

STUDENTS' LACONIC EXPRESSION IN ENGLISH

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This study centered on the weaknesses of public school students in English speaking skill. It aimed at exploring the causes and effects of students' laconic expression in English. For this purpose, I selected six students of Grade 10 and an English teacher from Shree Adarsha Sharal Secondary School, Lalitpur. Interpretive inquiry of the qualitative research method was employed to carry out the study. In-depth, open-ended interviews, direct observations and written documents were used as the tools of collecting data. The data were analyzed by categorizing them under different themes. The analysis of the data have led me to come to conclusion that less practice, hesitation and less exposure are the main reasons behind the students' laconic expression in English. The finding also shows that laconic expression in English has negative effects on the study as well as on career of the students. The findings of the study imply that more practice in speaking English, removal of hesitation and more exposure help students in developing the speaking skill in English.

September 29, 2014

Arjun Kumar Kharel

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research paper has not been submitted for any other degree.

September 29, 2014

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STUDENTS' LACONIC EXPRESSION IN ENGLISH

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I understand my research paper will become part of the collection of Kathmandu University library. My signature below authorizes release of the research paper to any reader upon request for scholarly purpose.

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STUDENTS' LACONIC EXPRESSION IN ENGLISH

Introduction

English is an international language, spoken all over the world. Fifty years ago, there were a very limited number of English knowing people in Nepal. Those who knew English were considered highly learned persons. Now, many children are learning it. Thousands of English medium schools have been set up and are being set up. In this connection, Shrestha (2012) writes:

As the second most important language in Nepal, English is extremely used in education system from the primary level up to tertiary level. It is widely used in various professions such as medical science, engineering, law and business. Therefore, it is very crucial for Nepalese students to be proficient in English so that they can use the language efficiently for academic purpose and later in professional setting (p.10).

Before implementing the new curriculum in the secondary level in 2057 B.S., four skills of language – reading, writing, speaking and listening – were taught in integrated form without separate teaching and testing. English teachers were teaching the four skills of the English language without planning, and students were learning together in the integrated form. When the new curriculum of English was introduced in 2057 B.S., the four skills were specified with mark allocation, credit hours, teaching and testing in the specification grid. It shows that the four skills have equal importance for overall development of the English language.

I have been teaching English in the secondary level for the past 15 years. I have not conducted different activities to teach the four language skills. As an English teacher, I found most of the students weak in speaking. It aroused my interest to study

English speaking skills of the students in other community schools as well. I chose 'Students' Laconic Expression in English' as the topic of my study. To find out real causes and problems, I selected Adarsha Sharal Secondary School, a community school located in Lalitpur-22. I also selected 16 students of Grade 10 and an English teacher from school. I used probability-sampling method in order to collect data.

Kerling (1983) states, "...random sampling is that method of drawing a portion of a population or universe so that each number at the population has an equal chance of being selected"(p.18). The reason behind applying this sampling method in my study was that the students having different abilities could have equal participation and the research result would have validity and reliability.

Laconic expression in English means using limited English words in formal or informal conversations. I hope this study leads to explore problems and provide some feedbacks to enhance English speaking. It would be beneficial to students, teachers and other concerned stakeholders.

Statement of the Problem

All the secondary level English teachers have been helping students to enhance the speaking skill. With an objective to improving speaking English, different training sessions have been conducted by National Centre for Educational Development (NCED), Education Training Centre and Resource Center Hubs. Most of the English teachers have participated in such training sessions, but they have not borne any fruit since the skills and knowledge of the teachers have not been well-transformed in the classroom. In this connection, Subedi (2009) writes:

During last 15 years, horizons of teaching learning English seem to be widened. Students are not only taught written language but also given practices in carefully listening examples of spoken English. The present curriculum is trying to include

extracts from the text of authentic conversations, radio broadcasts, poems and so on, not simply to utter written language sentences. Nepali students are learning English as a compulsory subject from the starting of their schooling. During the departure from their school level education, they are expected to communicate fluently and appropriately in a variety of formal and informal situations with the structural and lexical level of secondary level curriculum. Even if students receive good marks in English, it does not mean that the students' oral proficiency has achieved a certain level of competency. When they have to perform their competency in real life, they seem to fail to meet the expectations of the course objectives (p.10).

The researcher has proposed to make these problems an issue for further investigation as a part of the academic discourse in School of Education, Kathmandu University. A single statement of the problem is diverged to govern the entire study such as: Why do students use laconic expression in English? Are the teachers using outcome of the training thoroughly in the classroom? Who are more responsible for this cause? What is the shortcoming of this situation? What are the causes of such shortcomings and ineffectiveness? What perceptions do the teachers have towards this skill? The present study has tried to find out answers of these questions.

Purpose of the Study

This study is primarily aimed at exploring weaknesses of students in English speaking skills. It has two purposes. One is to explore the causes of the weaknesses in English speaking skill and the other is to find out the subsequent effects.

Research Questions

The research questions indicate the purpose and motive of the researcher. It is linked to all of the other components of the study. Thus based on the scope of the

study, the researcher has formulated the following research questions to explore the proposed issues:

- a. Why do students have laconic expression in English?
- b. How has their study been affected by such laconic feelings?
- c. What are the ways of making spoken English more effective?

Significance of the Study

The issues about students' laconic expression in English are dealt with a great importance in teaching and learning the speaking skill. The need of the study came to the mind of the researcher as a personal interest and due to professional obligations. The study is concerned with the enhancement of speaking English through involvement of both students and teachers.

The finding of this study is useful for those who are working in educational institutions as English teachers. The study also helps in making teaching and learning activities of the English speaking skill more effective. It is useful for prospective researchers who want to undertake researches on the related topic. As the study is focused on students' spoken English, problems related to the teaching and learning of the speaking skill and the ways to improve them in real life situation, it equally helps English teachers, students and language teaching policy makers (English curriculum designers) alike. Further, it is equally beneficial to English language teacher trainers and training institutions. Moreover, people who are directly or indirectly involved in the English teaching profession will be benefited from this study.

Literature Review

Literature review is a set of published sources in an area of study and within a particular timeframe. In a wide sense, a literature review is simply an abstract of ideas and thoughts based on other reference materials. The main purpose of this study is to

enhance the level of knowledge of the students in speaking English. The theme of my study emerged from my own personal experience of teaching and learning activities in English language teaching classrooms. I found students of public schools poor in English. The study has two purposes. One is to explore the causes of the weaknesses in English speaking skill and the other is to find out the subsequent effects.

In order to find out the thematic criteria of teaching speaking English strategies, I went through different books on approaches and principles related to teaching the speaking skill. Language teaching is generally defined as a means of communication. Speaking is a very complex skill that refers to the ability to express inner thoughts, feelings and emotions through speech with accuracy and fluency to convey a message. Harmer (2007) writes:

Good speaking activities can and should be extremely engaging for the students. If they are all participating fully and if the teacher has set up the activities properly and can then give sympathetic and useful feedback –they will get tremendous satisfaction from it (p.123).

Students' Laconic Expression in English

Laconic expression in English means using few English words in formal and informal conversations. In other words, the phrase refers to less use of English. Students' hesitation to communicate appropriately in English in a variety of formal and informal situations comes under the theme. It also refers to as students' inability to effectively engage in group discussions, share ideas, argue a point of view, narrate a sequence of events, describe an object or a process, and convey a message. Merriam Webster Dictionary (2005) defines laconic as brief and to the point, effectively cut short, or a crisp retort. It is short and terse, and easy to understand.

The impact of using less English is serious. It affects the learners' knowledge of pronunciation, appropriate use of English language, fluency, grammatical correctness and so on. Students will not be able to meet the specific objectives of speaking skill in English subject in the secondary level. It affects the marks in English in SLC examinations because English curriculum has allocated 15% marks to the speaking skill. It has a long-term effect in a student's career.

Making Spoken English Better

The following methods and techniques can be used to make spoken English better:

- Enrich the vocabulary of students.
- Create good environment for English exposure.
- Motivate the students.
- Use enough teaching materials while teaching speaking.
- Conduct group works and pair works in the classroom.
- Use student-centered approach in teaching.
- Reduce students' hesitation in speaking English.

According to Be are (2005), the following is a list of tips to improve the speaking skill in English:

1. Be patient with yourself. It takes a while to learn how to speak English well. Remember to give yourself time and treat yourself well.
2. If you want to improve the listening skill, just listen to the radio fifteen minutes rather than an hour.
3. Make mistakes, make more mistakes and continue to make mistakes. The only way you will learn is by making mistakes. Feel free to make them and make them often.

4. Learn how to speak English about the things you like doing. If you enjoy speaking about the topic, it will be much easier for you to learn how to speak English well in a shorter amount of time.

Beare (2005) further claims that we need patience, time, and willingness to make mistakes; we need friends to speak English with, and books or internet resources in English. The researcher has long tried to develop English speaking skills through extensive practice of speaking with self and with others.

Secondary English Curriculum

I went through the secondary level English curriculum prepared by the Curriculum Development Centre. Our national policy has accepted English as international language. In the English curriculum of Grade 9 and 10, the Curriculum Development Centre (2003) mentions that English has been taken as a vital tool for any students who become successful in local, national and international communication since it is also one major world language. English is taught as a foreign language in all schools of Nepal starting from Grade One to Grade 12. It is also taught as a compulsory subject up to bachelor level in different universities of the countries.

In the past, listening and speaking skills were totally ignored in the English curriculum in Nepal. Even at present, the government has given much priority to reading and writing, which carry 75 percent weight age in the SLC exam. On the other hand, listening and speaking tests carry only 25 percent in the SLC examination, with 10 percent marks for listening and 15 percent for speaking. Teachers also give less priority to listening and speaking in the classroom. They say nobody fails in the listening and speaking tests. In comparison to reading and writing, listening and

speaking skills seem neglected. I think these are the main reasons behind the students' laconic expression in English in the secondary level.

Previous Studies

A number of studies have been carried out on the issues related to developing the speaking skill. Some of the studies have been mentioned in the subsequent sections.

Shrestha (2007) carried out a research on Students' Weakness in English Speaking and found that very rare use of teaching materials in the classroom by teachers, weak foundation of students in the lower secondary level, and lack of the use of English in communication between teachers and students were the main causes of students' weakness in English speaking. To overcome those problems, the study suggests that students need to be provided with conducive atmosphere on the school premises; English-speaking environment should be created; teachers need to use teaching materials in the classroom; and more priority should be given to the speaking skill from the primary level.

Similarly, According to Adhikari (2005), some problems with speaking English are: inhibition, no motivation to speak, low or uneven participation, mother tongue use, etc. He has suggested that the teacher should make a careful choice of the topic, stimulate students' interest, give some instructions and training in discussion skill, use easy language, keep students speaking the target language, and specify limited task in order to solve the problems of speaking activities.

Subedi (2009) found that most of the Grade 10 students are not proficient in speaking skill. There are some reasons: less emphasis given to teaching speaking skill, lack of sufficient exposure, maximum use of mother tongue, lack of communicative activities, no implication of communicative method of teaching, no use of teaching

materials, untrained teachers, examination-oriented teaching learning system, and lack of subject teachers.

Adhikari (2009) revealed that drama class was conducted in a traditional way. The data collected through the questionnaire, interviews and classroom observations showed that the traditional approach was mainly used and communicative approach was not a common approach to teach drama.

Likewise, Oli (2003) found that students from both urban and rural areas were less proficient in speaking English, compared to reading and writing. However, the urban students were better in speaking than the rural ones.

Basnet (2009) has tried to find out the use of different techniques to teach speaking skill in language classrooms. He found that 60% of the English language teachers used the classroom techniques like discussion, role play, dialogue, picture, drills, and topic elaboration.

Pandey (2007) has found that group work, pair work, and discussion are commonly used techniques in teaching speaking.

Pokharel (2000) found that inductive method was more effective than deductive one for teaching communicative functions of English.

Likewise, Chaulagain (2009) has concluded that the success of the communicative classroom depends not only on the teachers, but also on students. The size of the classroom plays even more important role. He found that lack of teaching materials and lack of time to prepare teaching material were the main obstacles in conducting communicative activities in the classroom teaching.

All the researches mentioned above were related to the problems with the secondary level students in speaking English. The main reasons of poor performance in speaking English mentioned in the above researches are: less emphasis on teaching

the speaking skill, lack of sufficient exposure, maximum use of mother tongue, and no use of communicative activities in the classroom. The literature helps my research by providing me with additional support. They have helped me make my research strong.

The Research Gap

I found that all the related literature came to more or less similar conclusions. For instance, they have come to conclusion that there was lack of speaking practice in public schools. Similarly, the learners of private schools have more proficiency than the public schools. Likewise, the learners of urban areas have more English language proficiency in comparison to rural areas. The government policy has emphasized on reading and writing, which carry 75 percent weight age in the SLC examinations, whereas listening and speaking cover only 25 percent. Though the researches were carried out in the field of speaking skill, I found a gap prevailing in those researches. Though I cannot claim that my research can be completely innovative, I claim that it is quite different from the previous researches. The present research is similar to the previous studies in that all the studies are concerned with the speaking skill, the most important skill in learning a foreign language. The gap is that the other researches focused on developing speaking skill in students by finding out the learning problems, whereas the present research is mainly concerned with the performance level of students in speaking English.

Research Methodology

Ontological and epistemological positions provide fundamental aspects of research as they answer the philosophical questions what counts as reality and how beings come into being as well as what constitutes knowledge and how knowledge comes to be established. In this study, non-positivist ontology is relevant because direct and observable events of the students are depicted. The non-positivist ontology

deals with the subjective reality. The research was carried out with the belief of multiple realities. Knowledge was gained by gathering information in a systematic way and individual differences were given values in this study. I respected the participants' views. They were the source of my first-hand data. Their opinions and thoughts were the base of evidences. Therefore, they were the real source.

Research Method

It is a qualitative research. The case study – one of the qualitative research methods – was applied in this research. According to Young (1998), it is a comprehensive study of a social unit – be that unit a person, a group, a social institution, a district or a community (p.247). In this study, information was collected through interviews, direct observations and field notes. The main purpose of this study was to analyze the situation, phenomenon, problem and event. The study is more verbal than numerical. Generally, in qualitative research, the following methods are used for data collection:

- In-depth and open-ended interviews,
- Direct observation, and
- Written documents

Qualitative research is concerned with collection and analysis of information in as many details as possible. Even small numbers or examples are considered important, for they bear some meaning. The study believes in depth rather than breadth. It argues that human knowledge cannot be reduced to numbers nor can it be statistically measured. Social world is the creation of social actors' construction, and hence interaction with actors is essential to understand it. Human behavior can be understood only by understanding the meaning and purposes activities of human actors.

Why did I use qualitative method? Was there a special need for such an approach in the current situation? I will discuss why interest in qualitative research has been growing so much in the last decades. Qualitative research is of specific relevance to the study of social relations owing to its premise of pluralization. Yin (2014) defines a case study approach to research as follows:

There is no formula, but your choice depends in large part on your research question (s). The more that your questions seek to explain some present circumstance (e.g. how or why some social phenomenon works), the more that case study research will be relevant. The method is also relevant more that your questions require an extensive and 'in-depth' description of some social phenomenon (p. 4).

Qualitative research involves the use and collection of a variety of empirical materials case study, personal experience, introspection, life story, interview, artifacts and cultural texts and productions, along with observational, historical, interactional and visual texts that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals lives. Accordingly, qualitative research deploys a wide range of interconnected interpretive practices hoping always to get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand. It is understood, however, that even practice makes the world visible in a different way. Hence, there is frequently a commitment to using more than one interpretive practice in any study.

Research Design

Shree Aadarsha Sharal Secondary School, situated in Lalitpur-22 is the site of this research. The researcher selected six students from Class 10 and an English teacher. Among 15 students from Class 10, I selected only six because they would represent high, middle and low ability learners. They also represented males and females. It was the purposive sampling.

Class	Male Students	Female Students	Ability	Total
10	2	4	S1= H S2= L S3= M S4= H S5= L S6= M	6
Teacher: Secondary Level English Teacher				1
Total participants				7

H= High ability

M = Middle ability

L = Low ability

As the sampling was purposive, I selected students representing three ability groups based on their performance in the term test. For this purpose, I consulted with the school authority, the headmaster and the class teacher. I went through the first terminal result. According to the result of the first terminal examinations, S1 and S4 represented the high ability, S3 and S6 represented middle ability, and S2 and S5 represented low ability. In my first visit to the 15 students, I simply talked to them; I tried to examine the level of all the students. I found the same level – high, middle and low abilities– in the six participants.

Data Collection Tools and Techniques

Data are facts that exist in different forms. The data are found either in quantitative or in qualitative form. The precise way of getting these data and information is technique of data collection. For this, deferent tools such as questionnaires, interviews, observations, and checklists can be used. As a research of this case study, I developed interview guidelines, questions and used them. I also collected information through observation. Ker linger (1983) says, "The interview is a

face to face interpersonal role situation in which one person, the interviewer, asks a person being interviewed, the respondent, question designed to obtain answer pertinent to the research problem" (p.214). Young(1998) states, "Observation may be defined as a systematic viewing coupled with consideration of seen phenomenon"(p. 161).

In my study, interview was taken with some students and an English teacher of the school. I observed the students' situation by giving a topic for conversation.

Data Collection Procedure

As I have mentioned earlier, for the data collection of my research, I selected a nearby community school – Shree Adarsha Sharal Secondary School, Lalitpur. I selected six students from Grade 10 and one secondary level English teacher for data collection. As the school was closed for summer vacation, I had to wait for 10 days to start field study. Soon after the school resumed, I visited the school and met the head teacher for permission to conduct the research. After getting permission from the head teacher, I visited my participants (all class 10 students and the English teacher). Among the 15 students of Class 10, I selected six students – four girls and two boys – and I started my research work. I requested them to participate in this research study. Similarly, in the second day, I requested them to plan a schedule for interview and class observation as per their convenience.

As per the plan, I went to the school with two sets of questions for interviews with the students and the teacher, one classroom observation form and recording devices such as a voice recorder and a mobile phone, and a notebook for writing important activities in the classroom. I interviewed three students in my second visit to the field, and the other three in the third visit. In the fourth visit, I took interview with the teacher. I did three class observations in three separate days in the 7th periods.

Thus, I completed collecting data of my research within a week from the day I began the fieldwork. While going through the process of data collection, I did not face any difficulty as such.

Data Analysis Procedure

Data processing procedure is the succeeding stage of the data collection. Processing includes technical steps: editing, codification, classification, and tabulation – that make data appropriate for analyzing. Before editing the data, we have to consider following things: a) completeness of data, b) accuracy of data, c) uniformity of data and d) consistency of data. In this study, the researcher used three tools of data collection: interview, observation and reflective memo. Whatever I collected in the field using the three tools, I translated them into a written form. The data from the observation and the field memo were rearranged and finalized. I collected the qualitative data. I used the inductive method for processing the data.

Trustworthiness

The term trustworthiness refers to sincerity and honesty in research. It is more related to ethics of research. It specially applies between the researcher and the participants. The researcher's role is more important to maintain trustworthiness in research because the participants become ready to give real information only when they have trust on the research.

Guba and Lincoln (1989) demonstrate that a disciplined inquiry process must be publicly acceptable and open to judgments about the 'compression and rearrangement processes involved.

In my research, I have tried to maintain trustworthiness with my research participants, developing good and honest behavior. I assured them that there would not be any fraud and negligence. I gave my total attention to their social mechanisms

and their ideas. I tried my best to establish good and friendly relationship between me and my participants in the research field and tried to dig out in-depth information to make my research trustworthy.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues are serious aspects in the research work. Wolf and Patna (2005) state: "Ethics are moral principles or beliefs about what is right or wrong." These beliefs guide researchers in their dealing with their respondents and other related parties and provide a basis for deciding whether their behavior is right or proper.

In my study, I requested the respondents to speak freely. I did not force them to disclose their personal identities. I assured them that the study would not harm them in any way.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

To come out with answers to my research questions, I interviewed six students of Grade 10 and a secondary level English teacher. I did three class observations. For this, I visited the site, and fixed the schedule, in consultation with my participants, for interviews and class observations in the real classroom situation. In order to collect data, I recorded the interviews with the help of a voice recorder and made notes of the observations. Later, I transcribed the audio recording of the interviews. As some of the participants responded in Nepali during the interview, I translated them into English. I read the transcribed and translated texts. After that, I did the decoding of the data, and finally I ensured accuracy of the data by rereading.

I observed three classroom activities, which helped me to triangulate the data obtained from the interviews. Going through the data, I developed three major themes. These themes helped me accomplish the objectives of my study. The thematic interpretation is as follows:

Theme 1: Reasons behind Laconic Expression

Laconic expression is what is often thought but never so well-expressed. It means we have many ideas in our mind but we cannot express them well through language. Students cannot express their ideas and feelings in English though they do have a lot in their minds. It is rather changeling. In comparison to private school students, it is more difficult and challenging to the learners of public schools. My experience of teaching in both private and public schools suggests that students of public schools express less in English than do the students in private schools. Under this main theme, I identified three sub-themes as follows:

Practice

I asked my participants – six students of Class 10 and an English teacher – some questions pertinent to this sub-theme. When I asked first question to S1, she said that she felt better; she understood her teacher while teaching speaking skill and she did not have any problem. To my next question, she said that the teacher did not use any language games and other techniques, except pair work and group work activities. Similarly, when I asked first question to the S2, he answered with frequent pauses that the teacher did not use any language games and new techniques while teaching English speaking skills. As I went through the next question, he expressed a feeling of hesitation because of less practice. Likewise, answering the same question, S3 said that she was not so much interested in English speaking class. To my next question, she responded that the teacher did not use language games and other techniques while teaching speaking, except group work activities. In response to my next question, she answered that she felt nervous while speaking English because of less practice.

Similarly, when I asked the question to S4, he said that he felt good and interested, and there was no problem about speaking English. In response to my third

question, he said that the teacher used dramas, pair works and group works but he did not use language games and other techniques. As I went through the next question, he said that he felt uneasy because of less practice in the classroom and home as well. I asked him, "What are the reasons of your hesitation in speaking English?" He answered that less practice and lack of teacher's motivation were the reasons. In response to my next question, he responded that he felt a little bit nervous because he stammered while speaking English. In response to my first question, S5 said English class was not interesting. Answering the next question, she said she understood a little but not completely because of less practice. In my third question, she said that the teacher used dramas, pair work and group work activities, but he did not use language games and other techniques. To my question, 'Do you feel uneasy while speaking English?', she answered that she felt uneasy speaking English because of less practice in the class and at home. To my next question, she responded that the main reason for hesitation was to have less time English subject at home. When I asked her the last question, she answered that she felt nervous while speaking English because she never asked questions to the teacher in the class. S6 responded to my first question that she liked English but sometimes she did not understand because she did not speak English. In response to my next question, she answered that the teacher used dramas, pair works and group works but he did not use language games and other techniques. I asked her, "Do you feel uneasy while speaking English?" She said that she felt uneasy because she did not have enough vocabulary practice. To my last question, she responded that she did not speak English at home and even in school.

As I went through the first question to the teacher, he answered that he mainly focused on writing and reading rather than on speaking in the classroom. I asked him another question, "Do you let your students practice speaking English?" He replied

that sometimes he let them play different roles and sometimes he only asked short questions. When I analyzed my three class observation data, I found there that the teacher rarely conducted teaching learning activities while teaching speaking. His teaching was traditional and teacher- centered rather than students-centered, which does not give students room for practice. He did not use group work, pair work, language games and other techniques in the classroom. So from the students' interviews, the teacher's interview and the three classroom observations, I came to the conclusion that less practice is one of the main causes of students' laconic expression in English.

Hesitation

The responses of the students and the teacher, during data collection, helped me developed this sub-theme. To my first question, S1 said that she felt better and happy to learn English. I asked her, "What are the reasons for your hesitation in speaking English?"She responded that sometimes she felt hesitation because she thought that she might be grammatically wrong. Likewise, as I asked the first question to S2, he said with pauses that he liked the English class. Responding to whether his teacher used other materials in speaking class, he paused for about 5 seconds and said he sometimes used drama, but he never used language games and other techniques. In response to my next question, he answered that he felt a little uneasy because he thought that there might be grammatical mistakes. When I asked, "What are the reasons of your hesitation in speaking English?", he said he felt hesitation because he did not have more practice. In response to another question, he said he would be nervous and stammer while speaking English. Answering the first question, S3 said she felt a little bit uneasy because she did not know new words and their meanings. I asked her, "What are the reasons of your hesitation in speaking English?"She

answered that she would hesitate because she thought there might be mistakes in her expressions. To my next question, she said she felt nervous because the teacher asked question seven when she was speaking English.

In response to my first question, S4 said he felt good and there would be no problem in speaking English. When I asked him the reasons of his hesitation in speaking English, he responded that he would hesitate and the main reasons were: less practice, lack of teacher's motivation and good teaching. In my next question, he answered that he felt a little bit nervous because he stammered while speaking English. When I asked the first question to S5, she responded that English period was not so much interesting and it was a difficult for most of the students. In response to my next question, she responded that the main reasons of the hesitation were: she did not understand what the teacher taught at all and she did not give much time to the English subject. As I asked the first question to S6, she answered that English subject was interesting but sometimes she stammered while speaking. In response to the second question, she answered that she did not understand at all and she did not ask any question to the teacher because she thought there might be mistake in her English expressions.

When I went through the interview with the teacher and asked what the perception of his students towards the spoken English was, he responded that they were very poor in English and they would hesitate to speak English. In response to my next question, "What are the main problems you are facing in teaching speaking English to your students?", he responded that the main problem was that they hesitated to speak English. When I went through the three class observations, I found that the teacher asked the students to speak by giving the situation, but the students did not venture to speak. All the data collected through the interviews and the three

class observations verified that hesitation is one of the main causes of students' laconic expression in English.

Exposure

Most of the students in the research site used their mother tongue (Nepali) even in the English classroom. Not only this, the English teacher also used Nepali as a medium of classroom instruction to teach English. There was lack of teachers who could fluently speak English. Students had no access to other resources, videos, television and talk with native speakers. They had the teacher as the main source of exposure. Irony was that the teacher would use his mother tongue as the medium of classroom instruction even in the English class.

During data collection, I asked questions to the respondents, but they replied in Nepali. I have mentioned above in the data analysis and interpretation, I translated the Nepali version data into English. Students did not respond in English with even a complete sentence. They were very poor in listening and speaking English. When I asked them whether their teacher used other teaching materials in speaking classes, they responded that he sometimes used pair work, group work and drama activities, but he did not use language games and other technique. It also shows that students are not getting much exposure from teachers. Similarly when I asked them, "Why do you feel uneasy and hesitation while speaking English?", they responded that they did not speak English with their friends at school and they did not have such environment in their family and at home. Similarly, when I asked the teacher what were the major problems he was facing in teaching speaking skill, he answered that students felt hesitation and they did not have much exposure in English. From the class observation, I found that the teacher did not create good environment for English exposure and the students did not try to be exposed. From the analysis of the above

data, I came to know that less exposure is one of the causes of students' laconic expressions in English.

From the above account, it can be said that less practice, students' hesitation, less exposure, poor vocabulary, no use of modern methods and techniques in the classroom, nervousness, less participation of the students in classroom activities, and uneasy feeling of students while speaking English are the important factors for the laconic expression in English. As I went through the data from the student's interview, teacher's interview and class observation, I found that less practice, hesitation, less exposure, and nervousness are the main reasons behind students' laconic expression. Besides, traditional method of teaching which is more teacher-centered, and where there is low motivation and uneven participation of the learners in the teaching learning activities is also a reason for students' laconic expression, especially in the context of public schools. However, some students like S1 and S3 have little problem in speaking English.

Theme 2: Effects of Laconic Expression

The title of my study – Students' Laconic Expression in English – is concerned with speaking skill in English. Speaking skill refers to ability to express orally. Speaking is essential for communication as it helps to share ideas, thoughts, feelings and emotions with other people. If students lag behind in this skill, it affects on their study and future career. To find out the effects of student' laconic expression, I collected data from teacher's interview and I connected it with secondary level English curriculum. I did not go through students' interview for this research question because when I asked this question to the students, they did not speak at all. When they were supposed to share something in the interview, they all remained silent as if they were dumb and could express nothing in English.

When I asked the teacher what the effect of laconic expression or poor speaking English in students' studies was, he said that if students' speaking was not good, it would really affect them a lot in their studies. It would make them poorer, and they would become like paralyzed ones. For him, English was not just a subject; rather it was a language and if they were poor in speaking English, they could not improve in other subjects either. He said:

If they are poor in speaking English, they cannot write English well. Both speaking and writing are interrelated, and a person can write well in the exam only if he/she is good in speaking English. Speaking skill measures a lot. He further said listening and speaking carry 25 marks –15 for speaking and 10 for listening – and the pass mark is 10. So the students who do not have good English speaking capacity will fail in that test. Good English speaking helps them to increase their percentage also because those students who have good speaking capacity get 14 or 15 out of 15 and it is about 2% in total, so students must be good in speaking English.

I asked him the second question: how does it affect in their future career? He replied that it was the heyday of English, and the people who had good English would be preferred everywhere and in any institution. Only such persons who have good English would be selected. The demand of English knowing people is high in the world. So students must be good in English. To study subjects like medicine, science, engineering and forestry the candidates who have good English are preferred. So those people who do not have good English miss chance to study such subjects.

When I went through the secondary level curriculum, I found that our national policy has accepted English as an appropriate international language for Nepal. It has been taken as a vital tool for any students to become successful in local, national and international communication since it is one of the major world languages. The English

curriculum for Grade Nine and Ten has focused more on reading and writing by allocating more marks (75%) for them, whereas listening and speaking receive only 25 percent (10 for listening and 15 for speaking). The teacher said in the interview if the students were poor in speaking, they could not get good marks and it would have direct effect on the total marks and total percentage.

Both the teacher's interview and the secondary level English curriculum show that laconic expression in English has diverse effects on students. It has severe effects on academic performance, and future career. If students are poor in speaking, they cannot get good marks in the final examinations and it has rippling effects. Similarly, if students are poor in speaking English, they have less chance of getting jobs and it affects in their future career. After the analysis, I have come to know that laconic expression in English has negative effects.

Theme 3: Ways for Improvement

Where there is problem, there is solution. The above themes are related to the reasons for laconic expression in English and its effects. I have included in the research question the ways to make speaking English effective. To find out the exact solution of this question, I went through the interviews taken with the respondents. When I asked S1 what would be the proper way of learning and developing English speaking skill, she said daily practice was the best way to improve speaking English. She further said that practical knowledge, learning by visualizing and teaching by using different materials might improve performance of students in speaking. Likewise, S2 said there should be continuous speaking practice and added that the teacher should give continuity to speaking activities and medium should be English in all subjects, except Nepali. Similarly, S3 said more practice was needed. He added that the teacher should make them practice in English properly. He said they should

speak English in the class. S4 also responded in the same vein that enough time should be given to learn English and they should focus on English than on other subjects. The response of S5 was that they should practice more in English and they should give full attention to the teacher while he was teaching. Further, she said that they should communicate with their friends in English. Similarly, the response of the last student for this question was that the medium of instruction should be English from the primary level and students need more practice.

When I asked the same question to the teacher, he said that students could improve better if they could get increased exposure. According to him, the public schools should also use English as medium of instruction to improve the students' speaking skill. Further, he said that the teacher should conduct different activities in the schools like language games, pair works, group works, speech competitions, debate competitions and so on. He argued that the teacher should use different teaching materials while teaching speaking skill and student-centered teaching methods should be used for active participation.

Going through the class observation notes, I found that the students were not much interested in learning English because the teacher did not use any teaching materials while teaching in the classroom and he did not conduct any activity to engage the students. Similarly the students did not get chance to practice and the teacher did not give much language exposure to the students in the classroom.

From the above account, it can be said that students' speaking performance can be improved through regular practice. We can also improve it by using audio visual aids, conducting different games and programs, creating situation for exposure, making students' vocabulary strong, encouraging the students to participate in language games, and allaying hesitation.

Findings, Discussions and Implications

This chapter provides a summary of key findings of my research on the basis of analysis and interpretation of the data in the previous chapter. It is followed by some pedagogical implications for teachers and students. This study was carried out among six students of Shree Adarsha Sharal Secondary School, and an English teacher of the same school. A qualitative research approach was applied in order to collect data with purposive sampling by means of students' interviews, teacher's interview and three class observations.

Findings

Based on the analysis and interpretation of the information, in the previous chapter, I have drawn the following findings:

1. The interviews with my participants (students) show that most of the students are weak in speaking skill.
2. Most of the participants (students) are not interested in speaking English class because they have problems of understanding and the teacher does not motivate them.
3. Majority of the students feel uneasy and hesitation while speaking English because of less practice, less exposure, poor vocabulary and lack of grammatical knowledge.
4. It is found that teachers do not use enough teaching materials, methods and techniques except pictures, pair works and group works.
5. When I observed three classes, I found the mode of classroom teaching was traditional where the most of the classroom time was consumed by the teacher and there was little room for classroom interactions. As a result, there was low motivation.

6. Classroom teaching is mostly exam-oriented rather than providing a chance of learning language. Reading and writing are given more priority but less priority is given to speaking and listening. So speaking is ignored in English classes.
7. There is lack of English exposure because students use their mother tongues in conversations in the classroom. There is lack of practice of target language. Only English subject is taught in English and even teachers usually speak in Nepali in the classroom.
8. More practice, use of different teaching materials, activity-based teaching, use of English as the medium of instruction and communication, creation of English environment, and enrichment of students' vocabulary are the proper ways of developing speaking skill in English.
9. Laconic expression in English has diverse effects because students with poor English cannot get admission in the advanced subjects like medicine, engineering, and forestry and other technological fields and their job opportunity is less.
10. Communicative language teaching method can be used and students can be facilitated to improve speaking skill.

On the basis of the findings of my study, I have come to the conclusion that teachers give less importance to the speaking skill in English language teaching. Teachers in public schools use traditional or teacher-centered teaching method where classroom interaction is very low. Classroom activities should be increased and learner should be motivated. Students feel hesitation and have English anxiety due to poor vocabulary, lack of sufficient exposure, and opportunity to practice English in the real classroom situation.

Conclusion

On the basis of the finding of my study, I have come to the conclusion that most of the students are weak in speaking English because of less practice, hesitation, less exposure and less use of teaching materials. Most of the teachers in public schools use traditional or teacher-centered teaching methods where classroom interaction was very low. The use of appropriate classroom dynamics is necessary to increase classroom interactions and motivate the learners. The teaching learning activities in public schools are mostly exam-oriented; speaking is ignored because focus lies on reading and writing in the secondary level. Students feel hesitation and anxiety due to poor vocabulary and lack of sufficient exposure and opportunity to practice English in real classroom situation.

Implications

Based on the above findings drawn from the interpretation of the data, I have drawn useful educational implications, which are presented in the following sections. I am sure that these implications will be useful for me and any other secondary level English teachers and students for effective teaching learning activities of speaking skill in the real classroom situation.

For Teachers

1. This study unfolds that most of the teachers in public schools have theoretical knowledge of teaching methods, approaches and techniques, but they were not applying in the classroom situation. Therefore, this study will help them apply the knowledge in the real classroom situation.
2. Since teaching in school is mostly exam-oriented, reading and writing skills are given more priority. The agenda of speaking is ignored in the secondary level. As a result, students feel hesitation and anxiety due to poor vocabulary,

less exposure of target language and opportunity to practice English in the real classroom situation. Therefore, teachers change their teaching learning activities by providing students with enough opportunities to practice and exposure of the target language in the classroom.

3. All the teachers can be updated with new methods and techniques to make their teaching learning more effective and learned-centered.
4. It is also required that teachers behave friendly with students so that it can allay their uneasiness, hesitation and fear.
5. Formation of English speaking club in the initiation of the English teacher is really important in which all members of the club can practice the target language in free situation without any hesitation and anxiety along with the guidance of their English teacher.
6. Appropriate teaching materials in appropriate situation can be very much fruitful to facilitate the teaching learning activity in the language classroom. It can help to motivate to the learners to learn English language.

For Students

1. Learners have to understand the essence of the speaking and give it importance.
2. As the research shows that less practice, hesitation and less exposure are the causes of laconic expression in English, they need more practice in speaking English to remove hesitation.
3. Students can engage in different activities like language games, group work, pair work, role play and others conducted by the teacher.
4. As the research shows that students are not using target language in the classroom activities, they can use target language more for exposure.

5. As we know practice makes a man perfect, students need to participate in different activities like debates, conversations, elocution and quiz contests in school.
6. The curriculum shows that speaking skill contains 15 marks out of 100, students need to give emphasis to this skill too.
7. Speaking skill can be improved by conducting different activities like pair works, group works, and language games.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Interview Guidelines

For students

1. How do you find your English period?
2. Do you understand your English teacher while teaching speaking skill?
3. Does your teacher use any other materials in speaking class? Does your teacher use drama, language game, pair/group work techniques to teach?
4. Do you feel uneasy while speaking English? If so why?
5. What are the reasons of your hesitations in speaking English?
6. Do you feel nervous while speaking English? If so why?
7. What would be the proper way of learning and developing your English speaking skill?

APPENDIX II

Interview Guidelines

For teachers

1. What language skills do you focus on in your classroom teaching?
2. What is the perception of your students towards the spoken English?
3. What strategies do you apply to teach speaking skill?
4. Do you teach pronunciation, punctuation and intonation to your students?
5. Do you let them practice speaking English if so how?
6. What are the major problems you are facing in teaching speaking skill to your students?
7. How do you motivate your students to involve in speaking activity?
8. Do your students hesitate while speaking in English?
9. What are the effects of laconic expression or poor speaking English in their studies?
10. How does it affect in their future career?
11. What are the ways of improving speaking skill of the students?

APPENDIX – III

Class Observation Sheet

Teacher's name:

Date:

Students' number:

Grade:

Lesson:

Time:

Subject:

Period:

1. Did the teacher use lesson plan? Did the teacher set scene?
2. Was the start of the lesson interesting? Were the students ready to learn?
3. Did the teacher use target language?
4. Was the voice of the teacher clear?
5. Did the teacher give emphasis on the importance of speaking English?
6. What were the main speaking activities done in presentation, practice and production stage?
7. What kind of strategies did he use to cope with the hesitation of the students while speaking?
8. Did the teacher conduct group/pair work and involve in speaking English?
9. Did the teacher use target language or mother tongue?
10. Did the teacher give enough time and exposure for the language development?
11. How did teacher test speaking skill of the students?
12. How did the teacher correct the error of the students?
13. Did the teacher encourage the students to speak?
14. How did the teacher motivate the students towards speaking?
15. Did the students take part in the classroom activities?