Factors affecting English speaking skills of Afghan EFL tertiary learners: students' and teachers' perceptions

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Abstract: Speaking is "the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols in a variety of contexts" Speaking plays an important role in daily communication and educational purposes. In language learning; the spoken language production is viewed as the most important aspect. However, for the majority of EFL or ESL learners, speaking is the most challenging skill to master, and they cannot speak English language properly. This study aims to investigate the factors that affect Afghan tertiary level EFL learners' English speaking. Moreover, the study focuses on students' speaking difficulties and teachers' reactions to the student's oral mistakes. A quantitative research design was employed in order to achieve the objectives of the study. One hundred sixty-eight EFL learners and twenty-five EFL teachers took part in the study chosen based on stratified sampling. The findings identified a number of major factors that affect Afghan EFL learners' speaking skills. These include noisy and crowded classes, anxiety, fear of making mistakes, fear of criticism, use of traditional teaching methods, lack of vocabulary knowledge, among others. Additionally, the major speaking problems students encounter in the class include losing face, the use of native language. The findings highlight the factors that affect Afghan students' speaking skills. It also gives valuable insights for teachers about the factors that affect students' speaking ability. Furthermore, it can be used as a guide for teachers in the planning and preparations for teaching and learning focusing on speaking skills for Afghan EFL tertiary students.

Keywords: factors, Afghan EFL learners, speaking skills, perceptions

INTRODUCTION

According to Crystal (2012, p. 5) nowadays, English is the most widely taught foreign language in more than 100 countries, such as China, Russia, Germany, Spain, Egypt and Brazil, and is the leading foreign language in most of these countries. In Afghanistan, which is the context of the current study, English is taught as a foreign language at schools and universities. In schools, it is taught as one of the compulsory subjects from grade 4 to grade twelve. At the university, English is studied as a major

and also as a compulsory subject in every discipline. Therefore, English Language skills are essential for the academic success of students, particularly for students of English Language studies.

Although English Language is crucial for academic success, and the speaking skill is the most most important and most frequently used language skill for communication (Rivers, 1987), this skill is mostly ignored in many schools and colleges in Afghanistan. The students often do not have the opportunity to speak in English either inside or outside of the classroom particularly in settings where English is learned as Foreign Language (EFL) (Al-Zedjali, 2009; Al Hosni, 2014). The main goal of English language teaching is to help students use English effectively and accurately in communication (Davies and Pearse, 2000). Despite having learned English, not all language learners can communicate fluently and accurately and they are not able to express their ideas and knowledge via us of English. Many factors can result in affecting this ability of the students.

Coleman (2018) has found that in Afghanistan, English is not only considered as a foreign language, where it is used in some formal occasions, and workplace communication, but it is also considered as an important foreign language which is taught from grades four to twelve in all schools and at tertiary levels. Students in Afghan public schools, study English as a minor subject four times a week in a forty-five-minute session, whereas university students from all majors are required to take English courses for four semesters as a compulsory subject. In addition, there are English Language Departments in the majority of Afghan universities where English language is learned as a major and sees high enrolment of students. According to Coleman (2018), in his report for the Ministry of Education (MoE), students do not have sufficient and necessary language skills and knowledge as they sometimes do not even understand what they learn from their teacher and from reading the textbook. Thus, most of the students do not have enough skills in English. In particular, they are unable to express their feelings and opinions in English.

Verah (2017) states that the goal of every language learner is to speak English fluently, which needs constant practice in speaking and writing. Similarly, Mazouzi (2013) opines that the main goal of English language teachers is to develop and improve the four language skills, which enable the language learners to use the language effectively. For this to happen, the teacher needs to pay special attention to the content and methodology when teaching speaking skills to help learners speak better (Floden, 1997). In other words, English cannot be learned by memorizing vocabulary and rules of grammar or by reputation and drills. Instead, it needs practicing conversation and as well as in the real-life communications outside the classroom. However, some students still may tend to memorize vocabulary and language grammar rules, but when it comes to oral communication in English, they face some challenges

and are incapable of proper communication. Previous studies on the Afghan EFL context state that learners usually face difficulties in using English in the classroom which is the only platform for them to practice English conversation (Anwari, 2019; Katawazai et al., 2019; Zia and Sulan, 2015). Thus, the purpose of this study is to answer the following research questions.

1. What are the factors that affect Afghan tertiary level EFL learners' English speaking from their perspectives?

2. What are the factors that affect Afghan tertiary level EFL learners English speaking from the teachers' perspectives?

3. What are the Afghan EFL tertiary level learners' speaking difficulties as perceived by the teachers and how the teachers react to the student's errors?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking

Speaking is a macro skill in teaching and learning English language. Experts have made many definitions of speaking in language teaching and learning, for example, Burns and Joyce (1997) define speaking as an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information. Rizvi (2006) also points out that speaking is an interactive communicative process involving speakers and listeners. In a communicative process, the speaker needs to learn how to engage with listeners; use a variety of ways to express themselves; use speaking to clarify their ideas and maintain their conversation to develop thinking and reasoning. In addition, McDonough and Shaw (2003) claim that speaking is not the oral production of the written language, but involves learners mastering a wide range of skills, which together form an overall skill in the spoken language. To conclude based on the explanation given by the experts, it can be said that speaking is one of the most important aspects of language learning and it is the process of expressing ideas in the spoken language.

In daily communication and educational purposes, speaking plays an important role. According to Nasiri and Gilakjani (2016), human communication is a complex process. They further elaborate that people need to communicate while, saying something or conveying information. Speakers need to communicate when informing someone about something. To conclude, speaking is the only way of communicating ideas and messages orally, so we need to use the language for real communication.

Most researchers (Elhadi, 2015; Tuan and Mai, 2015; Yasin, 2018) agreed that among the four (listening, reading, writing and speaking) skills, speaking seems to be the most important. As human being, we need the ability to speak and interact with each other. For this interaction, the ability of the speaking is required, and this ability plays an important role in the communications systems in our daily lives, whether

socially or individually (Husnawati, 2017). In addition, Luoma (2004) asserts that in language teaching and learning, speaking is the most important part of a curriculum.

Previous Studies on Factors that Affect Speaking Performance

Many studies have been conducted around the world to identify the factors and issues that have a negative impact on the speaking performance of the student and cause speaking problems. A few of them are presented here.

Anwari (2019) Conducted a study in Kandahar university Afghanistan to investigate the causes and negative effects of anxiety. The purpose of the study was to identify the causes of poor speaking skills among EFL learners. The participants of the study were 100 male and female students studied through a quantitative questionnaire. The findings show that speaking nervously with other people, feeling of shyness during presentation, nervousness when talking to strangers, even with family members, lack of confidence in speaking when the whole class is paying attention, no peer motivation, and a feeling of fear when speaking to lecturers were the major causes that affect EFL students' speaking skills. The study of Anwari is somehow similar to the current study. However, Anwari conducted the study only in one province while the current study would encompass several universities. Despite, he studied only speaking anxiety while the current one will be a multidimensional (teacher, students, teaching method, curriculum and learning environment).

Similarly, Zia and Sulan (2015) conducted a study to identify the level of EFL classroom anxiety and its causes in a speaking activity. The aim of his research was to investigate English speaking anxiety of foreign language learners in EFL classrooms by assessing the performance anxiety level of the learners. The study also identifies the causes of speaking anxiety in language classrooms. The study was conducted at Nangarhar University, and the participants of the study were 115 first year EFL undergraduates' students. They have used the foreign language learning anxiety questionnaire adapted from (Horwitz, et al., 1986) to collect the data from the students. The results of their study showed that learners suffer from a high level of all three types of performance anxieties, but fear of negative evaluation was the highest one which causes speaking anxiety in learners.

Alzahrani (2019), conducted another study in the English Department of Najran University to explore the reasons behind the weakness of speaking among the students. The Participants of his study were 59 students of the Faculty of Science and Arts at the University of Najran academic year 2017-2018. A questionnaire was used to collect the data of the study. The results of this study revealed that the reason behind the students' low speaking performance was a teaching and learning environment, and the weakness of the students themselves. The study also reported that gender difference did not have a significant impact on the speaking of English Department at Najran University. A similar study was conducted by Abda (2017), in Ethiopia Robe teachers'

College, English Department to assess the factor that affects teaching speaking skills of second-year students. The aim of the study was to identify the factors that affect teaching speaking skills. A case study approach and a mixed-method design were used to collect the data. Hundred (100) students and two teachers were the participants of this study. The data of the study were collected through a closed-ended questionnaire, open-ended questionnaire, and observation. The finding of the study suggests that student did not participate and practice speaking activity inside and outside of the class, because of; poor knowledge of grammar, lack of motivation, lack of vocabulary, lack of exposure to the target language, lack of self-confidence, fear of mistakes, and poor background experience. These studies are somehow similar to current study but one of them is conducted in Saudi Arabia to explores the reason behind the weak speaking ability of the students, and the other is conducted in Ethiopia which assesses the factors that affect teaching speaking, but the current study will be conducted in Afghanistan to identify the factors that affect the speaking performance of the EFL learners.

Having reviewed the theoretical and empirical studies of the subject, we can say that the researches above have focused on various things, in different contexts such as development of speaking skill, the willingness to speak English, language anxiety in speaking, speaking difficulties and factors affecting speaking etc. The review of the above-mentioned literature in this chapter can assist the researcher by giving a clear image for further exploring the issue of the study in the Afghan context.

RESEARCH METHOD

According to Cresswell (2014), researchers have the freedom to choose the research methods they prefer. Though, researchers are expected to state the reasons for choosing a particular method over other methods. However, the method chosen must match the purpose of research and match the study questions. This study is designed using quantitative method because the focus of the study is to determine the factors that affect students' speaking skills. Since the study investigates the factors that cause difficulties for the students speaking skill, survey design is used to collect the data for this part of the study. In survey research, attitudes are usually measured by using rating scales. According to Burton and Steane (2004, p. 145), a survey is one of the most common methods of data collection in social sciences. Similarly, Patten (2000) argues that survey design is appropriate to measure beliefs or attitudes of subjects in non-experimental studies. The participants of the study include all English major students studying English in English departments of south-eastern zone public universities. For obtaining the sample of the study, stratified sampling technique was used to include desired representation from the population. For collecting the data of the study, two separate questionnaires have been used. A questionnaire consists of five domains; each contains sub-questions for students and another questionnaire for teachers. A questionnaire used in the current study for collecting students' perceptions containing

five domains each consist of sub-items was adapted from Hamad (2013) and Yasin (2018) and some questions to collect data about the demographic information of the respondent were added to the questionnaire. The items that are used to identify the factors that affect the speaking performance of the students were then coded in google form in Likert scaling, and sent to (240) students online. In order to collect teachers' perceptions about the factors that affect Afghan EFL learners English speaking skills, a questionnaire adopted from (Bani Younes and Albalawi, 2016) was used. After the data of the study were collected, then it was analyzed as per the objectives of the study. The quantitative data of the study were analyzed through The Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) software. After the data collection, first, it was carefully inspected, verified, sorted out than coded and key into the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS 25) for descriptive statistics (Frequency, Percentage, mean standard deviation).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

1. Students' perceptions about the factors that affect speaking skills of Afghan EFL learners.

Mentioning early that the student's questionnaire is consist of five domains with regards to the factors that affect English speaking. The result of each domain is presented below.

a) Teachers Related Factors:

Table (1.1) below shows the percentage of students' responses, mean score, standard deviation rank and degree of each item in the first domain of the questionnaire. The first domain was teacher-related factors impacting students' speaking skills.

Table 1.1

Teacher Related Factors

Item No	Questionnaire Items	SA	A	N	D	SD	M	St. D	R	D
4	The instructor does not use only English language to communicate with us outside the class.	26%	70%	0%	3%	1%	4.16	.677	1	H
2	Instructors are patient, understanding, sympathetic, and supportive.	39%	42%	1%	14%	4%	3.98	1.14	2	H
3	Instructors encourage us to answer in English language.	2%	88%	2%	6%	2%	3.79	.670	3	H
1	Instructors let us use Pashto language to express our answers.	19%	41%	17%	21%	3%	3.52	1.09	4	M
Valid N (listwise)		168								

The results of table 1.1 show that item (4) comes in the first rank with mean score (4.16) and standard deviation (0.677). Ninety-six (96%) of the participants show their agreement that their teacher does not use the English language outside the class. The second item (2) comes in the second rank with the mean score of (3.98) and standard

deviation (1.14), eighty-one (81%) of the students show their agreement that their teachers are supportive patient and understanding while for item (1) with a mean score of (3.52), and standard deviation (1.09) which comes in the fourth rank of this domain 60% of the students agreed that the teacher let students use Pashto language as a medium of instruction in the class, but 24% of the students did not agree and they use only English as a medium of instruction in the class, whereas 17% students were neutral. In general, it seems that lack of English language usage outside the class and the use of Pashto language inside the class are two main factors in this domain that affect students' English speaking.

b) Student Related Factors

Table (1.2) below shows the percentage, mean score recorded for each item in students' related factors domain with the standard deviation written next to it. in addition to the rank and degree. The second domain of the questionnaire is students related factors containing 14 items having a negative impact on the students' English speaking.

Table 1.2

Student Related Factors

Item No	Questionnaire Items	SA	A	N	D	SD	M	St. D	R	D
18	I fear criticism from others while speaking.	35%	52%	4%	5%	3%	4.13	.919	1	H
17	Speaking English makes me feel worried, and I feel pressured by the teacher and other students.	10%	74%	3%	7%	6%	3.76	.936	2	H
15	I am shy, I don't feel confident while speaking English in class.	15%	51%	26%	1%	7%	3.74	.991	3	M
16	I struggle to find the right vocabulary word; I want to speak English but I don't know the words needed for that certain topic.	24%	49%	11%	6%	10%	3.70	1.19	4	M
9	My Grammar knowledge is good enough to construct the sentences I want to say.	33%	34%	3%	16%	14%	3.57	1.42	5	M
5	I used to practice speaking skill at secondary level.	20%	38%	4%	26%	12%	3.27	1.35	6	M
10	I only speak English Language inside the lecture- room.	18%	41%	3%	24%	14%	3.25	1.33	7	M

		SA	A	N	D	SD	M	St.D	R	D
8	My possession of English vocabulary is not enough to speak English fluently.	20%	41%	7%	9%	23%	3.25	1.46	8	M
7	I can speak fluently but I fear speaking English language in public.	14%	38%	14%	20%	14%	3.18	1.30	9	M
6	I feel motivated and confident while speaking English in class.	16%	38%	10%	16%	20%	3.14	1.39	10	M
14	I can express my point of view in English without Pashto translation.	18%	30%	5%	32%	15%	3.04	1.40	11	M
11	I practice English speaking skill in English inside the university	23%	22%	10%	24%	21%	3.01	1.50	12	M
12	I can make a phone conversation in English.	4%	51%	2%	25%	18%	2.96	1.28	13	L
13	I can make presentation in English language.	25%	22%	2%	24%	27%	2.92	1.52	14	L
Valid N (listwise)		168								

Table 1.2 above indicates the percentage, mean score, standard deviation, rank and degree of each item of the students' related factors. The result shows that items (18 and 17) come in the high degree of this domain with the mean score (4.13), (3.76) and standard deviation (.919), (.936). respectively. Majority of the students reported that they are having fear of criticism and felling or worry as an obstacle for them while speaking in the class. The other items (15, 16, 9, 5, 10, 8, 7, 6, 14,11) come in the Moderate degree of this domain. It indicates that some students are victim of shyness, struggling to find the right vocabulary words, knowledge of grammar and lack of confidence. For the items 12 and 13 mean score (2.96), (2.92) most of the students have reported that they are able to make a phone conversation and are able to present a presentation and these two items come in the low degree of this domain. The overall result of this section shows that fear of criticism, feeling worries about making mistakes, shyness and struggling to find the right words and vocabulary while speaking are the major factors in the students' related domain that affect students speaking skills while a presentation and a phone conversation is not an obstacle for the students.

c) Curriculum Related Factors

Table (1.3) below shows the percentage and mean recorded for each item in Curriculum related factors domain with the standard deviation written next to it in addition to the rank and degree.

Item No	Questionnaire Items	SA	A	N	D	SD	M	St. D	R	D
20	Our Curriculum of Listening and Speaking contains enough exercises for speaking skills.	38%	45%	9%	4%	4%	4.08	1.00	1	H

21	The exercises in my textbook strength my speaking skills.	42%	36%	10%	7%	5%	4.04	1.11	2	H
19	All students have text book concern Listening and Speaking skills class.	27%	43%	17%	7%	6%	3.78	1.10	3	H
22	There are many exercises in my book to be practiced inside and outside the class.	21%	49%	6%	13%	11%	3.58	1.24	4	M
Valid N (listwise) 136										

Table 1.3 above depicts the percentage and mean of each item in the questionnaire regarding curriculum-related factors. From these findings, it seems that the majority of the students agree with this part. For example, items (20,21 and 19) of the of this domain come in the High degree, Similarly, the item (22), the last item of this domain comes in the rank 4 with the mean score (3.58) standard deviation (1.24) of curriculum-related factors domain. Regarding this item, 60% of the students show their agreement that there are enough exercises to be practice inside and outside of the class while 24% of the students are not agreed and the remaining 16% of the respondent reported neutral about the exercise of the curriculum. The overall result shows that curriculum-related factors have not affected students speaking skills because the majority of the students agreed with the curriculum.

d) Teaching Method Related Factors

Table 1.4) below shows the Percentage, mean recorded for each item in Teaching Method related factors domain with the standard deviation written next to it in addition to the rank and degree.

Table 1.4

Teaching Method Related Factors

Item No	Questionnaire Items	SA	A	N	D	SD	M	St. D	R	D
33	The teacher corrects my speaking mistakes all the time while I am speaking.	29%	59%	7%	5%	0%	4.11	.73	1	H
29	Instructors don't let us use Pashto language inside the class.	33%	52%	5%	8%	3%	4.04	.95	2	H
32	The teacher waits until I finish what I am saying then corrects it for me.	45%	35%	1%	12%	7%	3.98	1.25	3	H
35	The teacher introduces the idea of the lesson and gives us enough vocabulary to use for our speaking activity.	32%	49%	4%	11%	4%	3.92	1.08	4	H
27	Instructors use debatable topics to encourage discussions inside the class.	32%	47%	5%	6%	10%	3.85	1.21	5	H

30	Instructors make us do role-play to practice speaking skills.	27%	45%	7%	9%	10%	3.73	1.25	6	H
25	Lecturers use different strategies like body language, intonation ……etc.to teach speaking skills.	37%	33%	1%	18%	11%	3.66	1.40	7	M
24	Instructors use a mixture of English language and Pashto language in teaching.	20%	48%	12%	14%	0%	3.64	1.07	8	M
28	Instructors encourage us to express our point of view in English.	39%	26%	7%	16%	12%	3.64	1.43	9	M
34	The teacher gives us enough time to prepare for the speaking activity	28%	44%	2%	14%	12%	3.60	1.35	10	M
31	There is no pressure from the teacher when I am doing the speaking activity.	30%	33%	9%	20%	8%	3.56	1.32	11	M
23	Instructors speaks only English language in the class.	23%	44%	9%	7%	16%	3.51	1.34	12	M
26	Instructors ask us to make presentations in English language.	18%	50%	6%	17%	9%	3.50	1.23	13	M
Valid N (listwise)										

Table 1.4 above is the result of the teacher-related factor domain of the questionnaire. It can be implied from this result that the students have a different viewpoint about the teaching method of teaching speaking. For example, item (33, 29, 32, 35, 27, and 30) come in the high degree of this domain. It shows that correcting students mistakes during speaking, use of the native language in the class, introducing vocabulary, and introducing the debatable topics which encourage conversation have affected the speaking skills of the students. Items 23 and 26 of this domin are the most agreed itmes by the students and reflects that English as the medium of instruction and making prersentation in English are two items which enable students to speak. To sum up some teacher-related factors such as correcting students' mistakes while speaking, use of native language, the use of debatable topics, and not giving enough time to the students for preparation for speaking activities are teacher-related factors that have affected students speaking skills.

d) Learning Environment Related Factors

Table (1.5) below shows the Percentage, mean recorded for each item in Learning Environment-related factors domain with the standard deviation written next to it in addition to the rank and degree.

Table 1.5

Learning Environment Related Factors

Item No	Questionnaire Items	SA	A	N	D	SD	M	St. D	R	D
36	In my class there are 30 students.	23%	61%	5%	8%	2%	3.94	.91	1	H
41	The class is too noisy.	39%	35%	3%	14%	9%	3.82	1.32	2	H
42	My classmates do not support me while I am speaking English.	31%	29%	6%	27%	7%	3.51	1.34	3	M
40	In the classroom, there is an LCD/Projector where we watch videos and play games related to our lessons.	21%	20%	21%	25%	13%	3.11	1.33	4	M
39	The class has a friendly atmosphere which enhances the learning procedure.	15%	31%	10%	29%	14%	3.04	1.34	5	M
37	We listen to a CD as a model for speaking practice.	14%	37%	4%	30%	15%	3.04	1.35	6	M
38	We, as students, are given the chance to choose learning activities and games that motivate us.	15%	31%	11%	28%	15%	3.03	1.33	7	M
Valid N (listwise)		168								

1.5 above indicates the percentage of each item related to the learning environment factors domain in the questionnaire. It can be implied from the result of this table that items (36 ans 41) of this domain comes in the High degree. Which shows that the large number of studnts and noisy classes have a clear impact on the students speaking skills. While listening to a a cd as model and lerning activites and games that motivate the students are the most agreed items in this domin. The result of this domain shows that large and noisy classes, lack of classmates supports, lack of well-equipped classes, and lack of friendly atmosphere in the class are the dominant factor in this domain that have affected students speaking skills.

2. Teachers Perceptions about the factors that affect English speaking skills of Afghan EFL learners.

The second objective of the study is to identify the factors that affect Afghan EFL learners English speaking skills from teachers' perspectives. This section of the questionnaire identifies the factors that affect English speaking skills of Afghan EFL learners.

Item one: this item asks the teachers four yes/no questions which describe performance conditions in speaking class.

Table 1.6

Teachers responses to the condition in speaking class.

Item No	Description of Item	Frequency and percentage of Yes	Frequency and percentage of No
1.1	Are students given enough time to perform speaking tasks?	19 (78%)	6 (24%)
1.2	Do students prepare for a task before the task is performed?	5 (20%)	20 (80%)

1.3	Do students have any pressure to perform well?	18 (72%)	7(28%)
1.4	Is the listener patient, understanding, sympathetic and supportive?	17 (68%)	8(32%)

Table 1.6 above is the result of the teacher's responses to some conditions in speaking class. It can be implied from this result that majority (78%) (n=19) of the teachers agree that the students have given enough time to perform speaking tasks. Similarly, for the item (1.3) 72% (n=18) of the teachers agree that there is a pressure on the students to perform well. It can be implied from this table that the students feel pressure to perform well and the students do not prepare before from a speaking activity are the two main factors in this section that affect the students speaking ability.

Item two and three: these two multiple-choice questions; item 2 asks about the psychological factors of the students; item 3 ask about the students speaking level, are described in the following table.

Table 1.7

Overall Perceptions of listening and speaking skills.

No	Description	Motivated	Anxious	Confident
2	Choose the adjective that best describes students' listening skills?	5 (20%)	16 (64%)	4 (16%)
No	Description	Very Good	Good	Average
3	Choose the adjective that best describes students' state in speaking classes?	11 (44%)	6 (24%)	8 (32%)

Table 1.7 above shows the result of item 2 and three, it seems from the result that (64%) (n=16) of the students feel anxious while listing only 16% (n=4) of the students are confident while listening. So. it appears from the result that the students listing ability influence the students speaking skills.

Item Four: in this item, ten factors that affect students speaking skills are listed, and the teachers are asked to choose the factors that influence the speaking ability of their students. Below table shows the result obtain from the teachers.

Table 1.8

Frequency and Percentage of teacher's responses.

Item No	Factor(s) that affect(s) students speaking performance?	Frequency	Percentage
4.1	Confidence	24	96%
4.2	Motivation to speak	21	84%
4.3	Conceptual knowledge	20	80%
4.4	Anxiety	20	80%
4.5	Feedback during speaking activities	20	80%%
4.6	Listener's support	19	76%
4.7	Pressure to perform	19	76%
4.6	Time for preparation	16	64%
4.9	Listening ability	16	64%
4.10	Time allocated to perform speaking tasks	13	52%

The result of table 1.8 above shows that majority (96%) (n=24) of the teachers agree that confidence is the most influential factor. Motivation to speak is another

influential factor which comes in the second rank with a percentage of 84% (n=21). Conceptual knowledge, anxiety and feedback during speaking activities are other influential factors that have affected the speaking ability of the students with the percentage of 80%(n=20. The last three items; Time for the preparation, listening ability and time allocated for performing a speaking activity, come in the lower rank indicating that these factors do not have much effect on the students speaking ability.

1.1.1 Teachers perceptions about the speaking difficulties and problems that influence the students' speaking ability

The third objective of the study is to explore students' speaking difficulties and teachers' reactions to these difficulties. To identify, the difficulties the fifth section of the teachers' questionnaire is used to collect the teachers' perceptions about the speaking difficulties that influence the students Englsih speaking ability. The result of the section is shown below.

Table 1.9

Teachers perception about the speaking problems

Item No	Speaking problem that influences students speaking	Frequency	Percentage
5.1	They are fearful of criticism or losing face.	21	84%
5.2	They use Native language.	21	84%
5.3	They speak very little or no English at all.	20	80%
5.4	They have no motive to express themselves.	19	76%
5.5	They are shy.	16	64%
5.6	They are worried about making mistakes.	15	60%

It can be inferred from the result of table 1.9 that (84%) (n=21) of the teacher reported that fear of criticism, losing face and the use of native language are the major problems that influence the speaking ability of the students. In addition to that, (80%) (n=20) of the teachers think that the speaking very little or no English at all also influenced the speaking skills of the students. Furthermore, the lack of motivation is another factor that (76%) (n=19) of the teachers know it as the cause of the speaking problem for the students. Likewise, student's worriedness about making mistakes is another factor that (60%) of the teachers know it as a problem that influences the speaking ability of the students. Only a few (n=9) (36%) of the teachers think that the student's disability to think of anything to say is also a factor that influences the students speaking.

Table 1.10

Teachers reaction to students mistake during oral work.

Item No	Teachers reaction when students make mistakes during oral work	Frequency	Percentage
5.8	Stop them and correct their mistakes.	18	72%
5.9	If students cannot think of what to say, you may prompt them forwards	14	56%
5.10	Get annoyed when students keep making mistakes	13	52%
5.11	Keep quiet, smile and encourage them to go on their task.	7	28%
5.12	Watch, listen to the students and write down points to give feedback afterwards	7	28%

Table 1.10 shows the result of the teachers' reaction to the student's mistakes during oral work. It can be implied from the table that majority (72%) of the teacher stops the students and correct their mistake on the spot which may have a negative influence on the students speaking skills and cause fear in the students. For the situation when the students cannot think of what to say, the teacher may prompt forward, (56%) of the teachers reported that they push the students and give hints to speak.

4.2. Discussion

Research Question One: What are the factors that affect Afghan tertiary level EFL learners English speaking from their own perspectives?

The results obtained for the first research question from the student's questionnaire which consists of five domains (teacher-related domain, students related domain, curriculum-related domain, teaching method related domain, learning environment related domain) is presented domain vice in below section.

1. Teachers related Factors:

The results of the first domain of the student's questionnaire which is concerned with factors related to teachers show that majority of the students agreed that their instructors do not use only English language to communicate with the students outside and inside of the class. In addition, the teachers use a mixture of the English and Pashto language in the class in order to ensure the students' understanding of the content. Moreover, they use only Pashto language outside of the class, through which the students do not form the habit of using the English language. The use of native language as a medium of instruction and allowing the students to use native language inside and outside of the class seems to be one of the main obstacles that affect students English speaking. The use of native language for translating words and vocabulary makes it easy for the students but for mastering the language the students need to listen in English and form the habit of using English language (Yasin, 2018). This situation of the students is much similar to Hao (2017), study that the students say little or even nothing in English outside of the class. He also states that teachers do not consider English as a medium of instruction which results in the lack of exposure to the target language. Furthermore, this finding is similar with the findings of Hamad (2013) that the instructor uses the Arabic language as the medium of instruction and let the students use Arabic inside the class which affect the students speaking skills. Moreover, these findings are also supported by Abda (2017), who claims that the use of mother tongue inside and outside of the class and lack of exposure to the target language causes speaking problems.

2. Students Related Factors:

The result obtained from students related factors domain of the questionnaire shows that some phycological factors, such as (fear of criticism, anxiety and fear of making mistakes), lack of vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, lack of English

background knowledge from schools, lack of supportive environment and the use of first language are the common factors that have affected the students speaking skills. Having sufficient knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and knowing the correct use of the words that fit into the context while speaking increase once's self-confidence. On the other hand, lacking linguistics and topical knowledge makes students shy and anxious in the class. Moreover, anxiety, lack of confidence and fear of criticism makes students keep quiet in the class. The same result is being highlighted by some researchers in different contexts. For instance, (Brown and Principles (2001) found that shyness, anxiety, fear of making mistakes, are the hinders students ability to speak. Similarly, Ariyanti (2016) argues that the psychological factors that hinder students from speaking are likely to be caused by the feeling that they are too worried about making mistakes and lack of self-esteem. Likewise, Anwari (2019) found that feeling of shyness during a presentation, nervousness when talking to strangers, lack of confidence in speaking when the whole class is paying attention, no peer motivation, and a feeling of fear when speaking to lecturers are the major causes that affect EFL students' speaking skills. Besides that, (Abda, 2017), found that poor knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, poor background experience and lack of topical knowledge influence students speaking.

3. Curriculum Related Factors:

The result of the third domain, which is regarding the curriculum, the students seems to have positive perceptions. The students have reported that the curriculum contains enough exercise which strengthens speaking skills. Besides, they also reported that the majority of the students have textbooks concern listening and speaking skills. Though a few of the students are not agree and think that there are not many exercises to be practice inside and outside of the classroom. This finding is surprisingly different from some other studies such as (Hamad, 2013; Hao, 2017).

4. Teaching Method Related Factors:

The result obtained from the fourth domain of the student's questionnaire shows that some factors related to teaching and learning method also somehow negatively affected the students speaking skills. For example, some students reported that the teachers are not using different strategies while teaching speaking. The use of different engaging strategies in teaching speaking makes class exciting and enable students to learn easily. Alexandra Leavell (2006) states that teachers need to facilitate learning by addressing both contents and process. He further elaborates that instead of handing out a simple list of vocabulary to the students, teachers need to organize the terms in groups based on a unifying concept for different groups. The teacher should also take a few minutes to tell students how and why the terms are organized as they are and how the graphic organization of the terms can have a positive impact on their understanding. Building strategic awareness in learners has been shown to be quite successful in

enhancing their skills. Wolff (2010) states that students who did not practice are "Mute language learners" who learn a dead language. Although they can read and write English effectively but, they cannot communicate with others orally. Since speaking is an ability that cannot be developed independently, like reading and writing. Furthermore, it has also found that the teachers did not encourage the students to speak in English. In addition, some students feel pressure from the teachers while doing speaking activities. Likewise, the time given for the speaking activity is also not sufficient. Additionally, a quiet number of the students also states that the teachers frequently did not organize communicative tasks such as role-play, giving a presentation, class discussion, and debate which enhance speaking skills. Researchers (Leong and Ahmadi, 2017; Mahripah, 2014; Zia and Sulan, 2015) have also supported these findings and agreed that language teachers need to create a cooperative learning and teaching environment to build students confidence. Which can enable and motivate the students to speak freely in the class. In addition, Leong and Ahmadi (2017) stated that teachers choosing best teaching methods such as communicative language teaching to keep their learners involved in the speaking activities, giving the learners enough time for speaking, praising their students for speaking English and reminding their learners not to worry about making mistakes is the job of a good teacher. furthermore, Teachers need to create more opportunities for the learners to speak English through using some speaking tasks such as debating, describing pictures, group work, reading text orally, telling stories of daily activities, and games that help them to speak and urge them to take part in speaking activities. Although Takal (2019) states that at present, in Afghanistan, there are many obstacles that work against the implementation of communicative language teaching (CLT).

5. Learning environment Related Factors:

The last domain of the student's questionnaire shows that the learning environment has more influence on the students speaking skills compare to the other domains. Majority of the students have stated that in the class there are more than 30 students and the classes are noisy. Meanwhile, there is no support from their classmates while speaking. Since the number of students is high in the class and the teachers, do not have enough time to assess and monitor the students' performance to give feedback. Therefore, all the students don't know their strengths, weakness and what suggestions to follow in order to prove their communicative skills. A similar result is found by (Hao, 2017) which states that Large class size negatively affects the efficacy of students' learning speaking. The result also shows that the classrooms are not well equipped with LCD/ projectors for watching videos and playing games. Furthermore, it's also reported that the students do not practice listening skills which play a crucial role in improving communication skills. Rost (2013) states that, without exposure to the comprehensible language input, language acquisition never takes place. Besides

that, three-quarters (80%) of human learning takes place by visual and listening (Hunsaker, 1990). In addition, it has also found that the students are not given a chance to choose learning activities and games that motivate the students. On the other hand, some students claim that the classroom environment is not friendly, which enhance the learning procedure. A similar result was found by Al Nakhalah (2016) in Al Quds Open University English Language students.

Research Question Two: What are the factors that affect Afghan tertiary level EFL learners English speaking from the teachers' perspectives?

The result of the teacher's questionnaire shows that some psychological factors, teachers related factors and listening factors have influenced students speaking ability. It was found that students feel pressure to perform well is a factor that has influence the students speaking ability the same situation was reported by some students. Brown (1994) argues that the teacher's lack of encouragement is one of the main reasons for the students ' lack of confidence. We could clearly say from this point of view that the teacher did not give the students enough priority to persuade them that they could speak English. This situation causes students to lose confidence in their ability and also to be indirectly discouraged from speaking in English. Furthermore, the majority of the teachers agreed that lack of confidence and anxiety are other factors which influence the ability of the students. These findings are also supported by (Al Nakhalah, 2016; Anwari, 2019; Leong and Ahmadi, 2017; Zia and Sulan, 2015). In addition, some teacher identified the conceptual knowledge, and listeners support and pressure to perform an activity as speaking influential factors. The same situation was reported by (Abda, 2017; Al Asmari, 2015), who states that the lack of conceptual knowledge and low listening ability has caused obstacles to the students while speaking. Moreover, time for a speaking activity and the time allocated for activity were other factors that some teachers agreed on. This finding is in line with (Diep, 2017) Bani Younes & Albalawi. On the other hand, the student's confidence level was reported very low during listening activities. The finding of the teacher questionnaire is similar to the student's questionnaire.

Research Question Three: What are the Afghan EFL tertiary level learners' speaking difficulties as perceived by the teachers and how the teachers react to the student's errors?

The overall findings from the teacher's questionnaire showed that fear of criticism, use of native language, lack of topical knowledge, shyness, lack of motivation, losing face, wordiness about making mistakes, and lack of supportive environment are the major problems which have affected students speaking skills. From the teacher's questionnaire, it appears that these factors are caused because of fear of negative evaluation. For example, majority of the teachers reported that during an oral work if a student makes a mistake, they stop the student and correct the mistake

on the spot which cause anxiety and fear in the students meanwhile the students find it shameful for making a mistake. Harmer (1991) argues that the decisions made by teachers on how to respond to the results of the student would depend on the stage of the lesson, the tasks, the types of errors made and the individual student making the error. When teachers correct the students' mistake, the flow of conversation and the purpose of speaking is destroyed. Harmer (1991) states that when students are continually corrected, they may find it very disincentive and fear to speak. So Baker and Westrup (2003) recommend that the students' mistakes should always be corrected in a positive and friendly way. Furthermore, some teacher also mentioned that if a student makes a mistake, they get annoyed, which also have a negative influence on the student, getting annoyed on the student cause losing face.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study show that the use of native language inside and outside of the class by instructors, the use of a mixture of Pashto and English in the class, and the use of Pashto language as a medium of instruction are teachers related factors which form obstacles for the students English Speaking. Furthermore, some psychological factors such as anxiety, fear of making mistakes, fear of criticism have also affected students English speaking. In addition, the use of traditional teaching methods, lack of time for speaking activities, pressure from teachers on students while speaking have also affected students English speaking. Moreover, the lack of technological facilities in the class, noisy and crowded classes, and the absence of the classmate's support are other factors that have affected students speaking. Additionally, the major speaking problems students encounter in the class are losing face, the use of native language, no motive, and very little or no use English at all. The main cause of the student's anxiety and fear of criticism is teacher reaction to the student's oral mistakes.

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