

Investigation into the Source of Students' English Speaking Difficulties

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Abstract

English speaking skill is one of the four main language skills. Most learners who learn English as a foreign language face speaking difficulties. For this reason, this study aims to investigate the main source of students' English speaking difficulties at Rift Valley University. A simple random sampling technique was employed to choose 70 students. A questionnaire was utilized to collect primary data. Classroom observation was an additional tool to gather data on how students communicate in English and observe teachers' methods of teaching speaking skills. The results identified five major sources of students' English speaking difficulties: teachers' related problems (traditional teaching method, poor English proficiency, poor classroom management), students' related problems (lack of practice, lack of interest, mother tongue), overcrowded classrooms, poor course material design and absence of internet access. This study is significant for learners, instructors and syllabus developers.

Keywords: English-speaking skills; language theories; learning; teaching, speaking difficulty

1. Introduction

Language is a universal tool for exchanging ideas, opinions, and feelings with others. It is a means of expressing our thoughts and feelings, so it is crucial to social interaction. In Ethiopia, English is taught as a foreign language. It has played an important role in education. It is used as a means of communication and a link to the outside world. Students can hone their English language skills through studying English.

Listening, speaking, reading and writing are the four pillars of language. One must understand and speak the language before putting his/her thoughts into words to read and write effectively. Receiving information, processing information and making sense are all speaking parts. The learners' ability to talk in English is a crucial indicator of how well they are progressing in his/her studies of a foreign language. English Speaking can be honed by engaging actively in English conversation. The goal of learning a foreign language is to communicate with others (Sun, 2019).

Ethiopia's educational system emphasizes on English to improve the country's skilled manpower. In Ethiopia, Amharic, Afan Oromo, and other mother tongues are more commonly used for communication than English. Students at the university level are expected to communicate effectively in English. A Good command of English has significant merits to students' academic performance. Even though the Ethiopian government has attempted to improve students' communicative competency, most Ethiopian University's students fail to speak English fluently. Specially, Rift Valley University students cannot communicate effectively in English. Many university teachers have tried to support their learners speak English in the classroom, but learners are frightened to speak.

Zhang (2009) stated that speaking is still the most challenging skill for most students to master. In addition, Maulana, Daud and Heriansyah (2016) argued that learners lack the confidence to speak and feel afraid of making mistakes while speaking. Moreover, they have vocabulary shortage and poor pronunciation when speaking English. Similarly, Dash (2014) and Florist (2012) stated that learners' knowledge, interest, linguistic skills, personalities, and speaking topics could all contribute to students' inability to speak. Several factors impede the students'

ability to communicate verbally. Most students lack self-confidence and are always apprehensive when they speak English. This demonstrates that learners have lack of good command of the English language and little desire to practice speaking English. Similarly, Rift Valley University students rarely use English in the classroom and never use it outside the university. Most Ethiopian students face difficulty when they are asked to communicate in English. Students' speaking skills at a university level are insufficient to meet their learning objective based on the researchers teaching experience as university English language instructors.

Even though many researchers assessed the causes of learners' speaking difficulties and recommended solutions for the issues, most foreign language students are still challenging speaking English. This speaking difficulty indicates that some unidentified factors have not been discovered by the studies conducted so far. For this reason, the researchers aimed to focus on unique areas such as issues related to teachers, students, classrooms, course materials, and internet access in the university. Students' poor English speaking proficiency motivates the researchers to study on the topic entitled "Investigation into the Source of Students' English Speaking Difficulties." The study's objectives are:

- To discover problems related to teachers that affect learners' speaking skills.
- To investigate the problems related to students that influence their speaking skills.
- To explore the classroom-related problems that influence learners' speaking skills.
- To identify course material design related problem that influence learners' speaking skills
- To assess internet access related issues that influence learners' English-speaking skills.

2. Review Literature

2.1 Theories of Languages Learning and Teaching

2.1.1 Behavioral Theory

Behavioral theory proposes that learning takes place when an individual's behavior changes in response to a new set of circumstances in stable and easily observable ways. According to a behaviorism, learning is observable and measurable. Yimwilai (2015) argues that a stimulus is an external event that can be observed and influence a learner's behavior. A response is an overt behavior the learner shows in response to the stimulus. Consequently, behaviorists believe that learning is visible and quantifiable. A teacher can watch and quantify the changes taking place in a learner. According to Skinner, the stimulus that follows a response is crucial to human learning. The theory of learned behavior argues that infants learn to speak by imitating adults, using sounds like cooing and bubbling, and then being rewarded when they successfully repeat the behavior. The audio-lingual approach is the mode of instruction most closely linked to the behaviorist school of thought on language acquisition. Ahn (2016) claims that audio-lingual approach is an approach to learning a language best suited to a structured classroom setting and that it is best for oral communication exercises. According to Behavioral theory, learning a language is seen as habit-building by memorization or repetition through drills. This theory holds as one of its central beliefs that acquiring a new language is mostly a matter of forming unconscious routines (Ahn, 2016). In light of this, behavioral theory said that acquiring a language is a complex process that goes beyond understanding specific linguistic features.

Cognitive learning theory focuses on the learner's mental processes (Yimwilai, 2015). Learning is often characterized as a trial-and-error procedure. Cognitive learning theory is the most well-known and influential paradigm (Dudova, 2022). As Barman (2012) stated, acquiring a new language is the outcome of constructing and testing a set of rules. According to Cognitive theory, children were equipped with Language Acquisition Device (LAD). Children's ability to develop a set of rules based on the amount of interaction they make in a language. As the cognitivist, language acquisition device aids a student in learning any language. Although the students rely on the instructor's verbal inputs, they can play a great role in their learning process (Alamri, 2018). The cognitivist developed the grammatical curriculum to encourage students to study the subject. Thus, books and other educational resources help learners foster proper grammatical use.

The communicative language teaching approach includes more than a single technique; it is seen as a whole approach (Alamri, 2018). It is the most widely advocated and implemented method in education today. It emphasizes the use of teaching language as a means of communication rather than the rote memorization of grammar rules. Communicative language teaching ensures that all language classes succeed by focusing on students' communication abilities. It focuses on using language in its natural setting, which is achieved when there is enough opportunity for interaction. This approach employs activities like role-playing, simulation, debate, storytelling, group work, dialogue, and discussion to help students acquire and practice the language.

The social cognitive theory of language acquisition is one of the theories in studying foreign language acquisition. It is known as Albert Bandura's theory that learning is the process of translating information from the environment into mental representations that govern behavior. It shows the nature of the link between the learner and the environment (Stapa, 2007). It focuses on how learners' characteristics and social environment affect their learning capacity. As a result, social cognitivism considers learning a dynamic process whereby individuals' cognitive processes interact with their environment as they internalize and make sense of new knowledge.

Humanistic approach considers language acquisition as a means to discover and expose the meaning of people's experiences through conversation. Community Language Learning Method (CLLM) is a humanistic approach of teaching a new language. According to this method, language teaching is active and social interaction. A classroom language instruction should focus on how languages are picked up in everyday social contexts (Syahyuri, 2018). According to the community language learning method a teacher's role is a counselor, while

students' roles are that of clients. In this language learning method, students are seated in a circle and are encouraged to draw on their emotions, intellect, relationships, and responses to make the learning process more fruitful.

In conclusion, this section dealt with various theories and approaches to language teaching and pedagogical practices. On this basis, there is no such method as a wholly best or worst. It is difficult to determine which method is optimal for teaching a particular language skill since different pedagogical methods are used for developing different language skills.

2.2 Empirical Literature

Imaniah (2018) conducted research on "Students' Difficulties in Presenting Academic Speaking Presentation." The study found out what students struggle with most while giving presentations in academic settings was the primary goal of this research. The results showed that learners weren't planning ahead, self-aware, motivated, and create goals.

"Students' Speaking Problems in English Presentation" was the subject of the study conducted by Fitriani et al. (2015). A total of 38 students were selected for this research. Data was collected by means of a survey. Vocabulary was shown to be the most prevalent issue students encountered while preparing their presentations. Confidence, anxiety of making errors, grammar, and pronunciation are the other determinants.

Nadzrotunnuha (2017) conducted research on "The Analysis of Students' Problems with Speaking Skills, ". The results revealed that 35% of respondents used their mother tongues, 56% experienced inhibition, 54% were silent, 51% had little or unequal engagement. The findings show that learners have a hard time communicating in a foreign language because of the problems such as a lack of enthusiasm, ideas, and involvement. In order to assist learners, overcome their speech inhibitions, the instructor employed reward-based motivation. Furthermore, according to Lamessa et al. (2023), students' language learning and speaking abilities are favorably affected by a classroom setting.

3. Methods

Qualitative and quantitative research methods were employed in the study. Accounting and Finance Department learners were the study's target population at Rift Valley University. 70 students were selected for this study using a simple random sampling technique.

Both questionnaire and classroom observation checklists were developed to gather data from the samples. The questionnaire was designed as a Likert-scale and distributed to 70 respondents. Classroom observation was also employed as a data-gathering method in this study. Four classrooms were observed to obtain accurate information about the teaching-learning English speaking skill. The physical classroom environment, teaching method and the implementation of tasks in communicative English-speaking classes were the focus of the observations in the classroom. The observation in the classrooms is an accurate depiction of what is going on in the classroom at a given time. The collected data were analyzed by SPSS, version 26. The results of the data were depicted in tables and figures.

4. Results

4.1 Analysis of the Students' Questionnaires and Classrooms Observation

Q1. My English teacher is fluent in speaking.

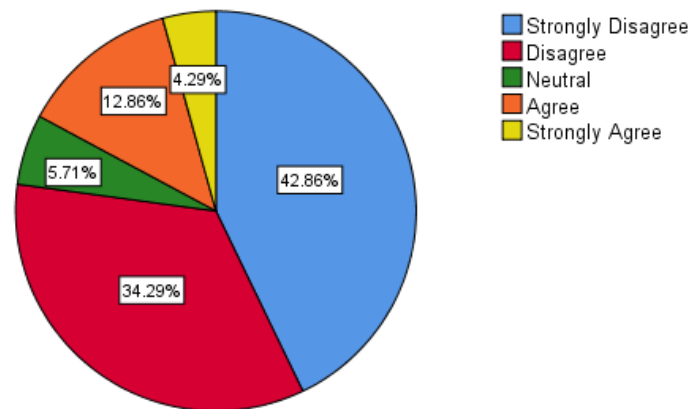


Figure 1. Participants' agreement level on their teachers' speaking fluency

Figure 1 shows that 42.86% and 34.29% of the participants strongly disagreed and agreed respectively that their English teachers are fluent English speakers. However, 12.86% and 4.29% of the students agreed and strongly agreed respectively that their English teachers are fluent speakers. 5.71% of the respondents remained neutral. This result shows that most English teachers do not have good English command.

Q2. "My English teacher gives me activities that develop my speaking skills in the class."

Table 1. Students' Level of Agreement on the given activities that develop their speaking skills

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	27	38.6
Disagree	21	30.0
Neutral	7	10.0
Agree	8	11.4
Strongly Agree	7	10.0
Total	70	100.0

Table 1 depicts that 38.6% of the participants strongly disagreed, and 30% disagreed with the statement saying, "My English teacher gives me activities that develop my speaking skills in the class." However, only 10% of the participants strongly agreed, and 11.4% of the respondents agreed, whereas 10% of the respondents remained neutral. This indicates that most English teachers do not develop communicative activities to improve their students speaking skills.

Q3. "My English teacher give me the oppportunity to practice speaking in pairs and groups."

Table 2. Students' Level of Agreement on a given opportunity to practice speaking

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	28	40.0
Disagree	20	28.6
Neutral	5	7.1
Agree	12	17.1
Strongly Agree	5	7.1
Total	70	100.0

Table 2 reveals that 40% of the students strongly disagreed, and 28.6% disagreed with the sentence, "My English teacher gives me the opportunity to practice speaking in pairs and groups." On the other hand, only 17.1% of the students agreed, and 7.1% strongly agreed with the statement, whereas 7.1% were neutral. This reveals that most teachers do not give students opportunities to practice speaking in English in pairs and groups.

Q4. "My English teacher usually prefers to use teacher-centered method of teaching than student-centered teaching method."

Table 3. Students' Level of Agreement on a teacher-centered teaching method

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	9	12.9
Disagree	11	15.7
Neutral	9	12.9
Agree	15	21.4
Strongly Agree	26	37.1
Total	70	100.0

Table 3 reveals that 37.1% of the participants strongly agreed with the statement which says, "My English teacher usually prefers to use teacher-centered method of teaching than student-centered teaching method" and 21.4% of the students agreed that their English teachers usually prefer to use teacher-centered method of teaching than student-centered teaching method, but 12.9% of students strongly disagreed, and 15.7% disagreed that their English teachers usually prefer to use teacher-centered method of teaching than student-centered teaching method, and 12.9% of respondents remained neutral. In addition, the classrooms observation shows the same result. These results reveal that the majority of teachers use teacher-centered teaching methods.

Q 5. I feel anxiety when I speak English.

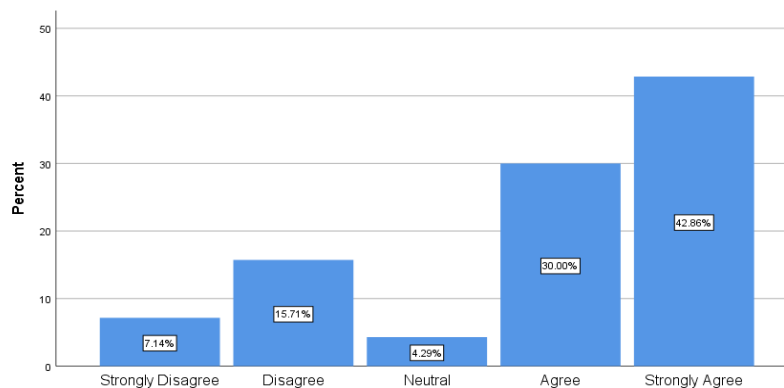


Figure 2. Participants' agreement on their speaking anxiety

Figure 2 shows that 42.86% and 30% of the learners strongly agreed and agreed that they feel anxiety when speaking in English. However, 15.71% and 7.14% of the learners agreed and strongly agreed that they feel anxiety when speaking in English. 4.29% of the learners remained neutral. This finding reveals that majority of the learners feel anxious to speak English because of fear of making mistakes.

Q6. “I do not have confidence to speak freely in class because I am afraid of making mistakes.”

Table 4. Students’ Level of Agreement on Confidence to speak freely in class

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	6	8.6
Disagree	5	7.1
Neutral	10	14.3
Agree	17	24.3
Strongly Agree	32	45.7
Total	70	100.0

Table 4 indicates that 45.7% of the learners strongly agreed and 24.3% of the respondents agreed with the sentence which says, “I do not have the confidence to speak freely in class because they are afraid of making mistakes,” but 8.6% and 7.1% of the learners strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that they have lack of confidence to communicate freely in during speaking since they are dread of making mistakes. Only 14.3 of the respondents were not sure. This result reveals that most students lack the self-confidence to communicate in English.

Q7. “I usually like to practice speaking English in and outside class.”

Table 5. Students’ Level of Agreement on Practicing Speaking English in and outside of the class

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	23	32.9
Disagree	19	27.1
Neutral	14	20.0
Agree	8	11.4
Strongly Agree	6	8.6
Total	70	100.0

Table 5 indicates that 32.9% of the participants strongly disagreed that they are not usually motivated to practice speaking English both in and outside the classroom. And also, 27.1% of the respondents disagreed with the sentence they were inquired about. However, 8.6% of the respondents answered strongly agreed, and 11.4% of participants answered agreed that they are usually interested in practicing communicating English both in the classroom and outside of the classroom, whereas 20% of the respondents were neutral. This finding reveals that most students are not motivated to practice speaking in English.

Q8. My English teacher sometimes uses YouTube short videos in the classroom to teach speaking skills.

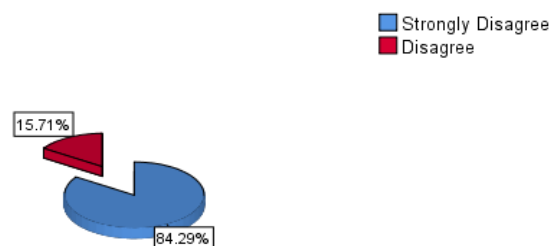


Figure 3. Level of respondents’ agreement on using YouTube to teach speaking

Figure 3 depicts that 84.29% and 15.71% of the learners strongly disagreed and disagreed that their teachers do not use short videos to teach them speaking skills. This result shows that students do not get any opportunity to listen to the model sample media conversation in speaking classrooms.

Q9. “There is a large number of students in the classroom.”

Table 6. Students’ Level of Agreement on a large class size

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	13	18.6
Disagree	7	10
Neutral	10	14.3
Agree	15	21.4
Strongly Agree	25	35.7
Total	70	100.0

Table 6 reveals that most respondents (35.7 %) strongly agreed, and 21.4% of the respondents agreed that the classroom is overcrowded. However, 18.6% of the participants strongly disagreed, and 10% disagreed that the classroom was overcrowded. 14.3% of the respondents

were neutral. This finding shows that the classrooms were overcrowded. This result is also supported by the classrooms observation result. Q10. There is an internet access in the university.

Table 7. Students' Level of Agreement on Access to the Internet in the University

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	28	40.0
Disagree	25	35.7
Neutral	7	10.0
Agree	6	8.6
Strongly Agree	4	5.7
Total	70	100.0

Table 7 demonstrates that 40 % of the students strongly disagreed with the statement that there is internet access in their university. In addition, 35.7% disagreed with the statement. However, only 8.6% of the respondents agreed, and 5.7% strongly agreed that there is an internet access in their university. Only 10% remained neutral. This indicates that almost all students do not get access to the internet at the university.

Q11. My mother tongue interference affects my English speaking skill.

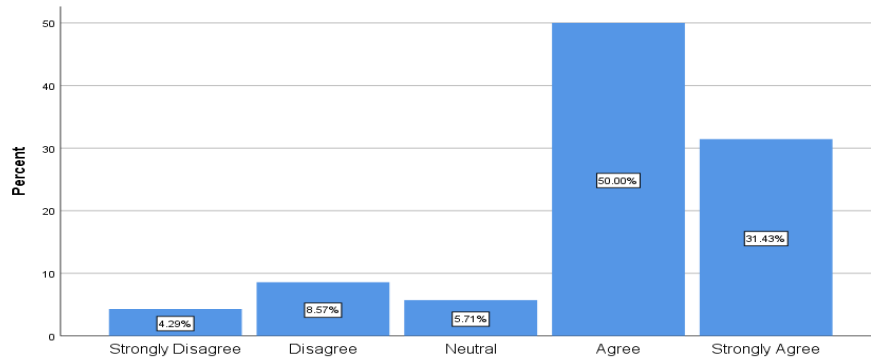


Figure 4. Participants' agreement level of on the influence of their mother tongue on their English speaking skills

Figure 4 indicates that half (50%) of the respondents agreed that their mother tongue interference affects their English speaking skills. And 31.43% of the participants strongly agreed that their mother tongue interference affects their English speaking skills. However, 8.57% of the respondents strongly disagreed, and 4.29% of respondents disagreed that their mother tongue interference affects their English speaking skills whereas 5.71% of the respondents answered neutral. This result reveals that students' mother tongue interference affects their English speaking skills.

5. Discussion

This study reveals the following findings as the major sources of students' speaking difficulties:

1. Teachers-Related Problems

a. Teaching methods

The study reveals that traditional teaching method is one of the major sources for learners' speaking difficulties. Teachers play the lion's share in the success or failure of their student's ability to speak. Students' learning is influenced by the methods used to teach them. The majority of teachers at Rift Valley University use traditional methods of teaching languages. In the traditional approach, language function is not accepted as a means of communication.

Teachers often prefer to use teacher-centered ways of teaching than student-centered teaching in speaking skills since it is simple and familiar with it. This traditional language teaching method highly affects students' active participation. Students in this approach are more concerned with passing an exam than learning the language for everyday use. As a result, this contributes to students' inability to communicate effectively in the language.

Most teachers who use teacher-centered teaching method do not provide students with activities that develop students speaking skills in class because they do not have much experience designing communicative language teaching activities. Besides, the classrooms observation revealed that teachers focus more on grammar-related activities than oral communication. The result is also supported by Antonio (2019), that says, "Teaching methods depend on several factors such as the developmental level of students, goals, intent and objectives of the teacher, content, and environment including time, physical setting and resources" (p.21). In addition, the result is also supported by Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu (2006), that say, "teaching approach and inadequate emphasis on speaking in the classroom affects students' speaking skills" (p. 498). Similarly, Aliyu (2017) found that:

most of the teaching methods adopted by teachers do not give adequate emphasis on developing the students' oral communication skills. They mostly dominate the classes and hardly give the students the opportunity to speak or interact in the learning process. This hinders the development of the students' oral communication skills. (Aliyu, 2017., p. 127)

b. Teachers' academic backgrounds

In this study, teachers' poor command of language is one of the major causes of learners' speaking difficulties. The kinds of training, teaching experience, and individual language proficiency affect teachers' efficiency. In addition, teachers' attitudes and beliefs about education are major factors influencing their choices of language learning activities. Teachers' educational backgrounds influence their teaching methods and overall performances. This finding is similar to the findings of Chang and Goswami (2011) that states "various factors hinder the students from developing their oral communication skills in English which include insufficient teaching hours for English, unskilled teachers, students' poor proficiency, non-English speaking environment" (p. 8).

c. Classrooms management

Poor classroom management is found to be one of the major sources of learners' speaking difficulties. Teachers' classroom management style is a significant factor in determining whether or not students' speaking skills are successful or unsuccessful. Teachers with poor classroom management tend to teach less than teachers with the best classroom management. Poor classroom management was observed in most speaking classrooms because of teachers' carelessness and lack of management skills.

II. Students-Related Problems

a. Anxiety

The result depicts that anxiety is one of the major sources of learners' speaking difficulties. Most learners are reluctant to communicate in English in the classroom because they dread making mistakes. Students' anxiety about being teased by their peers or blamed by the teacher also affects their speaking skills. Anxiety affects the effectiveness of communication skills and forces learners to be less fluent. Moreover, the observation of the classrooms indicated that most learners feel anxious about making mistakes when speaking in English. In the same way, Tuan and Mai (2015) found similar results. They stated that "Students' speaking performance can be affected by the factors that come from performance conditions (time pressure, planning, standard of performance and amount of support), affective factors (such as motivation, confidence and anxiety), listening ability and feedback during speaking activities" (p. 9).

b. Shyness

It is found to be one of the major causes of learners' speaking difficulties. One of the most common fears students have is that they will forget when speaking in front of a group. Therefore, many students experience anxiety and fear of speaking in English in front of the class. Shyness is a severe problem that hinders a student's speaking performance.

c. Lack of confidence

Lack of self-confidence is one of the major sources of learners' speaking difficulties. Learners have no confidence in communicating freely in the classroom since they dread making mistakes. Students' self-esteem drops sharply when their partners do not understand them. They feel uncomfortable expressing their ideas if the listeners cannot understand them. Therefore, they choose to be quiet. Similarly, Chiu-Ping (2010) also reported that "students' self-perceived and intrinsic motivation as significant factors affecting students' English speaking frequencies outside the classroom" (p. 100).

d. Lack of practice

The result reveals that lack of practice and motivation is one of the major sources of learners' speaking difficulties. This finding shows that most students did not practice speaking English in and outside the classroom. This indicates that lack of practice can highly affect their speaking skills. Students lacking motivation (interest) and practice in speaking activities are less likely to improve their speaking skills. Most students do not have interest to practice speaking because the teachers did not organize pair and group work that allowed them to communicate and share their experiences with their classmates. Besides, the classrooms observation also reveals that students were given individual activities. This indicates that pair and group work are rarely given, affecting the students' speaking skills. This finding is similar to Mahripah's (2014) finding that says, "EFL learners' speaking skill is affected by some psychological factors such as motivation and personality" (p. 1034).

In this regard, Rao (2019) stated that "English language learners' have to put their whole efforts into practicing speaking skills and allot more time to such activities to prove themselves in the contemporary world" (p. 11). Similarly, Sudarmo (2021) said, "Mindfulness practice can help us improve our ability to regulate emotions and reduce stress, anxiety, and depression" (p. 116).

e. Interference of mother tongue

This study shows that the influence of the mother tongue is one of the major causes of learners' speaking difficulties. It can be difficult for learners to develop their foreign language speaking skills if all or most of their classmates speak a common mother tongue language. Learners prefer to speak in their mother tongue since they find it difficult to communicate in a foreign language with their peers and they prefer to learn in their mother tongue than learning in a foreign language.

This result is supported by Dinar (2016), who stated that: when speaking in a foreign language, students are more likely to shift to their native language. The students demonstrate this while working on the task together in groups; they speak in their native tongue rather than English the entire time. Students' English speaking skills are negatively affected since students place an excessive amount of dependence on the mother tongue.

III. Classroom-Related Problems

a. Overcrowded classroom

Being overcrowded classroom is found to be one of the major sources to learners' speaking difficulties. The classroom observation reveals that almost all classrooms were overcrowded or contained many students. Class size has an impact on the instructional process. Even though the current Ethiopian higher institution standard recommends 40 students in a 46.00m² classroom, it is not feasible in most universities. A similar result was found by Chen and Goh (2011) that stated "large class sizes, insufficient facilities and equipment are the major cause of students' speaking difficulties" (p. 336)

b. Poor course materials design

Poor course materials design is one of the major sources of learners' speaking difficulties. For educational purposes, instructional materials refer to devices with educational contexts or functions. Activities designed in the course materials are not sufficient to improve students' speaking skills. Similarly, Linh (2011) suggested that "students can use the activities and role-plays from course books and the Internet" (p. 218).

IV. Access to Technology-Related Factors

The finding of the study depicts that lack of internet access is one of the major hurdles to learners' speaking difficulties. The result indicates that most students had no internet access, which can help learners to enhance their speaking skills. As there is no sufficient target language exposure in the community, students are only exposed to the target language in the classroom. If students can get internet access, they may listen to a different English conversation which can help them to develop their fluency and pronunciation skills. This finding is supported by Ahmadi (2018), that says, "Technology is utilized via the use of computer and internet, learners develop higher order thinking skills, and it can be clinched that multimedia combined with teaching methodology, is crucial to entice learners towards English language learning" (p. 118). Similarly, Arifah (2019) stated that internet use improves students' motivation. In today's world, almost all educational resources can be found online. Students who take advantage of this opportunity enhance their speaking skills. Students' English proficiency improves when they use resources like YouTube, eBooks, movies, and other materials.

6. Conclusion

Most Ethiopian students believe mastering English language skills is the most difficult task. Many students were anxious about communicating in English. Rift Valley University, Accounting and Finance department students' sources of speaking difficulties are the subjects of this investigation. The findings revealed that learners' speaking skills are influenced by five main factors such as: teacher-related issues like the use of traditional teaching methods, lack of English proficiency, the lack of giving opportunity for students to speak English, inability to organize pairs and groups and poor classroom management; students-related factors like lack of confidence, lack of practice, lack of motivation, anxiety, shyness and mother tongue interference; physical classroom-related factors, such as an excessively large or overcrowded student in the classrooms and insufficient English teaching materials; course material design related factors like insufficient and ineffective activities, and technological-related factors like a lack of internet access and lack of using model audio-visual materials.

Teaching students how to communicate in various ways is an important part of their education. The students' speaking ability can be greatly enhanced if teachers allow them to participate in speaking activities. Teachers' teaching methods are the most important factor in affecting students' speaking ability. Student-centered teaching method helps learners apply what they have learned in class to real-world situations. Generally, this study is significant because it reveals the main sources of learners' speaking difficulties and its solution to the problem to enhance students' speaking skills. Furthermore, future researchers can study on curriculum and syllabus design and students' family-related factors.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial or non-financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper. Besides, this research received no specific grant from public, commercial, or not-for-profit funding agencies.

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Author's Contribution

Dr. Megala Rajendran conceptualized and developed the arguments presented in the article and wrote the manuscript and **Dr. Jeyalakshmi Subramanian** contributed to the literature review, validation of the arguments presented, provided critical insights and ensured the overall clarity of the paper. Besides, **Dr. S.Ramesh** contributed to the development of the literature review. In addition, **Oli Lamessa** contributed to questionnaire development, data analysis, interpretation, the edition and revision of the paper. Furthermore, **Dr. Prakash A and Dr. P.Revathi** contributed to the edit and revision of the paper.

We, authors, discussed the research findings, contributed to the interpretation of the results, reviews and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Informed consent

Obtained.

Ethics approval

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Sciedu Press.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

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Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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