تتوجه لكم بخالص الشكر والتقدير لجهودكم الكريمة والتعاون الصادق لخدمة الباحثين.</p> <p>نود إعلامكم بالسماح للباحث / وسام فتحي نظمي سليمان باستكمال بحثها بعنوان:</p> <p>صعوبات التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية التي تواجه طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة ثانية في مجموعة من المدارس الثانوية الخاصة في أبو ظبي</p> <p>فالرجاء التكرم بتسهيل مهام الباحث ومساعدته على إجراء الدراسة المشار إليها، من خلال السماح لها بحضور حصص افتراضية وإجراء استبيانات من خلال عدة أسئلة للطلبة والمعلمين.</p> <p>شاكرين لكم حسن تعاونكم</p> <p>و تفضلوا بقبول فائق الإحترام و التقدير ،</p> <p>رافاييل مندس ستين مدير إدارة – إدارة المعرفة وتحليل البيانات</p>
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Appendix 3

Interview questions with teachers

1. What is the preferable language do you usually use to manage the classroom? Arabic or English language? explain?
2. Do you use only English language during English class?
3. Do you employ Arabic language for clarifying some advanced topics in grammar?
4. What are the speaking activities that used to improve students' speaking performance?
5. Are there any extracurricular speaking activities that are conducted outside the classroom environment?
6. Is teaching oral skill ignored during English class? explain
7. Do you think that teaching grammar and vocabulary to students is enough to master speaking skill? explain?
8. What are the skills that should be given more effort and time among four language skills to be taught in English class?
9. Do you think that students can acquire speaking skill naturally when learning grammar and vocabulary?
10. What do you think is the main speaking obstacle that face ESL students based on your experience?
11. What are the main English-speaking challenges faced by students while learning English in your class?
12. Is English the only academic subject that is taught in English language? If there is any other English based academic subject, mention it?
13. What are the speaking assessments that are facilitated to students for evaluating their progress?

Appendix 4

Interview questions with students

1. Do you have a good knowledge of vocabulary words?
2. Can you produce complete meaningful sentences when you speak during English class?
3. What do you feel when you start speaking English in front of your classmates and teacher?
4. What is your perception toward speaking in English?
5. Does the teacher let students to use L1 during English lesson?
6. Do you feel afraid from making mistakes or getting criticized when you participate in the class?
7. Do you prefer to use Arabic during English class to describe advanced topics?
8. Do you have any opportunity to practice English outside the classroom?
9. Do you have any regular speaking assessment (weekly or monthly)?
10. Do you receive any negative comments from your teacher when you make mistakes?

Appendix 5

<p>Department of Education and Knowledge Licence No. [redacted] Dated: 24/3/1982</p>		<p>دائرة التعليم والمعرفة ترخيص رقم [redacted] بتاريخ ١٩٨٢/٣/٢٤</p>
<p>التاريخ : 2020/10/11م الصادر : 2020/0011</p>		
<p>السادة / جامعة دبي البريطانية (دبي) تحية طيبة وبعد ، ، ، ،</p>		
<p>الموضوع / للواقعة علي تسجيل مهمة الطالبة / وسام فتحي نغمي سليمان</p>		
<p>نتقدم إدارة مدرسة [redacted] الخاصة (أبو ظبي) بالشكر والتقدير على جهودكم المبدولة ، وكذلك التعاون الواضح الذي تلقاه منكم ، أمين دوام التوفيق .</p>		
<p>يسعدنا أن نرسل لمساتكم مواظمة المدرسة علي السماح لطلبة / وسام فتحي نغمي سليمان - رقم جامعي 20182951 بحضور حصص صفية افتراضية لبعض صفوف المرحلة الثانوية (الصف الحادي عشر) و إجراء مقابلات افتراضية مع مجموعة من مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية لهذه الصفوف و طلابها لتتمكن من تقديم رسالة الماجستير حول صعوبات التعلم باللغة الإنجليزية التي تواجه الطلاب (كلفة ثانية) .</p>		
<p>نشكر لكم حسن تعاونكم ، ، ، ، ونتمنوا قبولاً قاتلاً الإحرام ، ، ، ،</p>		
<p>ملاحظة : يمنع تسجيل الحصص الصفية الافتراضية .</p>		
<p>مديرة المدرسة</p> 		
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"><div style="text-align: left;"></div><div style="text-align: center;"></div><div style="text-align: right;"></div></div> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Toll-free : 1-800-451-2222 Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates</p>		

Appendix 6

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
Ministry of Education & Knowledge

دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة
وزارة التعليم والمعرفة


التاريخ / 2020/9/28 م

تحية طيبة وبعد ،،

لأمانع لدينا من اعطاء الطالبة وسام فتحي نظمي سليمان ورقمها الجامعي 20182951 تدرس في الجامعة البريطانية في دبي تصريح لحضور حصص صفية افتراضية لبعض صفوف المرحلة الثانوية (الحادي عشر) وإقامة مقابلات افتراضية مع مجموعة من مدرسي اللغة الانجليزية لهذه الصفوف وطلابها لتتمكن من تقديم رسالة الماجستير حول صعوبات التحدث باللغة الانجليزية التي تواجه متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية كلغة ثانية .

شاكرين لكم حسن تعاونكم ،،،،،

مديرة المدرسة



Appendix 7



Private School ,



وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
AND KNOWLEDGE

2020/9/30

السادة/ جامعة دبي البريطانية في دبي المحترمين

تحية طيبة وبعد ،،،

يرجى العلم بأنه لا مانع لدينا من السماح للطلبة وسام فحمي نظمي سليمان ورقمها الجامعي 20182951،
تدرس في الجامعة البريطانية في دبي بحضور حصص صفية افتراضية لبعض صفوف المرحلة الثانوية
(الحادي عشر) وإجراء مقابلات افتراضية مع مجموعة من مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية لهذه الصفوف وطلابها
لنتمكن من تقديم رسالة الماجستير حول صعوبات التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية التي تواجه طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية
كلغة ثانية.

يرجى العلم بأنه يمنع تسجيل الحصص الصفية الافتراضية كما يمنع ذكر اسم المدرسة للحفاظ على
خصوصيتها.

وتقبلوا فائق الاحترام والتقدير


مدير المدرسة



انسانا :
Abu Dhabi - U.A.E

تكونا :
P.O.Box

فلكنا :
- Fax

ص.ب. :
- Boys Tel

أبوظبي - الإمارات العربية المتحدة
Girls - tel

Appendix 8

Following are samples of discussion dialogues between teachers and students which caused the researcher to conclude the different speaking problems discussed in this research.

Lack of suitable vocabulary words

Teacher: Express your feeling about the story (Harry Potter) you just finished reading today.

Student A: The story good to read and hmmm it is also (stops for a while) and I was happy when I read..

Student B: Bad because it has hard words.....

Student C: I feel that the story is, the student stops for a while and asks the teacher to translate (ممتع ومسلّي) into English..., and then repeat the whole sentence.

These short stops occurred with several students during their speaking time.

Using mother tongue

Teacher: Ok class, we will do a little challenge. okay?

Teacher: His room is full of guitars, keyboards and miscellaneous items.

From this context, conclude what does the word 'miscellaneous' mean.

Student A: Can I say the meaning in Arabic?

Teacher: yes

Student A: I think that means (أشياء متعددة ومختلفة)

This happened many times during English lesson and especially in grammar lesson.

Oral communication apprehension (Fear, anxiety, shyness)

Teacher: Imagine that you attended the Union Day. What happened on that day? How do you feel?

Teacher choose one student to answer.

Student A:Hmmm,she wanted to speak but she looks so nervous and worried. Her voice was so low that no body was able to hear what she was saying, the teacher tried to encourage her to talk but the student kept silent trying to find suitable words to express.

Student B:Her voice is trmbling,she looks confused.. I think there lots of people and presenters.

Lack of regular speaking assessments

Teacher:At the end of one of English lesson, dear students, get ready for reading and writing assesment next week for unite 4&5.

Student A:What about the speaking assessment?

Student B:When it will be conducted?

Teacher:I assume that we do not have time for doing any speaking assessments.

Teacher:It will take two periods, if each student will prepare a presentaion.

Student C:How will you mark the speaking assessment?

Teacher:We will just do some speaking activites the last 10 minutes when we have review.

This occures during observation in several classes.

Perception of teachers and their beliefs about teaching speaking

Teacher:We have four objectives for our lesson tody..who can read them?

Student A:1- Simple past versus past continuous

2-To use past perfect for past habits

3-To write about Sheikh Zayed using simple past and past perfect

Student B:What about the oral presentation about one of the emirates, you said that we will discuss and present it in today's lesson.

Student C: Yes Miss and you said we need to be ready.

Teacher:yes dear, I know that,all of the students need to practice this oral presentation in front of their calssmates, it is important ,but the issue is that, I need to complete all the lesson objectives for today especially in grammar. We have grammar assessment next week and simple past is including in the assesement and I do not want to be late.

Teaching strategies and techniques

Teacher: lets practice what we learned in the previous lessson in grammar..who can give a sentence using simple past?

Student A:She cut hmmm...his finger.. and go to hospital yesterday..

Teavher: you have some mistakes, who can correct her?

Student B: She cut her finger and went to hospital yesterdaay..

Teacher:Good job

Student A:Miss, I can say this sentence in arabic,it hard to say it without any mistake..

Teacher:(answers student in Arabic) you need to review the grammar lesson very well, then I'm sure you will be able to form meaningful sentences using simple past.

Lack of Exposure to English

Teacher at the end of the lesson: Next week is our class's turn in assembly. I need good students in speaking to participate in this activity.

Students: Very few students raise their hands and show their willingness to participate

Student A: We can do this speaking activity teacher

Student B: What is the topic for this activity?

Teacher: you are required to prepare short presentation about three emirates of UAE and talk about it in the morning assembly by next Sunday.

Three students raise their hands and said: We would like to participate in assembly, we can do presentation orally. (those students were participating actively during the lesson)

Teacher: practice the oral presentation together and then you can present it in front of your classmates first and we will do some changes if required.

Students: Do not worry miss, we can do it, we always participate in such activities with other teachers.

Limited participation in the class/nothing to say

-Teacher: pay attention to what I'm going to say, Imagine that you were attending the Union Day of UAE.

-In your opinion, what happened at that time?

-How did all people feel?

-What was sheikh zayed's feeling at that time?

-Students: very few participation have been observed

-Student A: Many people was there.

-Student B: I will be happy

-Students C: it is pleasure to attend such a historical event

-Teacher: good start, I need new faces to express their opinions, any one wants to participate?

One of the students raised her hand and said, Miss, I know the answer in Arabic, we studied about Union Day on Social studies Arabic, can I say in Arabic, then you can help me to say in English.

Teacher: Ok, the teacher assisted the students and translated her sentence to English.