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## Enhancing Oral Communication in English as a Second Language

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### Abstract

Oral communication is a cornerstone of English as a Second Language (ESL) education. It plays an important role in helping learners communicate effectively and adapt to real-life situations. This study explores innovative methods for teaching oral communication, such as task-based learning, role plays, use of technology, Audio-Lingual Method (ALM), and collaborative activities like presentation, group work, etc. in ESL classrooms. These methods aim to improve students' oral communication skills, fluency, confidence, and practical language use. Although the demand for English proficiency is growing in both academic and professional settings, several challenges affect the teaching of speaking skills. These challenges include large class sizes, lack of resources, limited teacher training, etc. The study highlights the importance of speaking skills in ESL education and shows how teaching methods can vary in different contexts. It addresses the lack of specific courses or prescribed materials for developing speaking skills, emphasizing the influential role of motivated teachers in engaging students and fostering basic to advanced language proficiency. The study further aims to identify essential strategies and skills for teachers in teaching oral communication in second-

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language classrooms. The findings may help guide recommendations for curriculum changes, teacher training programs, and improved access to teaching resources. By adopting interactive approaches, ESL education can better prepare learners to succeed in a globalized world.

**Keywords:** Oral communication, teaching methodologies, importance of CLT, myths in ESL

### **Introduction**

Oral communication is a productive language skill essential for effective human interaction. The importance of oral communication in language learning is recognized globally, as it provides learners with the confidence and practical ability to use the language in real-life situations. Linguists agree that oral proficiency contributes to the development of other language skills, including listening, reading, and writing. According to Morrow (2004), speaking skills are intricately linked with listening, reading, and writing, as language learners need to listen actively to respond appropriately in spoken exchanges. These interactions foster listening skills and require the learner to process and respond quickly, which improves fluency in both speaking and listening. For instance, students who engage in conversational practice tend to become better listeners, as they must understand their interlocutor's responses to continue the dialogue. In second language acquisition (SLA), speaking is often viewed as a primary skill that fosters learners' confidence in using the language.

Similarly, Canale and Swain (1980) argue that speaking is central to the development of communicative competence, which includes not only linguistic knowledge but also the ability to use language effectively and appropriately in various contexts. Speaking tasks provide learners with opportunities to practice different forms of communication, enhancing their grammatical knowledge, vocabulary, and pronunciation. This practical use of language strengthens both receptive skills (like listening and reading) and productive skills (like writing). Research across various contexts supports the view that oral proficiency is vital in SLA. In Asian contexts, for example, Wang and Bai (2019) highlight the importance of speaking in fostering communicative competence, which in turn aids in reading comprehension and academic success. Similarly, studies from European contexts stress the role of interactive

speaking tasks, which simulate real-life communication situations and engage learners in authentic language use, as essential for developing broader language skills (Dörnyei, 2005).

In the Nepalese context, learners struggle to develop oral communication skills because of the traditional emphasis on grammar and vocabulary, which neglects practical speaking practice. Consequently, learners are often unable to apply their language knowledge in real-life situations. English language instruction in Nepal predominantly focuses on written grammar rules and vocabulary memorization, contrasting with the need for interactive speaking practice. Gnawali (2018) highlights that English teaching practices in Nepal largely focus on rote learning and the memorization of grammar and vocabulary, rather than promoting communicative competence. Similarly, Sharma and Phyak (2017) discuss how traditional English language teaching in Nepal prioritizes the structural aspects of the language (e.g., grammar) over interactive, practical usage. Bhattarai (2011) traces the history of English language teaching in Nepal, noting that it has primarily relied on textbook-focused and grammar-translation methods. Furthermore, Giri (2014) states that English language instruction in Nepal has traditionally been grammar-based, with little emphasis on communicative skills. This lack of focus on oral communication affects learners' ability to express themselves confidently, engage in meaningful interactions, and manage real-life situations, ultimately limiting their overall language proficiency and success in academic, professional, and social contexts.

Addressing this gap requires innovative, practical, and culturally responsive teaching methodologies that prioritize oral communication in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms. Oral language proficiency directly influences learners' ability to express themselves, engage in meaningful interactions, and handle real-life situations (Brown, 1994). As a primary means of interaction, speaking serves as a medium for conveying information and fostering social, cultural, and academic integration (Harmer, 2001). In language learning, speaking is often prioritized as it typically precedes other communication skills, with children generally learning to speak before they can read, write, or listen. In ESL education, developing oral communication

skills presents unique opportunities and challenges. It requires learners to engage in spontaneous, real-time language use, integrating linguistic knowledge with the ability to adapt language to different contexts (Harmer, 2006). Harmer emphasizes that speaking fluently involves not only a mastery of language features but also the ability to process information and language "on the spot" (p. 269). Thus, speaking remains central to language learning activities, reflecting its essential role in communication and human interaction. Recognizing the gap in second language speakers' speaking skills, this article explores innovative approaches to enhancing these skills, focusing on integrating practical and culturally responsive teaching methodologies aimed at improving learners' communication abilities and benefiting both teachers and students in their professional development.

The objectives of the study are to identify the challenges faced by ESL learners in developing oral communication skills in the Nepalese context, explore innovative teaching approaches such as task-based learning, role plays, discussions, and collaborative learning to enhance oral communication in ESL classrooms, and provide recommendations for teachers and educators to improve oral communication skills in ESL learners. To achieve these objectives, the study seeks to answer the following questions: *What are the key challenges faced by ESL learners in developing oral communication skills in Nepal?* and *how can teachers effectively integrate practical speaking activities into their ESL teaching practices to enhance learners' confidence and communication skills?* In addressing these questions, the study explores innovative pedagogical approaches as tools to engage students in a second-language context. Practical approaches, such as task-based learning and interactive activities, can help learners become more confident communicators, ultimately contributing to their academic and professional success. Brown (2007) emphasizes that speaking, particularly in social and academic contexts, plays a crucial role in boosting learners' confidence. When learners practice speaking in authentic situations, they become more comfortable using the language and can express themselves more effectively. This increased confidence extends to other areas of language use, such as reading comprehension and written expression, as learners are more likely to take risks with

the language and engage in more complex tasks. Therefore, oral proficiency is not an isolated skill but a central component that influences other aspects of language learning. As learners build their speaking abilities, they simultaneously enhance their listening, reading, and writing skills, contributing to a more holistic approach to second language acquisition. By integrating innovative, interactive teaching methods, ESL educators can foster a learning environment that prioritizes practical communication, thereby equipping learners with the language skills needed for success in both academic and real-world settings.

### **Literature Review**

A number of studies regarding oral communication indicate that most of the oral teaching in the context of second language environment is expedient. Several teachers in Nepal indicate that there is no proper teaching and learning activities focusing on oral communication. Even course books of language and curriculum do not give sufficient space for oral communication. All the course plan for the teachers is consumed by reading, writing, drilling, and grammar activities. Only five percent time is slotted for oral communication. The importance of oral communication in ESL education cannot be overstated. Fluent speaking enables learners to perform communicative tasks effectively, thereby boosting their confidence and motivating further learning (Ellis, 1994). Ellis further argues that communicative competency in a second language is highly meaningful when the speaker can successfully perform their desired tasks. Clearly, effective language performance brings immediate satisfaction, while incompetent performance can demotivate speakers. In the context of ESL education, oral communication enhances learners' ability to speak fluently, which is fundamental because it allows them to use the language in practical, real-world situations, such as holding conversations, participating in discussions, or giving presentations. Success in communication boosts their self-confidence and motivates them to continue improving their language skills. Learners with strong speaking skills can complete tasks such as asking for directions, ordering food at a restaurant, or explaining their ideas in a meeting, which makes them feel more confident about their abilities. For example, if a student successfully participates in a group discussion,

they may feel proud of their contribution and become more willing to speak in future activities, which will help build their confidence.

Generally, “oral communication is also called Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) that emphasizes interaction as both the means and the goal of language learning” is commonly associated with Richards and Rodgers. In their influential work, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching* (2014), they explain that CLT focuses on interaction as a central component of language learning, aiming to develop learners' communicative competence rather than just their grammatical knowledge. Activities under CLT, such as role-plays, group work, and problem-solving tasks, encourage authentic and contextual language use (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). These methodologies address key aspects of language acquisition, including expression and interaction, by incorporating diverse activities and methods. However, learning a second language, such as English, presents unique challenges, encompassing both linguistic and non-linguistic factors. Consistent input is essential to equip learners with basic language skills, enabling them to progress toward meaningful communication. Ellis (2008) suggests that practice and reinforcement play a crucial role in helping learners produce meaningful utterances and achieve effective communication in broader contexts. Nevertheless, insufficient input remains a barrier for many learners.

In recent years, the demand for English-speaking skills has been increasing, particularly among employers seeking candidates proficient in English to meet the needs of Nepalese individuals pursuing employment opportunities abroad. A study by Shrestha et al. (2018) highlights that English language proficiency is crucial for engineers in Nepal, as employers prefer candidates who can effectively communicate in English. This trend is not limited to the engineering sector; various industries in Nepal require employees with strong English skills to cater to the growing number of Nepalese workers seeking jobs overseas. These English skills help them succeed in foreign job markets and send money back to Nepal. Furthermore, the vibrant tourism sector in the country necessitates efficient human resources with fluent communication skills to support the growth of the national economy. However, the current educational practices may either fall short or require significant improvement to effectively enhance oral communication skills.

Writing, reading, and listening are also integral to language development, speaking often takes precedence because it is a direct reflection of a learner's ability to interact and use language purposefully in real-world situations (Kramasch, 1993). Unlike reading and writing, which can be more passive and reflective, speaking requires learners to produce language instantly and respond to others. Speaking reflects how well a learner can use the language to interact with others. Imagine a student in an ESL class who excels at reading and writing but struggles with speaking. They might understand English texts well and write essays effectively, but they could find it difficult to engage in conversations, ask questions, or make small talk in a social setting. This gap in speaking would limit their ability to interact meaningfully with others in real-world situations, such as participating in a work discussion or socializing with friends. Therefore, developing strong speaking skills is crucial for learners to use the language purposefully and confidently in everyday interactions. However, teaching speaking in ESL contexts is not always straightforward, as learners face various linguistic, cultural, and psychological barriers. These include anxiety about making mistakes, lack of exposure to native speakers, and difficulties in transferring language knowledge into fluent speech (Baker & Westrup, 2003).

The ability to speak well provides positive motivation, and we can observe this in our daily lives. Fluency in speaking enables learners to perform communicative tasks effectively while allowing them to use language purposefully. For example, when a student demonstrates strong speaking skills, they feel more confident and capable of handling other language skills. Considering the importance of communication skills, Brown (1994) highlights that such skills are crucial in real-world situations, as spoken language is more spontaneous and reflects real-life contexts compared to other language skills. Moreover, speaking skills are considered the prompt use of language because a speaker must be mindful of what they are saying and the context in which they are speaking. Benus (2021) contends:

Speaking is thus also a form of subconscious activity and saying even simplest words or phrases like 'bag' or 'on the top' is similar to catching a ball. It involves articulatory actions of various organs and requires precise coordination



among these actions and monitoring. When speaking is part of interpersonal communication, it also involves the perception of the interlocutor's actions and the adjustments of your speech production in view of these actions. (p. 8)

A speaker develops effective communicative skills not only by understanding the rules of communication but also by being aware of how spoken language is processed. Additionally, they must be conscious of language use, context, and the application of phatic communion, where language helps establish compatibility between the speaker, listener, context, and their rapport. For example, if someone says, "I enjoyed your birthday party last night," the sentence can be interpreted as a statement or declarative information. However, in context, it may serve as a polite remark rather than just a factual statement. This distinction is clear only when the speaker understands the context of the language.

With the broad utility of spoken communication, the spoken form of language becomes a valuable asset in the classroom. It helps foster relationships between teachers and students, as well as among students themselves, making the class more interactive and participatory. Moreover, spoken competence allows for easier interaction in various social and cultural contexts. Additionally, strong speaking skills prevent the class from becoming monotonous, motivating both teachers and students to engage in discussions, planning, and interactive activities. This also helps clear cultural and social contrasts among individual learners, particularly in second language contexts.

### **Myths on Oral Communication in ESL**

There are several common myths about oral communication in English as a Second Language (ESL) contexts:

**Myth 1: Speaking English fluently requires perfect grammar.** In reality, while grammar is important, fluency in spoken English is more about being able to communicate effectively and naturally, even with occasional grammar mistakes. Effective communication relies on clarity, vocabulary, and the ability to express ideas, rather than on perfect grammatical accuracy. Harmer discusses how fluency and effective communication are more about conveying meaning than perfect grammar,



emphasizing the importance of clarity and vocabulary in communication (Harmer, 2007).

**Myth 2: Non-native speakers must use a native accent to be understood.** However, pronunciation can vary greatly, and a native-like accent is not necessary for effective communication. The key is intelligibility. As long as a speaker's pronunciation is clear enough for others to understand, adopting a native accent is not essential. The goal is communication, not imitation. Jenkins (2000) highlights that intelligibility is the goal in communication, and adopting a native accent is not necessary for effective communication.

**Myth 3: Listening skills are less important than speaking skills.** Listening and speaking are closely connected. Good speakers are also good listeners, as they need to understand and respond to what others are saying. Effective communication involves active listening and responding appropriately, not just talking. Nunan (2003) explains the integral relationship between listening and speaking, pointing out that effective communication requires both listening and speaking skills.

**Myth 4: Only practice with native speakers will improve oral communication.** While practicing with native speakers can be helpful, interaction with other non-native speakers is equally beneficial. Communication practice in various settings, such as with classmates, language partners, or through multimedia resources, can also improve speaking skills. Goh (2013) discusses how practicing with non-native speakers is also beneficial and highlights the value of diverse interaction settings in improving oral communication.

**Myth 5: It's okay to speak only when you're completely confident in your language abilities.** Waiting for full confidence can limit practice opportunities. The more learners engage in speaking, even with mistakes, the faster they improve. Language learning involves trial, error, and continuous practice. Littlewood (2004) emphasizes the importance of practice, even if learners are not fully confident, and the role of trial and error in language development.

**Myth 6: There's a "right" way to speak English that all ESL learners must follow.**

English is a global language with many regional variations. There is no single "correct" way to speak it. The focus should be on effective communication, with attention to clarity, cultural understanding, and appropriateness in different contexts. Seidlhofer (2011) discusses the diversity of English as a global language and asserts that there is no single "correct" way to speak English, with communication focused on clarity and appropriateness for the context.

These myths about oral communication in ESL contexts often create unnecessary barriers for learners. The belief that fluency requires perfect grammar or a native-like accent can discourage learners and hinder their development. In reality, effective communication prioritizes clarity, intelligibility, and the ability to engage in meaningful interactions, regardless of occasional mistakes or accent differences. As noted by Téllez (2008), addressing these myths is crucial for clarifying important issues in second language learning. Overcoming these myths encourages a more inclusive and practical approach to language learning, empowering learners to focus on meaningful communication and continuous improvement.

### **Methods and Procedures**

This study uses secondary data analysis to investigate innovative methods for teaching oral communication in English as a Second Language classrooms. It is based on the researchers' collective teaching experience in ESL classrooms over the past three decades. Drawing from these classroom experiences, along with existing literature, research articles, reports, and survey the study examines strategies such as task-based learning, role plays, use of technology, Audio-Lingual Method (ALM), and collaborative activities like presentation, group work, etc., which have been widely recommended by linguists and educational researchers to enhance speaking skills. Adopting a qualitative approach, the study evaluates teaching oral communication in ESL contexts while considering practical classroom challenges, including large class sizes, limited resources, and inadequate teacher training.

Task-Based Approach (TBA) is an effective tool for developing oral

communication for oral developing oral communication skills. Prabhu (1987) notes that "in task-based teaching, lessons... are not acts of text or language presentation, but rather contexts for discourse creations" (p.97). It emphasizes meaningful discourse over presenting language forms. Similarly, Ellis (2003) states that tasks replicate real-world activities, such as making calls, conducting interviews, or planning events, focusing on task completion rather than language accuracy. For example, a task to "organize a school event" begins with the teacher introducing vocabulary related to event planning (e.g., schedule, budget, invitations) and providing a model conversation. In the task phase, students collaborate in groups to plan the event, assign roles (e.g., budget manager, coordinator), and discuss key details. They work in team as a group work. Finally, in the post-task phase, groups present their plans, receive peer feedback, and the class votes on the best idea. The teacher facilitates peer feedback and highlights effective use of language while noting areas for improvement. The class votes on the most feasible or creative plan. This task emphasizes using English for real-life purposes, helping students develop oral communication skills through collaboration and meaningful interaction. TBA makes language learning more engaging, meaningful, and applicable to real-life situations. For instance, Rahman (2010) discusses how task-based approaches improve oral communication skills in academic settings. Similarly, Sethi (2012) highlights the effectiveness of TBA in motivating students to speak in ESL classrooms and enhancing their communicative abilities.

Another effective approach is role play, is an effective method for teaching oral communication, particularly in second language learning. It helps students develop communicative competence, interpersonal skills, and fluency within social and pragmatic contexts. Gower et al. (1995) describe role plays as cooperative activities that enhance language and interpersonal norms. Similarly, Snarski (2007) emphasizes that role plays promote student interaction and attentiveness, providing all learners with opportunities to practice speaking (p. 3). Beyond improving language skills, role plays also foster essential soft skills and interpersonal abilities. In this activity, the teacher assigns roles to students, explaining who will play what role. During the role play, the teacher observes, provides feedback on language use, pronunciation, and fluency,

and highlights effective communication examples. This realistic and engaging activity helps students build confidence and improve their ability to use English in practical situations. Class or group discussions too are effective tools for oral communication, helping students build opinions and viewpoints on various topics. These discussions, whether student-to-student or student-to-teacher, enhance awareness of communicative functions. Thornbury and Slade (2006) emphasize their role in second language learning, fostering spoken language competency in real-life contexts and developing interpersonal communication skills. To maximize their impact, teachers should create a comfortable environment and structure discussions in ways that suit students, such as group tasks, prepared topics, or impromptu prompts. Alternative discussion formats can also cater to students' interests in language learning contexts.

Brown (2001) highlights the effectiveness of group work, defining it as tasks involving collaboration and self-initiated language among small groups of students (p.173). In the same line, Harmer (1998) has suggested three strategies for teaching speaking: rehearsal (opportunities to practice speaking freely), feedback (learning through teacher or peer input), and engagement (active participation in speaking activities like discussions and problem-solving). Group work fosters motivation, reduces anxiety, and encourages cooperation and participation. Activities such as discussions, debates, role plays, and storytelling help students express themselves, interact, and learn in social and cultural contexts (pp. 87-8). Presentations are another valuable for developing oral communication skills in both students and teachers. They provide students with opportunities to practice speaking, gain confidence, and receive constructive feedback. Presentations, being learner-centered, enhance students' motivation by making them feel valued. Chivers and Shoolbred (2007) highlight that presentations build individuality, reduce nervousness, and develop interpersonal and communication skills essential for employment (p. 9). Teachers can design individual or group presentations based on students' language competencies. While some students may initially fear public speaking, group presentations can ease anxiety and foster participation. Overall, presentations offer a dynamic way to enhance oral skills beyond traditional language classes.

Collaborative and cooperative learning are another tool for developing oral communication skills, involving students working together to achieve shared goals by contributing their skills and knowledge. While collaborative learning focuses on shared tasks, cooperative learning is more structured, emphasizing interdependence, accountability, and interaction. Both methods play a significant role in oral communication education. Djiwandono (2006) notes that cooperative learning enhances language acquisition by promoting collaboration in small groups or pairs (p. 32). Byrd (2009) also highlights the importance of group-based instruction in achieving learning objectives. As a key aspect of Communicative Language Teaching, cooperative learning fosters student engagement and strengthens both productive and receptive skills (p. 18). Together, collaborative and cooperative learning strategies create an interactive and effective environment for developing communication skills. Integrating these strategies into oral communication teaching can foster a dynamic and engaging learning environment, promoting the development of effective communication skills among students.

Richards and Rodgers (2014) further emphasize the importance of speaking and listening skills by discussing the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM), which is rooted in behaviorist theories of learning. ALM prioritizes the teaching of listening and speaking before reading and writing, highlighting the importance of oral communication in second language acquisition. The method relies heavily on repetition, drills, and the memorization of dialogues. The aim is to develop good language habits through constant practice. Each of these methodologies offers unique approaches to enhancing oral communication skills in language learners. The choice of method depends on the specific needs and context of the learners. In recent years, many Nepalese schools have been adopting the communicative teaching approach. Course books increasingly provide opportunities for students to practice speaking and engage in oral communication activities both inside and outside the classroom. Thanks to these oral communication practices in academic and professional fields, the communicative approach has gained recognition as an influential aspect of teaching and learning.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) methodologies to address the growing demand for English proficiency in both academic and professional contexts are considerably practiced. These approaches prioritize fluency over grammatical accuracy, encouraging students to use English in real-life scenarios. Activities such as role-plays, group discussions, and pair work have become more common, particularly in urban and semi-urban schools, where English is often the medium of instruction (Richards, 2006). However, in rural areas of Nepal, the adoption of CLT faces challenges such as large class sizes, limited resources, and inadequate teacher training, which hinder its effective implementation. Despite these constraints, the shift toward communicative approaches reflects a broader recognition of the importance of practical language use in Nepal's multilingual and multicultural educational landscape. As well as Teachers of English include activities like storytelling, debates, and oral presentations to enhance students' speaking and listening skills. Use of technology, multimedia tools, such as audio recordings and videos, are also used to expose students to native-like pronunciation and accents (Brown, 2001).

At present, in the schools of Nepal, the focus has shifted from teacher-dominated instruction to student-centered learning. Teachers act as facilitators, encouraging students to participate actively through tasks like problem-solving activities and collaborative projects (Nunan, 1991). Many private schools and even some government schools have adopted English as the medium of instruction for all subjects. This immersion strategy helps students build confidence in using English across different contexts (Dearden, 2014). Students are often engaged in projects that require them to research, present, and discuss topics in English. This method integrates language learning with critical thinking and teamwork. The rise of digital technology in Nepalese classrooms has introduced blended learning practices, where online resources, language apps, and virtual platforms complement traditional classroom teaching (Stockwell, 2007). As part of this shift, schools have started incorporating performance-based assessments, such as group projects, presentations, and class participation, to evaluate students' communicative abilities, rather than solely relying on written exams (Harmer, 2007).

## **Challenges in Developing Oral Communication Skills in ESL Classrooms in Nepal**

While interactive and communicative practices are becoming more common in ESL classrooms in Nepal, several challenges persist that hinder the effective development of oral communication skills. One of the primary challenges is the lack of adequately trained teachers. Many educators in Nepal have limited exposure to communicative methodologies and innovative teaching strategies that prioritize speaking skills, such as task-based learning, role plays, discussions, and collaborative activities (Shrestha, 2019). Traditional teacher training programs tend to focus more on grammar, reading, and writing, leaving teachers ill-equipped to facilitate practical speaking activities in their classrooms. Resource constraints further exacerbate the issue, particularly in rural areas where schools often lack access to teaching aids, digital tools, and modern language labs (Education Review Office [ERO], 2019). The absence of these resources limits the ability of teachers to create interactive and engaging learning environments that promote oral communication. In contrast, some urban and semi-urban schools have begun to integrate multimedia tools and performance-based assessments, such as presentations and group discussions, but these practices are not yet widespread.

Large class sizes also present a significant barrier to improving oral communication skills. In many Nepalese schools, classrooms are overcrowded, making it challenging for teachers to provide personalized attention, monitor individual progress, and facilitate meaningful speaking practice (Poudel, 2018). As a result, students receive fewer opportunities to actively participate in speaking tasks, reducing their exposure to real-life communication scenarios and limiting their oral proficiency development. Additionally, the multilingual nature of Nepal presents unique challenges for the consistent implementation of English-focused activities. Given that students come from diverse linguistic backgrounds, with many speaking different local languages at home, creating a classroom environment that fosters English speaking can be difficult (Giri, 2014). This linguistic diversity often results in students reverting to their native languages during classroom interactions, further



reducing their opportunities to practice English speaking. Teachers, too, may switch between English, Nepali, and local languages to ensure comprehension, which, while practical, may hinder students' immersion in English communication.

Addressing these issues requires targeted efforts to improve teacher training programs, allocate resources for interactive teaching aids, reduce class sizes where possible, and revise curricula to emphasize the importance of oral communication in second language acquisition. Without addressing these challenges, learners will continue to face difficulties in applying their language knowledge in real-world contexts, ultimately limiting their academic, professional, and social success.

### **Findings**

This study identifies key challenges and opportunities in teaching oral communication skills in ESL classrooms in Nepal. Based on secondary data, existing literature, and researchers' experiences the findings highlight areas for improvement, focusing on barriers and strategies to enhance learners' oral proficiency:

- English language teaching in Nepal largely relies on grammar-translation methods, with limited focus on oral communication skills. Instruction emphasizes grammar and vocabulary memorization, which hinders learners' ability to communicate fluently in real-life contexts.
- Innovative teaching approaches such as task-based learning, role plays, discussions, collaborative learning, group work, and presentations are lacking in ESL classrooms. These approaches promote active student participation, encourage peer learning, provide opportunities for authentic language use, and improve oral communication.
- Teachers often have limited exposure to communicative teaching methods, technology, and collaborative learning due to a lack of training and resources. Many are not trained in approaches like task-based learning or role plays, leading to teacher-centered methods with fewer opportunities for student engagement in speaking activities. Schools, particularly in rural areas, often lack the teaching

aids, digital tools, and multimedia resources needed for interactive language learning. This lack of resources makes it difficult to implement communicative teaching methods effectively.

- Overcrowded classrooms limit opportunities for interactive teaching and personalized feedback, making it harder for students to actively participate in speaking tasks. The diverse linguistic backgrounds of students also pose challenges in promoting English communication, as teachers often switch between languages, reducing immersion in English.
- Oral communication is not sufficiently emphasized in the curriculum, despite its importance in ESL contexts. The current curriculum prioritizes reading and writing, with minimal focus on speaking tasks, which are rarely assessed. Coursebooks and syllabi emphasize reading, writing, and grammar exercises, treating speaking activities as supplementary rather than essential to language learning. This curriculum limitation affects how teachers approach lessons and shapes students' perceptions of oral communication's importance. Since speaking skills are seldom assessed in formal examinations, learners tend to prioritize written language skills over spoken fluency.

To improve oral communication skills in ESL learners, teachers and educators should adopt innovative methods and overcome the challenges highlighted in the study. By integrating interactive, engaging, and communicative teaching practices, educators can foster a more dynamic learning environment. Utilizing a variety of methods, techniques, and approaches will help enhance oral communication skills and facilitate student learning, aiming to maximize engagement, understanding, and retention in second language learning contexts. The findings of this study align directly with these objectives, providing actionable insights into improving oral communication instruction in Nepalese public schools.

### **Recommendations for Improving Oral Communication in ESL Classrooms**

Based on the findings, the study offers several recommendations to enhance oral communication skills in Nepalese ESL classrooms:

- **Revise the Curriculum:** Incorporate more speaking-focused activities into the curriculum and allocate dedicated time for oral communication practice. Ensure that oral communication skills are included in formal assessments to encourage both teachers and students to prioritize speaking practice.
- **Enhance Teacher Training Programs:** Provide professional development opportunities for teachers to learn and implement communicative teaching methodologies. Focus on training teachers in task-based learning (engages learners in real-life tasks, improving both oral proficiency and communicative competence), role plays (simulates real-life situations, helping learners develop interpersonal and language skills in different social contexts), and collaborative activities to improve classroom practices.
- **Improve Access to Resources:** Invest in teaching aids, digital tools, and multimedia resources to support interactive language learning. Ensure that rural schools have access to these resources to bridge the gap between urban and rural education.
- **Reduce Class Sizes:** Where possible, reduce class sizes to facilitate personalized instruction and interactive learning. Smaller class sizes allow teachers to provide individualized feedback and create more opportunities for students to participate in speaking activities.
- **Encourage Student Participation:** Encourage students to express their ideas, build confidence, and reduce speaking anxiety through supportive group settings. Activities such as role plays, group discussions, and pair work help students practice speaking in front of an audience, enhancing their confidence, fluency, and clarity. Schools should also utilize digital tools and online resources to enhance language learning. There is a gradual shift toward assessments like presentations and group projects to develop oral communication skills.

These recommendations are relevant and actionable, aimed at improving oral communication in Nepalese ESL classrooms. They address the key issues identified in the findings and offer practical solutions for enhancing the teaching and learning

process. The suggested approaches are based on classroom practices intended for implementation in second language contexts. Despite challenges such as insufficient teacher training, lack of resources, large class sizes, multilingual dynamics, and curriculum limitations, these strategies can contribute to developing oral communication skills in Nepalese ESL classrooms.

### **Conclusion**

Oral communication in a second language is often hindered by the lack of substantial course plans and teaching methodologies that target this skill. In Nepal's educational system, the higher secondary English curriculum does not prioritize oral communication, leading to a gap in effective teaching strategies at the secondary and early campus levels. This study reflects the challenges faced by many English teachers, who continue to rely on traditional methods that emphasize grammar and written skills at the expense of speaking practice. As a result, students struggle to develop the speaking skills essential for academic success and real-world communication.

Despite the growing recognition of oral communication's importance for academic, professional, and personal development, many teachers still rely on outdated methods that do not foster active speaking practice. The lack of adequate teacher training and resources exacerbates the problem. Teachers are often unprepared to implement communicative approaches like task-based learning, role plays, and collaborative activities that engage students in meaningful speaking tasks. Insufficient professional development opportunities and the lack of teaching aids, digital tools, and multimedia resources further hinder the effective development of oral skills. Additional challenges, such as overcrowded classrooms and limited access to resources, make it even more difficult to adopt interactive, student-centered teaching methods. Large class sizes prevent personalized feedback, which is essential for improving oral skills. In many rural schools, limited access to resources further restricts the use of innovative teaching techniques. Consequently, students miss out on opportunities to practice speaking in authentic contexts, which is crucial for building fluency and confidence. However, positive trends are emerging in urban and semi-urban areas, where some teachers are

adopting more interactive and student-centered approaches. These practices encourage active participation, authentic language use, and peer collaboration, which are crucial for improving oral communication skills. While this shift is promising, it is essential to ensure that these practices reach students in rural or resource-constrained areas.

This article provides valuable insights for language course planners, helping them devise strategies that promote oral communication skills. The methods discussed, such as task-based learning and collaborative activities, can enhance student engagement and promote real-world language use. These strategies are not only applicable in Nepal but can also be used in diverse second language learning contexts globally. Teachers, especially those in resource-limited settings, can benefit from incorporating these resource-efficient strategies into their teaching practices. The study also offers key recommendations for addressing the challenges identified. First, it calls for curriculum reforms that prioritize oral communication by integrating speaking tasks alongside reading, writing, and listening activities. This would ensure that both teachers and students give equal importance to developing oral communication skills. Furthermore, ongoing professional development for teachers is essential to equip them with modern, communicative teaching methodologies. Increased investment in resources and technology is also necessary to facilitate more engaging and interactive language learning.

This study provides valuable insights into the challenges of teaching oral communication in Nepal. While some progress is being made, particularly in urban areas, significant efforts are needed to overcome the persistent barriers. Teacher training, resource allocation, and policy support are essential for equipping students with the oral communication skills needed to succeed in an interconnected world. A comprehensive approach, including curriculum reforms, professional development, and better resource distribution, will ensure that students develop the language skills required to thrive both academically and professionally.

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