

# Problems Faced by Secondary Level Students in Developing English Speaking Skills in Community Schools: A Narrative Inquiry

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## Abstract

This study aimed to uncover the experiences of secondary level students regarding their difficulties in developing English speaking skills. Based on the narratives with the teachers, the study identified real classroom learning problems of the community school students as experienced by the teachers throughout their supports and the strategies that the teachers applied to address those problems. The interpretative paradigm has been applied in the study, in which four teachers from four different schools were asked to share their personal experiences using a narrative inquiry method. The main tool utilized in this study was a set of interview guidelines for teachers. They were asked to narrate their real-life experiences of teaching English speaking skills and the perceived difficulties associated with the secondary level students. The findings show that the students had problems with vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, background knowledge of the text, inferencing the key ideas, understanding the technical texts, and expressing the meaning in context. The results from this study can be applied to provide insights for the teachers and teacher educators to set new strategies/activities of learner engagement in English speaking.

*Keywords:* vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, inference, background knowledge, technical text

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### Article History

Received: May 12, 2026

Revised: June 25, 2026

Accepted: July 26, 2026

### Cite

Oli, C. P. (2026). Problems faced by secondary level students in developing English speaking skills in community schools: A narrative inquiry. *Gipán*, 8(1), 53–65. <https://doi.org/10.3126/gipán.v8i1.98720>

## Introduction

Speaking skill is a crucial skill that all pupils must master to ensure success in both their personal and academic lives. The majority of pupils, however, have significant difficulties understanding what they are speaking, even once they have achieved the required decoding skill (Kessler, 2009). Students may face a variety of speaking skill issues, such as incorrect background knowledge usage (Williams, 1993), lack of fluency in speaking, inability to discern between various text structures, lack of vocabulary knowledge, and inability to make inferences (Graham & Bellert, 2005), and lack of speaking fluency (Hall & Barnes, 2017) are all contributing factors that lead to speaking skill difficult.

Speaking is defined as the ability to express oneself effectively in spoken language, including the ability to speak fluently, accurately, and appropriately in various contexts (Brown & Larson-Hall, 2012). Speaking is an active and dynamic process of encoding and decoding

meaning through language. It requires the integration of linguistic knowledge, cognitive skills, and social-cultural knowledge to produce and interpret meaningful utterances (Bygate, 2013). Speaking texts that follow any language curriculum in an EFL setting aims to improve students' speaking abilities. As crucial language ability in language learning, the secondary English curriculum encourages teachers to teach speaking using a variety of methods.

Byrne (1984) takes speaking as a form of oral communication. It is indeed the dual or binary process between the askers and listeners and encompasses productive and assimilative skills. The case of speaking English in Nepali schools, colleges, and universities is not satisfactory. English is being taught as a compulsory subject by playgroups and large numbers of graduates complete their academic courses, however, the level of English especially in speaking seems very poor. In comparison to speaking, they are relatively better in other language skills like reading and writing. Their speaking skill is affected by various factors such as lack of vocabulary, poor knowledge of grammar, pronunciation skills and lack of motivation, confidence, lack of effective materials and environment. Harmer (2007) suggests that students need to be able to pronounce phonemes correctly, use appropriate stress, intonation and patterns and speak in connected speech. Almost all the language teaching programs are centralized on developing the speaking ability to the students.

In a similar vein, Richards and Renandya (2002) opine that a huge proportion of people use English language as an indispensable language and these groups dominantly study English in order to thrive skill in speaking. Speech serves diverse purposes, necessitating the utilization of various skills to effectively fulfil its numerous functions. They include; making social contact with people, establishing rapport or engaging in harmless chitchat with friends (Poudel, 2022). Learning a language is a way of developing a set of performance

skills. Speaking is one of the performance skills (Bygate, 2013). It is to communicate a message audibly between the parties and individuals in a communicative event. Among the four skills, speaking seems to be extremely important for language learning. So, this paper sought to answer the following research questions.

- o How do the teachers respond to teaching speaking skills in English in community based schools?
- o What sorts of problems faced by students in speaking skills in English at the secondary level of the community-based schools?

Hence the principal purpose of the research was to explore the problems faced by the students in speaking skills at the selected community-based schools.

Speaking has particular importance on overall language proficiency development of the learners. Though problematic to many second and foreign language learners, speaking is supposed to be the foundation for better reading and effective writing. Folse (2006) argues that most people believe that knowing a language means the ability to speak a language since speech is essential to communicate in society with other people, but speaking a language for foreign language learners can be very difficult because adequate oral interaction requires the ability to utilize the language appropriately in social communication. Interaction involves verbal communication and paralinguistic elements of speech, such as stress, pitch, and intonation.

Moreover, Sokip (2020) points out that language learning skills cannot be separated from the aspects of education such as the role of teacher, role of teaching materials and curriculum, the teaching method adopted by the teacher, teaching media, and infrastructure of the institution.

Graham and Bellert (2005), on the other hand state that the lack of appropriate use of previous

information has remained a complication that prevents children from correctly understanding printed content. To put it another way, a speaker must make connections between first-hand literal facts and all prior information, outside knowledge, and individual involvements with the subject of understanding to better comprehend a written piece (McNamara & Kintsch, 1996). Establishing connections between the speaker's past knowledge and the text's content is essential to facilitate speaking skill.

Raja & Selvi (2011) found environment, attitudes, and teachers' competence as the major factors of learning difficulties. They further said that if we could not create a conducive environment in the classroom, and focus on students learning needs or ability then students may not understand the content easily. Students need to be motivated or teachers should develop a positive attitude towards the English language in learners' minds for better learning.

Another problem with speaking skill is the lack of sufficient vocabulary among the students. Qian (2002) asserted that although vocabulary knowledge is crucial for helping pupils understand what they speak, some speakers struggle to understand a speaking text thoroughly because of their insufficient vocabulary knowledge. According to several academics, students' understanding of a paragraph is influenced by their familiarity with the text's terms (Anderson & Pearson, 1984). Another problem that negatively impacts communication is a lack of terminology that affects pupils' ability to grasp a text and the incorrect application of prior information (Graham & Bellert, 2005).

Bos and Vaughn (1994) differentiate between different types of questions, effectively apply a particular speaking strategy to understand a text, integrate prior knowledge with new information, or connect the ideas in a passage to make sense of it. Additionally, Garner (1980) argued that unsuccessful speakers could not apply a correction strategy, such as returning to a text's specific portion to grasp it.

Neupane (2009) identified several challenges, such as lack of physical facilities and proper teaching materials in teaching speaking, student's poor English background and not giving focus on speaking skills at the basic level created problems in speaking skills. Likewise, Lakhandri (2014) studied affecting factors to students participation in learning English and explored family background, economic status, educational environment as the factors affecting speaking competencies.

Rahayu (2015) investigated on students' incompetency and the strategies to surpass the difficulties in speaking English Daily language and found out the eternal and external factors like, still lack of understanding of grammatical patterns, incorrect pronunciation affect speaking. Most of the students confined to diction mastery, minimum chances, student's interest, mother tongue use, bare to practice and less discipline, apprehension of making mistake and environment factors.

Sunar (2015) studied the challenges faced by the English teachers while testing speaking ability of grade ten students and identified test items, test instructions and speaking components instructed in the classroom as the challenges.

The overall findings of the reviewed works reveal students' challenges in grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension. These problem led some students to quit school as well. In this regard, the present has identified teacher experienced problems and the instructional strategies that teachers used to overcome the problems in speaking skills in English classrooms.

## Methods

This study employed narrative inquiry to examine the lived experiences and problems faced by students in speaking skill in language classroom. Interview was used as a main tool for collecting information. Regarding interviews, Kvale and Brinkman (2009) assert that qualitative researchers use interviews as an effort to discover their experienced world before scientific explanations,

to unravel the significance of their experiences, and to grasp the world from their subjective point of view. Cohen et al. (2007) argue that the interview is carried out to obtain research-relevant information. Therefore, interview was chosen as appropriate tool for eliciting the data in this study. The entire interview transcriptions was reread and created themes (Saldaña, 2016) in the margins of each transcript. As stated by Creswell (2013), qualitative researchers make notes in the transcript's margins to capture their overall impressions of the data. The themes were derived from the participants' stories, and then explained each theme as the answer to research question, including the verbatims of the participants.

## Findings and Discussion

All of the research participants in this study shared some problems that impede the students' speaking skills. The shared stories have been associated with the themes and interpreted the meaning in the following sub-headings.

### Absence of Prior Knowledge

The absence of prior knowledge indicates that students do not have sufficient prior knowledge and experience; as a result, they cannot comprehend a speaking text well. To understand the text completely, learners must have background knowledge and past life experience.

All the English teachers who participated in this study had different views relating to the difficulties pupils have with understanding and speaking. One of the participants, Bishal, shared his experience as:

Yes, prior knowledge has a crucial role in getting the meaning of the speaking script. If students have prior knowledge about any script or prepared talk, they can make connections to the present speaking, which facilitates getting the meaning. In the absence of background knowledge, students have to struggle a lot to understand.

Bishal's narrative indicates that a lack of prior information on the topic among students has been one of the problems in speaking skill. He added that he provided background information about the text at the beginning of the lesson, and then he started teaching the lesson. It helped students understand the lesson properly. He also shared that providing prior/background knowledge while teaching poems is necessary because teaching poems is more complex in comparison to other informational texts.

Bimal's narrative seems similar to the views of McEwan (2007), who opines that one of the difficulties that prevent children from comprehending spoken material successfully is a lack of using prior information in the right way.

Similarly, my next research participant, Archana, shared her experience speaking about the problems that learners face in speaking skill in her class as follows:

There is a lesson on 'Memoirs of my Visit to Ghalegaun' in grade nine. It was the first time I had taken a class in grade nine. In section B, I taught the same lesson with an explanation, sometimes translating the difficult words.

Archana's narrative indicates that prior knowledge is important for comprehending the text and vocabulary well. I asked her, "How do you give prior information in the class while teaching speaking skill lessons?" She further said:

Well, I do not teach any scripted text directly. Before entering into the text, I ask students to guess who the author is, and what the context of the spoken text is to watch the pictures, which are given before every lesson or speaking script, to think about the given pre-questions about the text, which are given in the book.

The narrative of Archana reflects that she has been providing background information to the class before teaching every lesson. She believes that providing background knowledge has a lot to do with getting a better idea about the text. In the

same way, Akbari (2016) in her study also explored the role of a course book or content as the main cause of weakening speaking proficiency. She further noted that a lack of proper focus on speaking activities in the course may discourage learners from practicing the English language.

Similarly, another research participant, Bimala, also agreed that a lack of background information leads to low comprehension of the speaking text. She shared her experience as:

No doubt that background information is required for better comprehension. But I think students' socioeconomic conditions also determine their background knowledge of the students. For example, if the student's family is rich, then they can celebrate the holiday in different cities or different new places.

Here, Bimala's narrative is slightly different than the previous participants. She believes that background information can be generated and the children who are grown up in rich families can have a high chance of learning more things and can create more experiences which ultimately becomes helpful for students' new knowledge and facilitates speaking skills. I requested her if she could give a piece of evidence or she could share her experience to make it clear. She shared her experience in the following ways:

Yes, there is a lesson, 'A memorable journey from Terai to the Hill' in grade eight. While teaching this lesson, a comparatively weaker student (who does not speak much in the classroom and hardly answers the questions) told me the meaning of 'homestay, marigold, and garland' before I wrote on the whiteboard.

Bimala shared her experience, which showed that students who have past related knowledge can link it with the present topic, understand the dialogue, and improve their speaking. But not all students may have such facilities for traveling or visiting new places. Her narrative aligns with Armand (2001), who says that students can better

understand a text by using their past knowledge, in the right ways of speaking and activating it.

My fourth participant, Sambeg, also agreed with the narratives of previous participants and shared his experience of the problems of the students in speaking skill in the following lines:

In my ten years of experience in teaching English, I can say that context creation and providing background information are crucial in teaching speaking. Students cannot understand well in the absence of context and background information.

Sambeg's narrative stresses that contextualization and background information help students understand the indirect meaning given in the text easily, and students feel as if they are participating in the learning through questioning. Sambeg's narrative reminded me of the view of Oakhill et al. (2015), who explained that past knowledge plays a significant part in assisting pupils in comprehending all implicit information.

### **Problem With Vocabulary**

Vocabulary is a set of lexical items. Woolley (2011) asserted that a collection of lexemes that includes single words, compound words, and idioms is referred to as a vocabulary. Communication breaks down in the absence of appropriate vocabulary. Therefore, a good store of vocabulary is essential for communication in speech and writing.

Knowledge of vocabulary is an important component that supports learners' speaking skill. In this regard, Qian (2002) argues that an essential component of speaking is vocabulary knowledge, which enables pupils to easily understand terms in written texts. All four participants of this research study shared their experiences on how the lack of vocabulary knowledge hinders speaking skill. One of the participants, Bishal, shared his experience in the following lines:

I don't need to tell you the importance of vocabulary in speaking comprehension. In



our time, our teacher used to give us a list of word meanings (English words and Nepali meanings) in each lesson before teaching. Our duty was to learn them by heart. If anybody missed a single word's meaning, then he or she used to get one stick as a punishment.

Here, Bishal, revealed that he was taught through the GT method at his school level and teaching vocabulary was taught through rote learning. He also admitted that one of the biggest problems in speaking skills that the learners face is a lack of vocabulary knowledge. After reading Bishal's narratives, I remembered Chou (2011), who asserted that children with more vocabulary than children with less terminology may pick up on new words more rapidly and comprehend written texts more effectively.

Similarly, another participant, Bimala, shared her experience of how a lack of vocabulary negatively affects the learners' understanding in the following ways:

Vocabulary plays an important role in speaking skills. One of the reasons why students cannot acquire speaking skills is that they have a limited vocabulary that negatively affects their comprehension of the text. There are so many words in a passage that they are unfamiliar. If they know the meaning of all foreign words, no doubt they can understand any written text fully.

Bimala claimed that controlled vocabulary has been a major problem in speaking skill. Bimala's narrative resonates with Graham and Bellert (2005), who explain that using foreign vocabulary impairs a student's ability to comprehend what they are speaking, which deflates their expectations and saps their desire to read. Regarding the same question, what creates difficulty in speaking skill?' another participant of this study, Archana also had a similar experience. She said:

Obviously, vocabulary is the major cause of difficulty in speaking skill. Those students who are good at vocabulary can have a

better speaking understanding capacity in comparison to the students who acquired less vocabulary.

Bimala admitted that vocabulary has a major role in speaking skill. Her narrative is very convincing and aligns with the view of the scholar, Chou (2011), who concludes that learners' speaking comprehension is influenced by their vocabulary size. My fourth research participant, Sambeg had a slightly different view, though; he meant the same thing as the previous participants. He said why speaking skill is difficult in the following lines:

Students seem confused and cannot get the meaning of the word when the words are derivatively changed. They cannot find the meaning when the words are changed into different other parts of speech. At the same time, they have to struggle a lot whenever they come up with academic vocabulary.

Apart from emphasizing the importance of vocabulary in speaking skill, Sambeg highlighted two pertinent things: knowledge of the derivational nature of the vocabulary and academic vocabulary. I feel Sambeg's narrative is genuine, for he revealed the practical problems with vocabulary with examples. His narrative seems more similar to the view of Graham and Bellert (2005), who alleged that students find it most challenging to read passages that utilize much challenging language and terminology. As a result, they frequently make mistakes in comprehension because they are unable to relate the passages to their prior knowledge.

Additionally, in the same line as Sambeg, Ricketts et al. (2007) revealed that pupils' poor storage of terminologies could hinder their understanding, particularly if the material uses uncommon words. In this regard, Anderson and Pearson (1984) also have the same opinion, which justifies Sambeg's narrative. Moreover, the participants' narratives regarding the lack of vocabulary knowledge align with Walker (2002), who mentioned the four elements that lead to difficulty in speaking comprehension. Among

those four elements, she argued that the lack of knowledge of sight words in the text brings problems in understanding the passage better.

### **Problems With Inferencing the Meaning**

Another problem that hinders the speaking skill of students is their inability to draw conclusions from a reading text or passage. According to Keene and Zimmerman (2007), Making inferences is the ability of a student to come to their own conclusions about what is being said in a book without the writer's expressive statement, to make predictions both before and while speaking, and to use images or imagery to help with understanding. Woolley (2011) views that to connect many informational items that are clearly presented in the text, for example, students must draw connections between them. However, Hall and Barnes (2017) differ in defining the term inference and say that an illustration is used to infer a relationship between a pronoun and the textual subject it alludes to within the text.

All the participants agreed that the low level of inferencing skill of the students has been a problem in comprehending the speaking text well. One of the research participants, Bishal, shared his experience regarding how a lack of inference skills brings problems in speaking skills in the following way:

Most of the students have difficulty with the connotative meaning of the words. They do not look for the connotative meaning in the stories rather they look for direct meaning. There is a story in Grade X 'Ant and the Grasshopper'. While teaching this story, the students hardly understand the meaning of the connotative words.

Bishal shared his experience that the denotative and connotative meanings of the words affect the speaking skill of the students. He insisted that students have difficulty with the connotative meaning of the words. His narratives showed that if the students are creative enough to deduce the meaning of the words, it is quite easier to

understand the text, but for those students who are not skilled enough to deduce the meaning of the unfamiliar words, speaking is really hard for them. Sembeg's narratives align with Laing and Kamhi (2002), who assert that numerous children struggle with speaking comprehension due to the complexity of the inference. I totally agree with the view of Laing and Kamhi (2002), in the sense that when I was a secondary-level school student, we could not even guess the meaning from context. Similarly, Bimala, another participant in this research, shared her experience regarding learners' difficulty in understanding because of inadequate inference skills in the following lines:

When the passages/texts are long, students forget the previous parts of the text which makes it difficult for them to remember what happened in the previous section of the story. This mainly happened in the lower-level students' storybooks. In classes nine and ten the texts are shorter and students have fewer problems.

Bimala revealed that the length of the reading text also, to some extent, determines the comprehensibility of the text. At the same time, she added that students' memory and concentration have also been the cause of difficulty in making inferences.

When I read Bimala's narrative, I remember that what she experienced in her classroom during teaching was true. Her experience resembles my personal student life too. When I was in grades XI and XII, there were storybooks, namely 'The Magic of Words' and 'The Heritage of Words' respectively. As a result, I, along with my other classmates, would have difficulty connecting the previous ideas to the present information.

Bimala's experience and opinion seem to be supported by Chard et al. (2002), who insist that learners may have to struggle to understand written material because of a variety of issues. Likewise, my other research participants, Archana and Sambeg, also admitted that making inferences is

most important in speaking skill, and in the absence of it, competency cannot be achieved. They shared their common experience in the following ways:

Fluency, accuracy, clarity and creativity are the most important part of speaking skill. But I am sad to say that due to rote learning habits, the cognitive power and creativity of the students seem to be lost. They can memorize a whole text for debate competition but are unable to guess the meaning in the context and unable to find out the minor things in the text if it is written indirectly.

Here, Archana and Sambeg shared their experience, revealing that the cognitive power and creativity of the students are prominent in understanding the speaking skill, but in the absence of these qualities, the students cannot comprehend the text well, which has also become a major problem for students. The participant reported the increasing problem of rote learning and lack of cognitive power in students. Their experience is somewhat similar to Jenkins et al. (2003), who argue that to understand the meaning of the text, the students should combine the information presented in the text with their own personal experiences, prior knowledge, wisdom, values, thoughtfulness, and creativity.

The participants revealed that the inability of the students to make inferences about the text that they are speaking has adversely affected their comprehension. Walker (2002) also mentioned similar problems of speaking skills. She mentioned in her book, *Supporting Slow Learners*, that instead of integrating all relevant cues, the learners appear to rely on only one given source of information.

### **Problem With Decoding and Pronunciation**

Another issue that adversely affects young readers' speaking skill is their inability to speak fluently. According to McEwan (2007), speaking fluency is the capability to recite a text fast. Speaking fluency refers to a speaker's capacity to communicate in a language naturally, smoothly, and effortlessly. Therrien (2004), further, argues

that children need to be able to quickly process vocabulary units, like letter-sound correspondences, naturally create word connections, quickly absorb knowledge, and reflect on the passages as they read in order to understand what they read. Speaking fluency is essential for enhancing learners' speaking skills in addition to help them speak accurately and quickly.

All four research participants who participated in this study shared their narratives based on their teaching experience, which revealed that students in Nepalese public schools struggle with understanding and speaking, and one of the issues was slow or less accurate speaking. Bishal shared his experience in the following ways:

One major problem with my students is the problem of decoding. They take a lot of time to decode or speak a single word. Not only this but also, they spend much physical and mental energy focusing on deciphering the word. When they spend much time just trying to pronounce a single word, then they cannot think about comprehension, and they cannot pay attention to what is going on in the text.

Bishal's narrative indicates that students in public schools have a problem with speaking speed, too. They speak too slowly to make the connection to the meaning. As a result, they lose comprehension of the passage. I also realized and experienced this problem with students in community schools when I taught as a pre-service teacher. Bishal's narrative parallels with Stanovich (1986), who were convinced that word recognition processes are laborious and slow up cognitive resources that could be used for comprehension.

Similarly, another participant, Bimala, also shared a similar experience regarding the lack of speaking fluency among her students which obstructs speaking skill. She shared her experience as:

Most of the students in my class are really sluggish speakers. They have problems decoding the word. When they have a



problem decoding a single word, no doubt, their understanding of speaking the scripted text is slow and obstructed. They can comprehend the text as far as they know the Nepali equivalent of the word but due to their inability for decoding, they lose the meaning not only of the sentence but also the meaning of the whole text.

She also shared the way she helped students improve their slow speaking skills in this way:

I spend much time just drilling multi-syllabic words several times (minimum three times in the class). Likewise, I read the text and ask them to repeat it after me. I re-read for them too. Then I have them speak individually by calling them in front of the class and I make corrections whenever they mispronounce the words or whenever they feel in speaking the text.

Bimala had the students having low level speaking exposure who couldnot comprehend the word power well. To improve that situation, she adopted drilling and modeling with dialogues so that her students could be motivated and improve their speaking skills gradually. After reading her narrative, I found that her experience is closely related to Chard et al. (2002), who viewed that fluency issues in pupils are correlated with their hopelessness to read sight words, decode words, read phrases and sentences precisely and quickly, and decipher words.

The other two research participants, Archana and Sambeg shared their experiences slightly differently. They both admitted and shared their stories:

Not only slow speaking but also quickly speaking creates problems in understanding the meaning of the text. There are very few students in our class who completed their primary level education from private schools. They speak very quickly; their speaking speed is very high. As a result, they cannot achieve comprehension.

Archana and Sambeg said that not only does the lack of speaking fluency negatively affect speaking skill, but fast speaking in the class also hampers the understanding process because the speakers only pay attention to decoding the words rather than understanding by linking backward in the text regarding what they speak and how the text is moving ahead.

The research participants' narratives in this study can be compared with Walker (2002), who also argued that inadequate knowledge of sight words, decoding skills, and letter -sound relationship leads to difficulties in comprehending the sounds in the text.

### **Problems With Technical/Expository Text**

Students come into contact with and cope with a variety of textual information as they move through the school and the college level. Graham and Bellert (2005), argue that the common varieties of texts that learners encounter when learning are narrative and expository among all the other text structure types. In other words, the fundamental goal of expository writing, in the opinion of Berman and Nir-Sagiv (2007), is to explain ideas, concepts, issues, arguments, causal relationships, Issues and remedies, comparisons and contrasts, definitions, and examples, and to make clear the logical relationship between them.

The objective of the narrative text, which takes the form of a story, is to amuse or entertain the speaker, contrary to the textual explanation. Examples of chronicle texts are fiction, myths, plays, and legends, but these are not the only ones. Graham and Bellert (2005), opine that it is simple for children to understand narrative writing because the setting, characters, events, and outcome are the four components of a story that are usually used to write the narrative text's parts.

One of the problems that can impede learners' speaking skill is their lack of familiarity with academic and expository text structures. Mannes & Kintsch (1987), define text structure as the method a writer organizes text to make a point to a speaker.

Understanding text organization is crucial for learning because it helps students connect textual material and distinguish between main concepts and supporting elements (Sáenz & Fuchs, 2002). It also benefits students by urging them to ask appropriate questions about the text as they read from the written contents.

All the participants agreed that academic and expository texts have been one of the difficulties that impede learners' understanding. Bishal, one of the research participants, shared that his story is based on his teaching experience on how these texts have helped create the problem in the speaking skill of the students.

In my teaching experience, what I feel is that students have difficulty understanding technical texts in comparison to stories that start with 'Once upon a time...'. They comprehend the stories well and narrate to you everything about what happened in the story, who were the characters, what were their role, how they were acting in the story, sketching the character, and so on.

When I asked him, what made the academic text more difficult, he went in the following lines:

Well... Ummm, I think the main reason for the difficulty in those texts is a presentation of unfamiliar and difficult vocabulary in expository writings. The next thing is the grammatical structure used in those texts such as impersonal writing, use of passive voice, selection of highly formal and standard vocabulary, and so on.

Bishal shared that technical and expository texts given in the textbook are quite difficult to understand in comparison to stories or fictional texts for the students because of their academic writing style and unfamiliar vocabulary. Here, Bishal's experience aligns with Sáenz and Fuchs (2002), who asserted that for most children, understanding expository and academic literature is more challenging than understanding a narrative text.

Similarly, Archana shared a similar story supporting that academic and technical texts are more difficult for students than non-academic ones.

Technical texts are difficult for students to comprehend well because they seem to have been written at a high cognitive level, which is difficult for weak students.

The next reason for the difficulty of such texts is that such lessons use facts, scientific data, and sequence of particular events.

Archana agreed with Bishal that technical and expository writings are difficult for students due to two main reasons. The first reason was that such lessons use high cognitive level language, which is difficult to process for young learners, and the second reason was that such text contains scientific facts, data, and events that students find difficult to memorize. She also revealed her teaching technique for such texts in the classroom. Archana's narrative is similar to Weisberg and Balajthy (1989), who claim that students tend to retell less information because they take longer to recognize and gain knowledge of the key elements of expository texts.

The narratives of Bishal and Archana seem to be similar to Walker (2002), who mentioned that texts which are difficult to read and comprehend are frequently offered to the learners, as a result, speaking skill becomes difficult, and it demotivates the students towards their study.

Teaching speaking has been the major the major skill to all the participants. They spend fewer teaching hours teaching speaking. The research participants reported that they experienced the following problems in their learners during teaching speaking texts. They argued that lack of Nepali equivalents of English vocabulary creates problems in understanding the spoken text of the learners.

The participants also shared that teaching speaking becomes difficult due to the lack of inference skills among the learners. The students could not make conclusions about what was said in

the text if the author used implicit writing. Teaching technical texts, according to the participants, was another difficulty that they faced in the English classroom. Among the difficulties faced by the learners in English classrooms, as narrated by the participants, lack of knowledge of English vocabulary with Nepali equivalents and learners' inability to make inferences seem to be universal in the sense that some scholars such as Graham and Bellert (2005), Hall and Barnes (2017) and Walker (2002), also mentioned in their research work on 'English Language Teaching'.

Although these difficulties shared by the participants of this study seem to be similar to other researchers' work, these problems are context-specific.

### Conclusion

The findings of the study reflect that the ignorance of learners' psychology by the teacher also plays an astounding role in generating the sense of fear or hesitation in learners to speak English in class. Teachers' structural and rigid practices have a close link, creating a sense of fear in learners in the time of English-speaking context. Teachers are indeed major determinants of improving the speaking skill of the learners. Teachers' behavioral and instructional attitudes have a major role in speaking and apprehension in utilizing the target language. Thus, teachers' treatment has potential in improving learners' speaking skills.

The findings of the study also revealed that English language teachers seem to use various ICT tools in enhancing students' pronunciation in the classroom. The integration of ICT tools not only enhances students' vocabulary but also improves students' pronunciation. The students were found to improve their pronunciation through mobile phones because they provided feedback. Google and digital dictionaries also assist the students in pronouncing words and sentences because Google search and digital dictionaries help the students to learn how to pronounce words or sentences, and

phonemic transcription. The student can record their voices on a smartphone and listen to them back to improve their pronunciation.

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