

## **EFL Teachers' and Students' Attitudes and Practices Regarding Oral Communication in English Classes: Ethiopian High School Context**

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### **Abstract**

This study looked at the attitudes of Ethiopian English teachers and Bonga Mehal Ketema High School grade 10 students about spoken communication in the classroom. The purpose of this study was to determine why oral communication is such an important part of English teaching, what role teachers and students play in making orally active students in the English classroom. Four English teachers were purposively interviewed, and 95 pupils in the tenth grade completed a questionnaire. The findings show that the majority of teachers and students believe that oral communication is an important aspect of the English education process. It is primarily due to the fact that being able to express yourself vocally in English in today's world is extremely important. The findings also reveal that teachers believe assessing students' oral competence is difficult since it is not as concrete as other abilities assessed in the English foreign language course. The challenge of convincing timid or unmotivated students to engage orally, as well as a lack of time, make assessing students a challenging undertaking. Thus, EFL teachers should establish a welcoming environment in the classroom to help students enhance their speaking skills.

Keywords: Attitude; self-esteem; assessment; oral communication; language teaching; English classroom

### **Introduction**

A language is a communication instrument. We speak with people in order to clarify our thoughts and to comprehend the thoughts of others. Where there is speech, communication takes place. Without speech, we are unable to converse with one another. Language usage is an activity that takes place inside the confines of our community. Language is used in a number of settings. People at work or researchers working in a medical laboratory or a language laboratory, for

example, are expected to talk accurately, fluently, and effectively in order to interact effectively with one another.

Speech, in particular, plays a significant role in our way of life, and it's increasingly typical to hear someone speak multiple languages. However, because our mother tongue is the language we learned organically, we usually feel most at ease speaking it. As a result, speaking can be an important aspect of our social lives and can make us more visible. As a result, learning a new language is a significant achievement that opens the door to a plethora of new chances and experiences (Qureshi,2000).

Furthermore, according to Alonso (2012), speaking is generally seen as the most important of the four talents. In fact, one typical source of frustration among students is that they have spent years studying English yet are still unable to communicate properly in the language. As a result, speaking is widely considered to be the most important of the four abilities. One of the most challenging skills for language learners to master is speaking. Despite this, because grammar has a long written past, it has typically been pushed to the side while we spent all of our classroom time trying to teach our pupils how to write, read, and sometimes even concentrate when learning a foreign language.

Speaking, according to Alonso (2012), is an activity that necessitates the integration of numerous subsystems. All of these variables combine to make learning a second or foreign language a difficult undertaking for language learners, although speaking is a crucial skill for many.

There are numerous situations in which people need to speak, such as lecturing someone face to face, communicating over the phone, answering questions, posing for directions, in stores, meetings, or chatting with friends, to call a couple of people to spend a batch of their time interacting with more people, and each of those situations necessitates a unique register consistent with the forma.

Tornberg (1997) points out that pupils finding out a foreign language typically suppose that it's necessary to be able to speak the target language however in order for the pupils to be able to communicate orally within the target language an explicit quantity of self-esteem among the pupils is needed. It appears to me that inspiring and encouraging all students to be verbally engaged in the English foreign language classroom is a great challenge for associate degree English teachers. It also appears to be difficult for English teachers to evaluate students' capacity to speak English orally because students' oral activity is directly linked to their emotions. The overall goal of this paper is to find out how some Ethiopian English professors and ninth-grade students feel about speech in the English foreign language classroom.

#### Statement of problem

Students learning a foreign language frequently assume that speaking the target language is essential, but being able to communicate orally in the target language demands an explicit level of self-esteem among the students, according to Tornberg (1997). Speaking is an important aspect of teaching and learning a second or foreign language. It is the most frequently rated skill among students, and it is through it that they win or lose friends (Bygate 1987). He goes on to say that students frequently need to be able to communicate confidently in order to do even the most simple transactions.

According to Rahman (2010), speaking is the most common means of communication for expressing viewpoints, making arguments, providing explanations, transmitting information, and making an impression on others. Speaking, according to Chaney (1998), is the process of creating

and sharing meaning in a range of circumstances through the use of verbal and nonverbal symbols. However, despite the fact that the purpose of teaching speaking is to increase students' oral communicative abilities, the role of teaching speaking has been undervalued, and language teachers continue to teach speaking through exercises and memorization of dialogues.

As a result, secondary school students lack sufficient English skills to communicate effectively with others. Several things can be blamed for this. According to Byrne (1986), teachers must overcome several obstacles in order to develop students' oral skills, including class size, classroom arrangements (which rarely favor communication), the number of hours available for teaching the spoken language, the syllabus, and, in particular, examinations, which discourage students from paying attention to the spoken language.

Strevens (1983), for example, claims that allotted time for teaching and acquiring the spoken language is insufficient. As a result, oral abilities are consistently undervalued. This results in pupils' inadequacies and lack of oral communication proficiency (Ibid). The majority of classroom lessons are led by the teacher, and pupils are not given the opportunity to participate in debates. As a result, pupils' confidence is harmed when they try to communicate with their peers orally. According to Byrne (1986), our main aim as language teachers is to enhance our students' capacities to use the language for a range of communicative objectives, not to enlighten them about the language.

Teachers are like skilled orchestra conductors, offering each performer an opportunity to participate and ensuring that their performance is satisfactory (Ibid). A school teacher, according to Mercer and Swan (1996), is one who directs his or her students into active involvement in a meaningful dialogue. The formation of shared experience and mutual understanding is essential to the teaching and learning process. We should also be mindful that students and teachers have diverse perspectives on how spoken language is taught and learned. As a result, many high school students assume they are in the classroom to be taught, and that teaching entails knowledge transfer. To put it another way, students still think of an English teacher as primarily an instructor (Hill and Holden 1989). Furthermore, pupils learn English mostly to pass tests, and teachers primarily assist them in accomplishing this goal.

### Research questions

The study's overall goal was to examine how English teachers and grade 10 students at Mehal Ketema High School feel about oral communication in English classrooms. The following basic research issues were sought to be answered in this study:

- Why is oral communication such an important aspect of English language instruction?
- What variables in the English classroom contribute to pupils being orally active?
- What do EFL teachers and students believe about evaluating students' abilities to express themselves verbally in English?

### Literature review

Factors that make oral communication difficult for students

ESL/EFL students frequently fail to convey their ideas, feelings, and thoughts in English due to a variety of circumstances. The following are the most important factors:

#### *Affective factors*

*a. Stage fright:* This is a common occurrence among students who are too shy to participate in an oral discussion. They will acquire exceptional listening comprehension but little ability to

express themselves orally if they remain mute. They are frequently worried of losing face if they make blunders in English (Dobson 1988). Students are afraid of losing face, thus they are unable to speak what they want. For fear of making mistakes or failing to find appropriate words, EFL students tend to hide their flaws and flaws.

They are hesitant to speak in order to avoid being laughed at. As a result, there is a vicious circle: the less they say, the less they progress, and the more afraid they are of speaking.

As a result, these pupils should be assisted in overcoming their apprehensions about speaking. Teachers should explain to kids that making mistakes is normal and that everyone in the class does so. When shy students realize this, they will be more willing to participate in group discussions.

*b. Lack of Confidence:* Students who lack confidence speak in such hushed tones that they are difficult to hear. According to Via (1972), as reported in Dobson (1998), pupils have a fine, loud voice when speaking their native language, but their voice suddenly becomes weak and they can hardly be heard when speaking English. He goes on to say that speaking loudly gives you confidence, much as striking with an explosive sound in Judo/ Karate provides you extra energy, strength, and confidence to move ahead. As a result, when pupils are the center of attention, teachers should encourage them to speak boldly. As a result, they will have a higher level of confidence. The other students would be kept awake and alert as a result of it (Ibid).

*c. A lack of motivation:* A lack of motivation is an internal drive that encourages someone to take action (Harmer, 1991). In order to learn FL/SL, you must be motivated. According to Stern (1983) and Littlewood (1981), one of the most important variables in establishing successful FL/SL learning is the learners' motivation. These writers go on to say that motivated students are more likely to succeed in a FL/SL classroom than unmotivated students.

Though it is difficult to assess students' motivation, their willingness to actively participate in language learning tasks and activities, ask and answer questions in pairs and groups, and, most importantly, the effort they put forth in learning the target language in the classroom are all indicators of motivation. Students who lack desire to study SL/FL, on the other hand, are more likely to be hesitant to complete an assignment or work, to participate in a discussion, and to experience feelings of perplexity, anxiety, anger, melancholy, and doubt. Gardner (1985) points out that an unmotivated student is one who lacks motivation;

- eagerness to learn the language,
- willingness to put forth additional effort in the learning activity,
- willingness to keep the learning activity going.

*d. Attitude:* Having a good attitude toward the target language and culture is essential for foreign language learning success (Gardner, 1985).

As stated below, Gardner (1985) emphasizes the necessity of having a good attitude when learning a foreign language.

A positive attitude: often leads learners to use a variety of learning strategies that can facilitate skill development in language learning, contributes greater overall effort on the part of the language learner, leads to greater success in specific language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and helps learners maintain their language skills after classroom instruction is over.

As a result of their cultural influence, most high school students in the countryside do not have positive attitudes toward studying a foreign language. There are, for example, cultural proverbs that inhibit spoken communication in the classroom.

### Factors related to language and current events

This occurs when students lack appropriate vocabulary and grammar understanding. According to Atkins, Hailom, and Nuru (1995) and Harmer (1991), having an adequate vocabulary and understanding of grammar can help them communicate verbally. Another prevalent issue is that students believe they have nothing to contribute about a given topic.

They may be bored since the subject is unconnected to anything they are familiar with. As a result, they are unable to participate in oral conversation (Piccolo 2010). Another explanation for the students' quiet could be that the class activities are uninteresting or misunderstood. As a result, the teacher must examine the types of speaking exercises he or she employs to see if they pique students' interest and inspire a genuine desire to communicate.

### Teacher related factors

Error correction: When practicing oral communication in a foreign language like English, there will inevitably be problems in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary.

A few blunders here and there indicate that kids are in the middle of a natural communication period. English teachers in high school must provide pupils with constructive, supportive feedback in order to aid their learning (Atkins, Hailom and Nuru 1996:139-144). Pupils develop a sense of inadequacy and a fear of making mistakes if professors are serious about their students' performance.

This mood is demotivating, damaging, and prevents pupils from communicating effectively. In this regard, Wondwosen (1992), as referenced in Atkins, Hailom, and Nuru (1996), contends that EFL teachers are ineffective when providing oral feedback on spoken errors the majority of the time. Many of the flaws that teachers correct are grammatical errors that can be found in writing or speech, but many of them are minor. With continual modest adjustments, teachers should not stop students' flow of dialogue.

## Research method

### Research design

The study looked at how English teachers and Mahal Ketema High School grade 10 students feel about spoken communication. They have the ability to create a learning environment: Communication exercises enable students to form positive personal relationships with one another and with their professors. The descriptive survey design was used for this purpose in the hopes of eliciting attitudes concerning oral abilities. As a result, both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used in the research.

### Subjects of the study

Bonga Mehal Ketema High School students in Grades 10 and their English teachers were the study's target population. Teachers and students in grades 10 were used as participants in this study's data collection. The researcher employed stratified proportionate random selection to select the purported respondents from each sector in order to obtain a sample from the target population. Purposive sampling was used by the researcher to choose teacher-informants. According to the information available, a total of 95 students and four professors took part in the information gathering process.

### Tools of data collection

In this area, data was gathered using questionnaires and interviews. The researcher examined what happens during the teaching and development of speaking skills through indirect classroom observation. The questionnaire contained both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The interview was created with instructors in mind. The researcher devised semi-structured independent interview questions for the samples of teachers in order to extract additional information from the subjects and bridge the expected gaps between the classroom observation and questionnaire. A total of four teachers were interviewed on purpose. To obtain correct information, the researcher described the objectives and individual questions to both participants.

### Method of data analysis

The researcher employed a mixed approach to analyze the data. Both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis were used. The data from the questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively and this was done based on tables of frequency and percentage for the close-ended items. The data which were collected from interview and classroom observation were analyzed qualitatively. These data were transcribed and narrated thoroughly.

## Results

### Students' questionnaire results

Each question from the survey has been translated into English and will be displayed in a separate table. The data will be presented in greater detail after each table.

Table 1. Do you find English to be enjoyable?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not fun at all	9	9%
Fun	49	52%
Very fun	37	39%
Total	95	100

The majority of pupils are enthusiastic about English as a subject. 91 percent of pupils said English is “fun” or “very fun.” Only 9% of the students who took part in the study said that English was “not at all entertaining.” This finding is in line with a national poll that found that many students consider English to be one of the most important subjects in school (Lundahl in Estling Vannestl 2002). The table demonstrates that students consider English to be enjoyable.

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Table 2. Do you have a good command of the English language?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not good at all	36	38%
Good	49	51.5%
Very good	10	10.5%
Total	95	100

As it is indicated in the table 2 above, 51.5 percent of students said they were “good” at English, while 10.5 percent said they were “very good” at English. However, 38% of those polled stated they aren't fluent in the English language. It's noteworthy to compare this to table 1, where 91 percent of students think English is "fun" or "very fun." Although students find English to be enjoyable, they are not fluent in the language.

Table 3. In your opinion, what are the most crucial English skills? (Place 1, 2, 3, and 4 on a scale of 1 to 4)

Response	1		2		3		4	
	Freq	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Fre	%
Listening	4	4%	5	5%	6	6%	53	56
Reading	7	7%	65	68%	19	20%	20	21
Speaking	73	77%	6	6%	9	10%	11	12
Writing	11	12%	19	21%	61	64%	10	11
Total	95	100	95	100	95	100	95	100

As seen in table 3, 77 percent of the students believe that speaking is the most significant English skill. This finding supports Tornberg's assertion that students studying a foreign language believe it is critical to learn how to communicate in the target language (Tornberg 1997:45). Many students clarify their opinions in the personal remarks by mentioning the long run in one technique or another. One of the students, for example, writes:

*“If you speak English fluently, you will do well in other countries. It is critical to be able to communicate with people from diverse countries.”*

*“I guess speaking is the most important element because that is probably what I will use the most as an adult,” comments another youngster.*

These responses show that the students would reflect on the notion that what they learn in school should be applied outside of the classroom in real-life settings. This is in contrast to Tornberg's observation that students tend to link language training with simply what they do in the language classroom (Tornberg 1997:17).

Table 4. What are your thoughts on using English in the classroom?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
I don't like it at all	7	7%
Don't Like at	14	15%
Like it	43	45%
Like it a lot	31	33%
Total	95	100%

As shown in table 4, the majority of pupils are enthusiastic about speaking English in class. 74 percent of the students said they "enjoy it" or "like it a lot." The remaining 7% and 15% of pupils, respectively, say they "don't like it at all." These figures can be compared to the fact that 62% of students claim they are “good” or “very good” at English, and that one of the students who enjoys speaking English in class motivates himself by writing: “Learning to dare to speak English in the classroom is both enjoyable and rewarding.”

“It feels useless to speak English with folks who understand the local language,” writes another student who does not prefer to speak English in the English foreign language classroom.

The latter comment is in line with Ur's (and others') viewpoint on the importance of having a purpose in mind when teaching a foreign language. According to Ur, students in a foreign language classroom often lack a genuine motive to communicate with one another, and as a result, they perceive the language classroom as artificial (Ur 2005:5-6).

Table 5. When communicating orally, how active are you?

	Not so active	Very active	Active	Total
---in your class	N = 46 %=48%	N =23 %=24%	N = 26 %=28%	N = 95 %=100%
---in your group	N =45 %=47%	N = 22 %=23%	N = 28 %=30%	N = 95 %=100%
---in your pair	N = 14 %=15%	N = 42 %=44	N = 39 %=41%	N = 95 %=100%

The findings demonstrate that while teaching oral communication in an English foreign language school, the size of the group is extremely important. When oral communication is practiced in pairs, students indicate they are "extremely active" and "active." Furthermore, in a personal response (related to Question 4) from a student, the opinion concerning the size of the group and the fact that it matters to the students is expressed:

*“It depends on what we usually talk about and the size of the group; I don't like to talk about things in English if the entire class is listening.”*

It is important to note, however, that this outcome does not only reflect the students' willingness to talk in English classes. Obviously, the amount of speaking time available to each student in whole-class discussions is significantly less than in group or pair work.

Table 6. What factors influence how active you are when practicing English oral communication?

	Does not affect	Affects me	Affects me a lot	Total
The pupils in my group	N = 18	N = 49	N = 28	N = 95
If the topic is interesting	N = 21	N = 55	N = 19	N = 95
If a teacher is present	N = 25	N = 52	N = 18	N = 95
If I feel confident in the classroom	N = 18	N = 37	N = 40	N = 95
If the teacher assesses me	N = 22	N = 49	N = 24	N = 95
If I don't know the word in English	N = 34	N = 46	N = 15	N = 95
The size of my group	N = 13	N = 55	N = 27	N = 95

When practicing oral communication in a foreign language, as the table above plainly shows, self-esteem is crucial. The element that influences them the most in the English foreign language classroom, according to 42% of the students, is whether or not they are confident. The size of the group affects 26% of students, whereas the composition of the group affects 28%. These findings support Krahens' Affective Filter Hypothesis, according to which foreign language acquisition can take place "in circumstances where anxiety is low and defensiveness is absent" (Brown 2000: 279). The relevance of feeling safe in one's own home is debatable.



Another element that influences 58 percent of students, according to the results of the survey, is engaging themes. This finding emphasizes the importance of students feeling personally invested in the classroom. The fact that the students know all the appropriate terms while talking in English appears to be the least of their concerns.

Table 7. What should the teacher do to encourage you to speak English more in class?

Responses	Freq	Percentage(%)
Make assignments that are enjoyable.	28	30%
Let's have a discussion in small groups.	23	24%
Be passionate and upbeat.	21	22%
Use topics that I'm interested in.	16	17%
Ask me more questions	7	7%
Total	95	100%

As shown in table 7, 30% of students believe that the teacher should allow students to practice oral communication through entertaining activities. Games that require students to apply their English skills, as well as role-playing, are examples of activities that students offer in class. 24 percent of students believe it is critical that the teacher allow students to practice oral communication in small groups. According to 22% of students, it is critical that the teacher is passionate and encouraging. One student clarifies this by writing:

*"A good English teacher should inspire us and make the classroom a happy place so that you want to and dare to speak."*

*"I believe the teacher should enable us to speak freely on anything that we are interested in," another student claims. "If I am not interested in the issue, I will not speak."*

Table 8. In English classes, how often do you practice oral communication?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not so often	11	11.5%
Often	49	51.5%
Very often	35	37%
Total	95	110%

As seen in table 8, 51.5 percent of students feel they practice oral communication "frequently" or in English classes, whereas 37 percent believe they practice oral communication "very often." The remaining 8% of students said they practice oral communication in English class "not very often." The majority of students, 88.5 percent, believe that oral communication is used frequently in English classes. It can be argued that oral communication is mostly practiced in the English classroom.

#### Results of teachers' interviews

The data collected from interview informants will be discussed in this section, and the names of the informants will be coded anonymously.

*The following are some of the reasons why oral communication is important in the teaching of English as a foreign language:*

When expressing why they believe oral communication is an important aspect of teaching English as a foreign language, all four teachers refer to the curriculum texts.

*“Practicing speech is crucial since the syllabus for English and hence the curriculum say that English teachers should present the children with different assignments where they practice speaking English,” one of the teachers (informant 1) adds.*

When answering this question, it's worth noting that the teachers start with the curriculum documents. This shows that today's teachers are fully aware of the need of adhering to the instructions in curricular papers as an educator.

*“It is crucial that English teachers deal with this to enable the kids to meet the goals about oral communication that are mentioned in the English syllabus,” one teacher (informant 2) said of these objectives. My duty as an English teacher is to make sure that all of my students improve their English skills, and the capacity to communicate verbally is a prerequisite for that.”*

In their responses, two of the teachers (informant 1 and 2) also mention the national English test.

*“English teachers should deal with oral communication to organize pupils for the oral component of the national test of English,” says one teacher (informant 1).*

Another reason why teachers believe that practicing oral communication in English is vital is that it allows students to utilize the target language in a variety of interactive circumstances. All of the teachers believe that listening and conversing with others helps students develop their English skills. This implies that the teachers who took part in this study believe in the communicative instruction environment, which promotes the use of the target language in conversations and other interactive language activities, according to Lightbown & Spada (Lightbown & Spada 1999:70).

One of the teachers says that in addition to practicing their language skills, the students

*“also learn how to conduct an English work discussion even if they don't have the perfect term or expression” (informant 3).*

This viewpoint, shared by all teachers, is consistent with the national English syllabus, which states that English teachers in Ethiopian compulsory schools should strive to help students develop “an all-around communicative ability” and that teachers should encourage students to compensate for their lack of language knowledge “by employing strategies such as reformulating or rephrasing.”

This viewpoint concurs with Brumfit's belief that students in a foreign language classroom should be given several opportunities to practice the language in order to improve their fluency. Students learn the target language by experimenting with the various language systems that they have built, according to Brumfit foreign language (Brumfit in Johnson & Morrow 1986:48).

According to the teachers, another reason why oral communication is vital in the teaching of English is that knowing how to express oneself in English is important in today's world. According to one teacher (informant 4):

*“It is critical that the students improve their oral English communication skills for their own sake and for the sake of their future.”*

This is in line with the English syllabus, which states that English "is the main language of communication throughout the world" and that "English is required for studies, travel to other countries, and different types of social and professional international interactions."

*Factors that lead to orally engaged students in the English foreign language classroom include:*

The teachers stated that one important component that contributes to orally engaged students in English is the students' confidence in the classroom. This is expressed by one of the teachers (informant 1), who says,

*"The keyword is a safe classroom climate." It's critical that they believe in themselves, accept and trust one another, and that they are familiar with me."*

The importance of a safe classroom climate in the creation of a communicative language classroom is obvious. The issue of shy students is mentioned by all of the teachers. Informant 2), one of the teachers, explains:

*"There are a number of students in every class who are really insecure about themselves, and as a result, they are very silent in class, which is quite tough to deal with."*

Another important feature mentioned by the teachers is the presence of motivated and encouraging language teachers. They all emphasize the importance of the teacher's role in assisting students in being orally engaged in the foreign language classroom. Linn, one of the teachers, justifies her point of view by saying:

*"The teacher must motivate, encourage, and support the students."*

*"The teacher should endeavor to help them embrace one another and believe in themselves and their ability," another teacher (informant 4) comments.*

All teachers emphasize their role in encouraging shy students to speak up in the foreign language classroom.

*"It is my obligation to create settings where shy children can exhibit what they can do," one teacher (informant 1) says. For example, smaller groups. I have to pull them away and talk to them alone on occasion."*

Teachers' views on a safe classroom climate and students' self-esteem can be linked to one of Stephen Krashen's five hypotheses, The Affective Filter Hypothesis, which says that foreign language acquisition occurs "in circumstances where anxiety is low and defensiveness is absent" (Brown 2000: 279).

Another factor emphasized by all three professors is the significance of allowing students to practice oral communication in small groups, as well as the requirement for shy students to practice oral communication with classmates with whom they are familiar.

*"It's terrible for the shy children since they don't get to exhibit what they can do," one instructor (informant 4) comments. I make every effort to pair shy students with someone with whom they feel comfortable. If people feel safe, they will communicate more."*

Despite the fact that the teachers emphasize the importance of small groups, they admit in their responses that they are not always easy to organize. According to one teacher (informant 1):

*“I'd want to work with oral communication in smaller groups; all students, especially the shy ones, gain from it. Because I have so many students in each session, it's difficult to develop oral communication. It would have been fantastic if I could have sat and talked to one or two students at a time.”*

Furthermore, the teachers state that an important aspect that contributes to orally active students in the English foreign language classroom is the motivation of the students. When they answer this, the teachers often mention another important factor: the significance of employing relevant assignments that are engaging for the students.

One of the teachers (informant 4) goes on to explain further:

*“The task at hand is really important. The students must find the speaking scenario intriguing and meaningful. They must be able to choose what they want to talk about so that they are not compelled to talk about something they are not interested in.” “Teenagers are often bored,” adds another teacher (informant 2). Teachers must devise enjoyable and varied assignments that are relevant to the students.”*

According to two of the teachers (informant 1, informant 4), one of the reasons it is difficult to persuade all students to participate actively verbally is the difficulty in creating authentic conversational circumstances in the English foreign language classroom. One of the teachers (informant 4) explains why she holds the beliefs she does:

*“I believe the most prevalent reason why it is difficult to encourage students to freely express themselves in English is because the scenario is not real.”*

*She goes on to state, “The natural method for them to communicate is after all Amaharic, and they have to use English as long as I'm there, but once I'm gone, many of the children begin to speak other languages instead.”*

*“One negative element is that the dialogues between the pupils or between me and the pupils are constantly artificial away,” another instructor (informant 3) expresses his or her perspective. The students never talk to each other or address me in a casual conversational setting. Sure, it becomes more spontaneous in some ways, but everyone recognizes that it is far from authentic.”*

These views agree with Ur's assessment that the most difficult task for foreign language teachers is to encourage students to participate actively in dialogues in which they can freely express themselves. According to Ur, one reason this could be difficult is since, like the lecturers in this class. The teachers' perspectives on meaningful learning are similar to Ausubel's. Different aspects of a language, according to Ausubel, should not be learned individually. Rather, learning a foreign language should be done through a variety of activities that include meaningful dialogue (in Brown 2000: 61-63).

Furthermore, the instructors' observations on the non-authenticity of the communicative situation can be linked to Granath & Estling Vannestl's views on the increased use of the Internet in foreign language instruction. According to Granath & Estling Vannestl (2008), language teachers can allow foreign language students to utilize the Internet to communicate with students in other countries via e-mail, discussion forums, chatting, instant messaging, or net-based telephone. This could be one method of motivating students in language classes.

The teachers also emphasize the importance of personal engagement in the students' motivation. They must demonstrate a genuine enthusiasm in studying English, according to the teachers.

*“The students must participate actively and not just say something when they are sure,” one instructor (informant 4) comments. Students should pay close attention to their homework and make the most of every opportunity.”*

In fact, all of the teachers agree that speaking English is enjoyable for the majority of students, and that the majority of students consider this aspect of English instruction is critical.

*“Most of them appreciate speaking English,” adds one teacher (informant 2). Many of them, I believe, believe that is their strongest suit. They come into contact with spoken English through the computer and put it to good use. But, of course, there will always be a few who are unwilling to learn.”*

This viewpoint is similar to that of Granath & Estling Vannestl (2008), who discuss Internet communication in the foreign language classroom.

## **Discussion**

The findings showed that data gained from the EFL teachers and students through questionnaires, interviews, and informal dialogue regarding attitudes and practices of oral communication in English classroom. The data also showed that the challenges that the teachers faced during the implementations of oral communication in classroom. Regarding teachers' practice of toward oral communication, that data obtained using questionnaire contradicts with the data collected through informal dialogue. According to the quantitative data, EFL students and teachers have positive attitude toward the practice of oral communication in. Based on the findings, oral communication is a crucial aspect of teaching English as a foreign language to the majority of teachers and students. This result agreed with the previous studies (Lundahl in Estling Vannestl 2002; Tornberg 1997:45; Lightbown & Spada 1999:70).

Nevertheless, in light of the qualitative data, teachers say it is difficult to assess students' ability to express themselves orally in English. They claimed it was harder than anything they'd ever tried in an English foreign language class. One reason for this is a lack of time, and another is that oral communication is not evaluated as thoroughly as other projects. The result of the oral description demonstrates that that participant teachers have less awareness of the oral communication practice. This result confirms the findings of the previous studies (Ur (2005); Granath & Estling Vannestl (2008); Brown 2000; Brumfit in Johnson & Morrow 1986). The findings of both the qualitative and quantitative information agree with and ascertain the previous works and observations on attitude and practice of oral communication in English, speaking in classroom, and implementation preferences by Lundahl in Estling Vannestl 2002, Tornberg 1997:45; Anto, Coenders & Voogt (2012), Piccolo (2010), Littlewood (1992), Chang & Goswami, (2011), and Masgoret and Gardner (2003).

The results of the present study are in line with that of Littlewood (1992) work that displayed the extent to which higher schools English language speaking skills teachers' preference of oral communication skills, yet he hadn't assessed the attitude and practice toward oral communications separately. Besides this, Littlewood (1992) found that both teacher and students opted their old traditions, beliefs, and priorities and collaboratively work to create a richer context

of developing oral communication in the class. The results of the study reveals that self-esteem, a safe classroom environment, small groups, group members, intriguing subjects, engaging tasks, and passionate and supportive teachers, according to students, are all crucial traits that lead to orally active students in the English foreign language classroom.

This implies that described in the previous studies; views agree with Ur's(2005) assessment that the most difficult task for foreign language teachers is to encourage students to participate actively in dialogues in which they can freely express themselves. Learning a foreign language should be done through a variety of activities that include meaningful dialogue (in Brown 2000) Concerning the oral communication preference, teachers are doubtful to oral communication techniques in English classrooms. This confirms the studies of Ur (2005);Granath & Estling Vannestl (2008); Brown 2000 that have indicated that plenty of teachers and students don't have the skill and awaressnes towards for classroom oral communication; they prefer content- based teaching. Besides, Tornberg 1997:45; Atkins, Hailom and Nuru (1996),Piccolo (2010), Littlewood(1992),and Masgoret and Gardner (2003) concluded that language teachers are not good enough in the implementation oral communication practice in the classrooms; they lack pieces of training. As the Brown (2000) indicated, the perception of of the EFL students and teachers about the practice of classroom's oral communication is somewhat scanty. As a result language teachers are unable to implement the demand of curriculum for teaching the English language. However, as to the students who participated in this study, oral communication is an important element of their English education since it teaches them how to speak English fluently, which they believe they will need in the future. They also believe that practicing verbal communication allows them to learn from one another, which is motivating.

## Conclusion

The overall purpose of this research was to find out how Ethiopian 10th grade English teachers and students felt about spoken communication in the classroom. Investigators wanted to know why they believe oral communication is such a vital part of English teaching and what characteristics they believe contribute to pupils being vocally active in English foreign language classes.

Based on the findings, oral communication is a crucial aspect of teaching English as a foreign language to the majority of teachers and students. Oral communication is important, according to teachers, since it allows children to use the target language often. Teachers also believe that practicing oral communication is important since it should be included in Ethiopian students' English education.

As per the teachers, students' self-esteem, a safe classroom environment, passionate and supportive teachers, meaningful assignments, small groups, and student motivation all contribute to orally-active pupils in the English foreign language classroom. Furthermore, teachers say it is difficult to assess students' ability to express themselves orally in English. They claimed it was harder than anything they'd ever tried in an English foreign language class. One reason for this is a lack of time, and another is that oral communication is not evaluated as thoroughly as other projects.

According to the students who participated in this study, oral communication is an important element of their English education since it teaches them how to speak English fluently, which they believe they will need in the future. They also believe that practicing verbal communication allows them to learn from one another, which is motivating. Self-esteem, a safe classroom environment, small groups, group members, intriguing subjects, engaging tasks, and

passionate and supportive teachers, according to students, are all crucial traits that lead to orally active students in the English foreign language classroom.

Furthermore, the degree to which the English teachers who took part in this survey agreed on their comments was not surprising. The fact that the teachers all came from similar backgrounds could have influenced the results. The investigators' decision to interview the teachers was a good one because they wanted to learn about their perspectives.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings.

- To help students improve their speaking abilities, EFL teachers should create a warm and friendly environment in the classroom.
- Teachers of English as a second language (ESL) students should design tasks that encourage pupils to practice speaking in real-life circumstances.
- Teachers should commit to being role models for their pupils and encouraging them to speak English both in and out of the classroom.
- During speaking class, teachers should discourage students from using their native language (local language) and encourage them to use English instead.
- Finally, it is hoped that the findings of this study would inspire other researchers to look into similar or related subjects; as a result, additional research is needed to acquire a better understanding of the factors that influence oral communication attitudes in English classes

### Declaration of conflicting interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in this work.

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