



Communication Difficulties in English language of Sudanese Secondary School Student: analytical study

Manahil Altahir Ahmed¹ & Mahamoud Idrees Ibrahim²

^{1,2}Sudan University of Science And Technology, Collage of Post Graduate Studies.

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to investigate the areas of deficiencies in the speaking performance of the Sudanese secondary school students of English. The researcher used the descriptive analytic method as a research methodology. The data collection methodology used for teachers and other for students at secondary level. Having collected the data and analyzed it statistically by means of the SPSS package, the research comes up to the following findings. Secondary school teachers concentrate on building up learners' vocabulary and understanding grammatical rules more than engaging them in communicative tasks. In addition, teachers neglect speaking and listening skills. Most of the teaching activities are of the traditional modes such as dialogues, reciting texts and doing translation. The researcher recommended that, teachers should be keen about teaching English in general and developing speaking in particular. Schools should be provided with language labs or at least with some educational techniques introducing classroom communicative activities in good and interesting manners.

Keywords: *Communicative competence , teaching approach , communication approach, communication situation.*

المستخلص:

هدفت هذه الدراسة لبحث صعوبات التحدث في مادة اللغة الإنجليزية لدى طلاب المرحلة الثانوية . استخدمت الباحثة الأسلوب الوصفي التحليلي لمناسبته للدراسة . الأدوات المستخدمة لجمع المعلومات هي استبانتيين واحدة لأساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية بالمرحلة الثانوية وأخرى لطلاب المرحلة الثانوية . بعد أن أجرى التحليل الإحصائي بواسطة برنامج التحليل الإحصائي توصلت الباحثة لعدد من النتائج ، أهمها أن معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية بالمرحلة الثانوية يركزون في تدريسهم على تدريس معاني المفردات والقواعد أكثر من تركيزهم على النشاطات التخاطبية . كما أن مهارتي التحدث والاستماع لا يتم التركيز عليهما من قبل معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية . وقد أوصت الباحثة بالآتي : يجب على معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية التركيز أكثر على مهارة التحدث لدى طلابهم ، كما يجب تزويد المدارس بمعامل لتعلم اللغات أو على الأقل ببعض المعينات التدريسية التي تساعد في النشاطات التخاطبية بطريقة جيدة وممتعة .

كلمات مفتاحية: *المهارة التخاطبية ، طريقة التدريس ، طريقة التدريس التخاطبية، موقف تخطابي.*

INTRODUCTION:

One of the main necessities in learning a foreign language is the development of the four major skills. Despite the importance of these skills, for many years, teaching speaking has been undervalued. However, today's world requires that the soul of teaching should improve student's communicative skills, because only through that students can express themselves and learn how to follow the social and cultural rules appropriate in each communicative

circumstance. The result of neglecting speaking is obviously noticed. Most students at secondary schools cannot communicate in English language properly and effectively.

Literature review

Definition of the concept of communication

Speaking is "the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts (Chaney, 1998, p.13).



Speaking is the productive skill in the oral mode it, like the other skills, is more complicated than it seem at first and involves more than just pronouncing words.

John (1989), defined speech communication as a human process through which people make sense out of the world and share that sense with others.

Speech organization process helps to organize experiences while shaping.

The perception of the environment, also through the use of the language that meanings are shared thus speech communication serves as foundation for all the human relationship.

Communicative competences:

Linguistic theory concerned primarily on ideal speaker – listener in completely homogenous community, who knows his irrelevant condition of memory limitations (random or characteristic) in his applying knowledge of language in actual performance (Chomsky 1965.p3).

Teaching approaches :

The problem is that students and especially students in developing countries who have received several years' formal English teaching, frequently remain.

Deficient in ability to actually use the language, understand use in normal communication, whether in spoken or in written mode.

It seems generally the reason for this state of affairs is that secondary – school teachers don't do their job properly; they do not follow the approach of teaching English which thought to them in training colleges and on the in – service course and which is embodied on the prescribed text books. The assumption is that if only the teacher could be persuaded to put this approach in practice, then the problem would disappear. It is seldom that the validity of the recommended approaches called in to question. Brimfil (1985) suggests that the problem root is to be found in the approach itself, the difficulty

is that the ability to make sentences not the only ability we need to communicate.

Communication only takes place only when we make sentences to reform in variety of different acts of an essential social nature.

Thus we do not communicate by composing sentences, but by using sentences to statement of making different kinds, to describe, to record to classify and soon, or to ask questions, make request, give order, knowing what involved inputting sentences together correctly is only on part of what we mean by knowing the language, and it has very little value on its own it has to be supplemented by acknowledge of what sentences counts on their normal use as means of communication. And I do not think that the recommended approach makes adequate provision for teaching of this kind of knowledge. The materials are easy they are conducive to the growth of production ability but easy input cannot secure easy comprehension of difficult materials, on the other hand, difficult materials contribute the growth of comprehension ability, but often too difficult to cultivation of production ability and therefore wasted in terms of production.

So far the wide gap between comprehension and production has not been adequately considered by the communicative approach and the comprehension approach. (Kristen's comprehension input method, the listening based method).

The communicative approach.

The communicative approaches are one of the most modern approaches of teaching foreign language in the world and recently being adopted in most Arab countries but not in Sudan. Samar Abdulla (2002)

She is also arrived at the lack of training offered to new teacher in field of teaching. Samar divided Sudanese schools in to types. Ones that focus on teaching reading and writing in addition to grammar, these are the state school, the other



focus in listening and speaking skills (private schools). In state schools English is taught for the purpose of passing the exams. Sudanese certificate examinations included, Comprehension questions, essay writing and grammar. Samar comes to the point that, although student's minds are filled with grammatical paradigms and syntactic rules, may still seem to lack the ability to construct correct sentences while speaking. Since speaking skill is not required for the exam, then it is of less importance. Brain Tomlinson defines communicative approaches as: "Approaches to language teaching which aims to help teachers to develop the communicative competence" (Brain Tomlinson in date divided the approach to two types.

" weak communicative approach with in which the teacher in clues over teaching of language forms and functions in order to help the learners to develop the ability to use them for communication " strong communicative approach which relies on providing the learner with experience of using the learners a main means of learning".

In such an approach the learners for example talk to learn rather than learn to talk. So he emphasizes on talking or speaking skill as the target of learning and teaching process since he aims which shows the importance of speaking skill among the other skills.

(Samar Abdull a2013) has described the communication approaches situation in the Sudanese school nowadays, we find aside gap between English language taught in state schools and that in private educational sectors. In the former we find that the communicative method is still struggling its way into English classes whereas in the latter, classes are equipped with vides, tape – recorders and other various visual aid. While there are numerous private schools

and institutes, still state schools twice their number.

The history of the communicative approach backs to 9702 at the time that the necessity to introduce a new method of teaching mush roomed, the frail of the direct method and the grammar translation method in providing language learner with appropriate social language, gesture or expression realistic in other words language learners were not learning words language learners were not learning enough whole language Ann, Galloway (1993) stated that:-

Communicative language teaching makes use of real – life situations that necessitate, Communication. The teacher sets up as situation on that students are likely to encounter in real life unlike the audio lingual method of language teaching, which relies on ration and drives, the communicative approach can leave students in suspense as to the outcome of a class exercise which will vary according to their reactions and responses.

She justifies that by saying students ovation is basely built on their desire to communicate the target language in meaningful ways about meaningful topics.

Mustafa (1997:53) as cited in Mohammed Ahmed (2007:13) mentioning the shortlisted facilities foster speaking and listening skills.

“Sudanese student's skills are limited to reading and writing (as listening and reading require facilities which are not available, and crowded classrooms constitute constrains and they are not tested).

One of the previous studies in the same field is done by Ezzeldin Mohamed Tejeldin (2001:15). Title of this study investigating difficulties EFL students in oral communication . This study Objectives will investigate to identify the difficulties experienced by EFL students in oral communication and to provide strategies on how



to teach oral communication. The major Results are:

- More practice of some certain fundamental of oral communication factions to remove difficulties that encounter EFL student.
- Teacher should select an interesting and familiar form of language.
- Successful oral communication necessitates the inclusion of the socio-culture items of a language.

Materials and methods

The subjects of this study were 20 secondary schools Sudanese students at third year (Gadarif State). They were male students whose native language is Arabic and they learn at English as a foreign language. The school context included students of the same socio-economic background. They were from different specializations (arts and science).

The students in this age group are known to be diverse in terms of academic content knowledge, learning styles and multiple intelligences. They also have different experience operational egocentrism in which they do not separate their own abstract knowledge from the perspective of others. The subjects of the study have different abilities. Some of them are high achiever in English while others are low achievers. Their current level of proficiency and achievement in English is identified by the monthly assessment tests and final exams. They do not need any additional classes.

Two questionnaires were used as data collecting methods the Students which contain questionnaire contains three parts about the approach, teacher proficiency and the curriculum. It consists of 40 statements. The respondents are expected to decide whether the statements are always, usually, often sometimes or never.

The questionnaire after being filled was analyzed statistically by SPSS program. The other questionnaires were for the teachers who

are currently working in the secondary schools. The questionnaire included five open ended questions which deal with teachers training to teach speaking pre-service and while service as well as teacher's attitudes towards the text books. It also investigates teacher's expectations about the outcomes of teaching speaking. The teacher questionnaire was distributed to 20 English teachers in the secondary school stage. The questionnaire was analyzed statistically by SPSS program and they were randomly selected from four streams.

Results:

Many students blame teachers on including visual aids and using audio materials in the class specially in speaking English classes. This could be seen in the tables No. 1, 2, 3, 4 which investigate the teaching approaches used at the secondary school English teacher in Sudan. The number of those who said never is clearly higher than those who said always and usually statement that investigated the approaches section as the first 10 items of the questionnaire. In the first table at data presentation it appears that more than 80% of participants said teachers never use visual aids to stimulate speaking. Teaching approaches, about teacher proficiency students. To major finding of this study is that Sudanese students do not have a sufficient skill of speaking that enables them to communicate in English fluently. They are other area of the field of speaking need to pay much attention at specially training teacher to achieve the expected output in terms of speaking part.

Sudanese students are neglecting the speaking skills at secondary level at least, since it is not part of their final exam. Through table 3 indicates that the curriculum designer has put in his mind the conversations and dialogues that need the need of students but it is still not satisfactory to the teachers answered the questionnaire this is clear in chart that provides teachers responses to the questionnaire. Other



finding that could concluded from this research, that schools are not equipped with the technologies and devices that aids enhancing speaking skill specially learning skills of foreign language in general above it all, it worth mentioning here that all the teachers have agreed that speaking is not included in the examinations so it is ignored by teachers and consequently by students.

This section in clues testing hypothec of the studying in chapter one according to the results of data analysis and presentation in chapter four

Hypothesis1:

There are many reasons behind students', low achievement in speaking English fluently including the syllabus. According to statistical results as shown in table 2 through 165 it reveals that books do not devote parts for speaking skill or the teacher does activate it. Moreover students complain that textbooks are tight with out any audio materials accompanying them.

Tables 17 and 18 were about supplementary materials. About 108 out of 165 of the students stated that books were published without and CDs or cassettes. This hypothesis is approved.

Hypothesis 2:

Teachers are not well trained to teach speaking skill. To test this hypothesis which agrees with Samer Abdall? The researcher made a questionnaire but it statistical shows that teachers had attaining either pre-service lat the university or in service (while they are working as teachers) so the hypothesis is disproved. Samer Abdalla proved that teacher at Sudanese school are lacking training and autonomy.

Hypothesis 3:

There are no good moods for the students to imitate. Despite that students have said they are well training to pronounce correct but they do not have the chance or an opportunity to contact and communicate with the native speaker lively or through cassettes and tapes. As shown earlier, teacher inefficient training in phonology and phonics led them to jump or not to teach the phonic section in the text book. Table No.3 and 4 show that no any audio devices have been used to help them imitate the native language speaker.so, the date prove this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4:

There is no time allotted for speaking practice with in the period.

For students to master speaking skill, they have to have time with in the period or during the day to do other activities in speaking. Table No.3 shows that students were not asked or given a chance to present topic in the class this could be due to the large number of students seated in each class. This indicates students do not have adequate time to practice speaking that this also affects ear training process negatively. The hypothesis is thus proved

Many students blame teachers not including visual aids and using audio materials in the class specially in speaking English classes. This could be seen in the tables No.1 , 2 ,3 ,4

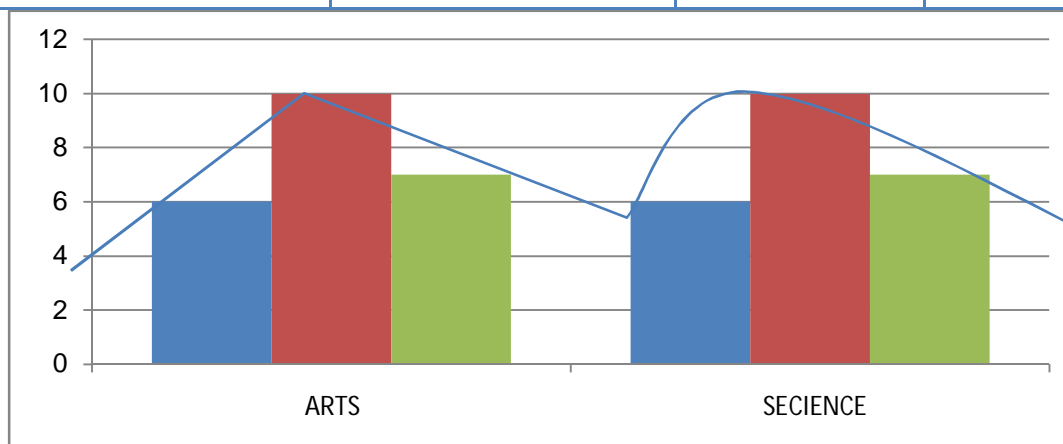
- It was found that teachers lack training in phonetic and phonology. Sudanese students do not have a sufficient skill of speaking that enables them to communicate in English fluently.

- Sudanese students are neglecting the speaking skills at secondary level at least, since it is not part of their final exam.

Table (1) Students Questionnaire : Approaches, Curriculum, Teacher Section

Section	APPROCHES	CURRICULUM	TEACHER
Arts mean	27.4634	33.5976	40.16.5
N	82	82	81
STD Deviation	6.40254	10.04049	7.39672
Science mean	27.3855	32.9139	39.9398

N	83	164	83
STD Deviation	6.48042	10.684720	8.57727
Total mean	27.4242	32.9939	40.0488
N	185	164	164
STD Deviation	6.42229	10.35475	7.99218

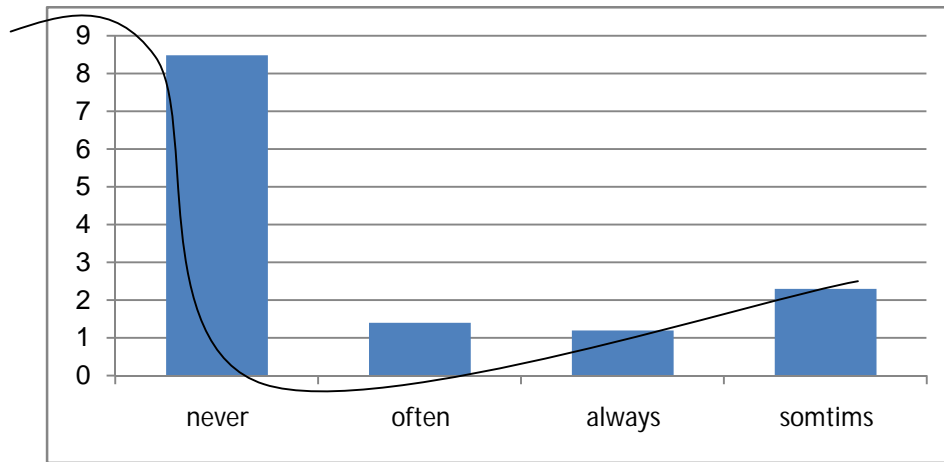


Table(1) shows the standard deviation and means for all section to the three variable which are approaches that followed by teacher in teaching English speaking skill as beginning part of the questionnaire , and the curriculum is taught in the government school in addition to

the teacher proficiency. The number of participants is almost the same. The statistics show that there are no significant differences in terms of section or fender to the all three variables, the number of participants to all sections.

Table 2 : The Role of Visual Aids

	frequency	percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Availed never	135	81.8	81.8	81.8
Sometimes	21	12.7	12.7	94.5
Often	4	2.4	2.4	97.0
Usually	2	1.2	1.2	98.2
Always	3	1.8	1.8	
Total	165	100.0	100.0	100.0

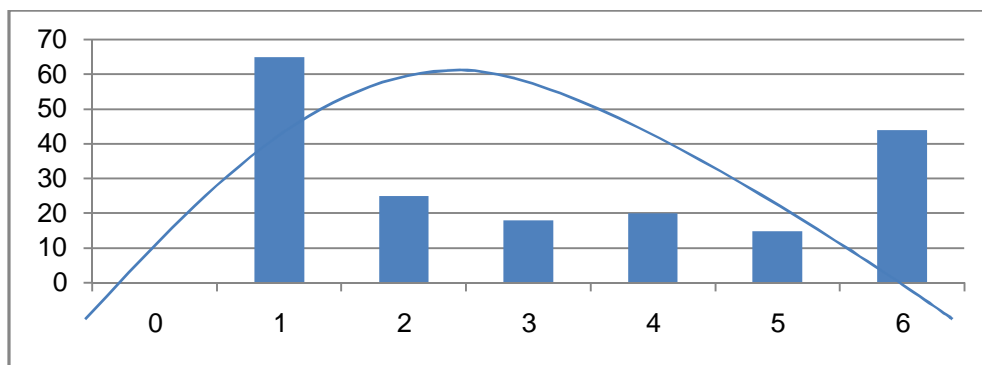


The majority of the respondents 81.8% say that visual aids are not used in the classrooms. Only

1.8% they say visual aids are used in their class for enhancing speaking skill.

Table 3: English books are published ((CDs or cassettes)) to aid listening skills.

		frequency	percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Availed	never	67	40.6	40.9	40.9
	Sometimes	18	10.9	11.0	51.8
	Often	23	13.9	14.0	65.9
	Usually	14	8.5	8.5	74.4
	Always	42	25.5	25.6	100.0
	Total	165	100.0	100.0	100.0



Means =2.67 - Std.dev = 1.662 - N=164

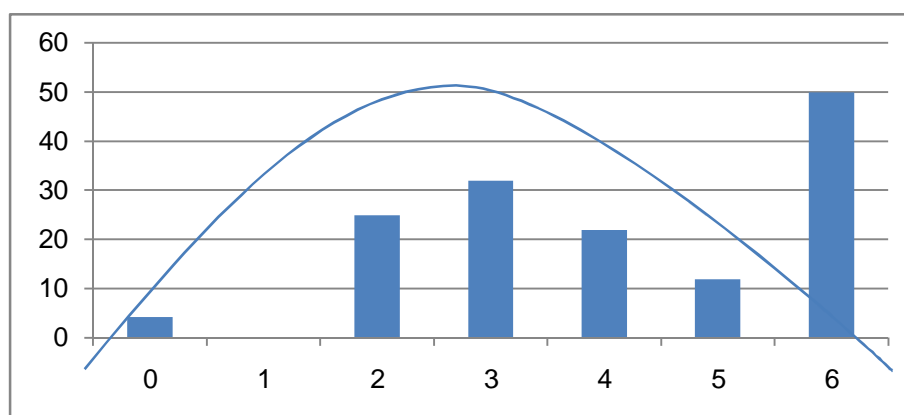
This figure shows mean of statement 14, the standard deviation and the frequency of answer. The previous table shows the result about statements: English books are published ((CDs or cassettes)) to aid listening skills.

And English books (CDs or cassettes)) used to aid speaking skills. It appears that the majority 88% consider the shortage of audio materials that aids improving listening and speaking skills of the students which results in improving students. Books were pranced and distributed without CDs or

cassettes.

Table 4: Samples consider phonics and phonology section in the English book is well taught

	frequency	percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Availed never	28	17.0	17.0	17.0
Sometimes	37	22.4	22.4	37.4
Often	28	17.0	17.0	56.4
Usually	16	9.0	9.7	66.7
Always	56	33.9	33.9	
Total	165	100.0	100.0	100.0



Mean = 3.21 - Std.dev = 1525- N=165

This figure shows mean of statement, the students deviation and the frequently of answer.

Table 4 shows 42% of samples consider phonics and phonology section in the English book is well taught. 39% of them think phonics and phonology are never or sometimes well taught this can consider as one factor that leads to inability to speak the English fluently.

Results

Many students blame teachers on including visual aids and using audio materials in the class specially in speaking English classes. This could be seen in the tables no 4.5 6 and 7 which investigate the teaching approaches used at the secondary school English teacher in Sudan. The number of those who said never is Cleary higher than those who said always and usually statement that imvestigat the approaches section as the first 10 items of the questionnaire.

In the first table at date presentation it appears that are than 80% of particpate said teachers never use visual aids to stimulate speaking. Teaching approaches, about teacher proficiency students. To major finding of this study is that Sudanese students do not have a sufficient skill of speaking that enables them to communicate in English fluently They are other area of the field of speaking need to pay much attention at specially training teacher to achieve the expected output in term of speaking part.

Sudanese students are neglecting the speaking skills at secondary level at least, since it is not part of their final exam. Tables 16 through table 25 in dicaqbs that the curriculum designer has put in his mind the conversations and dialogues that needy the need of students but it is still not satisfactory to the teachers answered the questionnaire this is clear in chart that provides teachers responses to the questionnaire. Other



finding that could be concluded from this research, that schools are not equipped with the technologies and devices that aid enhancing speaking skill specially learning skills of foreign language in general above it all, it is worth mentioning here that all the teachers have agreed that speaking is not included in the examinations so it is ignored by teachers and consequently by students.

This section includes testing hypotheses of the studying in chapter one according to the results of data analysis and presentation in chapter four

Hypothesis 1:

There are many reasons behind students' low achievement in speaking English fluently including the syllabus. According to statistical results as shown in table 15 through 26 it reveals that books do not devote parts for speaking skill or the teacher does not activate it. Moreover, students complain that textbooks are tight without any audio materials accompanying them.

Tables 17 and 18 were about supplementary materials. About 108 out of 165 of the students stated that books were published without and CDs or cassettes. This hypothesis is approved.

Hypothesis 2:

Teachers are not well trained to teach speaking skill. To test this hypothesis which agrees with Samer Abdalla? The researcher made a questionnaire but it statistically shows that teachers had attained either pre-service at the university or in service (while they are working as teachers) so the hypothesis is disproved. Samer Abdalla proved that teachers at Sudanese schools are lacking training and autonomy.

Hypothesis 3:

There are no good reasons for the students to imitate. Despite that students have said they are well trained to pronounce correctly but they do not have the chance or an opportunity to contact and communicate with the native speaker lively or through cassettes and tapes. As shown earlier, teacher inefficient training in phonology and

phonics led them to jump or not to teach the phonic section in the text book. Table no.3 and 4 show that no audio devices have been used to help them imitate the native language speaker. So, the data prove this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4:

There is no time allotted for speaking practice within the period.

For students to master speaking skill, they have to have time within the period or during the day to do other activities in speaking. Table no.33 shows that students were not asked or given a chance to present a topic in the class this could be due to the large number of students seated in each class. This indicates students do not have adequate time to practice speaking that this also affects ear training process negatively. The hypothesis is thus proved.

Discussion:

There are many reasons behind low performance in speaking English fluently including the syllabus. According to statistical results as shown in table 3 through 165 it reveals that books do not devote parts for speaking skill or the teacher does not activate it. Moreover, students complain that textbooks are tight without any audio materials accompanying them. And teachers are not well trained to teach speaking skill. To test this hypothesis which agrees with Samer Abdalla the researcher made a questionnaire which statistically shows that teachers had attained either pre-service at the university or in service (while they are working as teachers) so the hypothesis is disproved. Samer Abdalla proved that teachers at Sudanese schools are lacking training and autonomy.

There are no good reasons for the students to imitate. Despite that students have claimed that, they are well trained to pronounce correctly but they do not have the chance or the opportunity to contact and communicate with the native speaker lively or through cassettes and tapes. As shown earlier, teacher inefficient training in phonology



and phonetics led them to jump or not to teach the phonic section in the text book. Table no.3 and 4 shows that no any audio devices have been used to help them imitate the native language speaker.so, the data prove this hypothesis.

For students to master speaking skill, they have to have time within the period or during the day to do other activities in speaking. Table No.3 shows that students were not asked or given a chance to present topic in the class this could be due to the large number of students seated in each class. This indicates students do not have adequate time to practice speaking that this also affects ear training process negatively. The hypothesis is thus proved.

Finally and as a summary of the paper, researcher found that, teachers concentrate more on building up student's vocabulary and not on making students understand the communicative activities. And one of the reasons of speaking skills problems is the lack of using educational techniques, such as audio and visual aids in teaching English language. Listening and speaking skills are neglected by secondary school teachers. Also students are not motivated and encouraged to practice speaking the language through playing roles of other people in communication situation.

The paper recommended that teachers should work very hard in teaching English language in general and in developing students speaking skills in particular. And Secondary schools should be provided at least with some visual aids to be used in teaching English language. Besides, teachers should provide students with enough time to practice speaking skills by involving them in communicative activities. In addition, teachers should encourage and motivate students to read literature by providing them with simple and interesting books.

References

1) Doff (1988) teaching pronunciation – CUP-Longman.

2) Gillian Brown & Gorge Yule (1993) – teaching the spoken language – camp ridge university press.

3) Hammer , Jeremy (1988) - the practice of ELT. Chapter (18-20) .- person, Longman.

4) Hynes, M., and Bachman, M. (1989). Breaking the ice: Basic communication strategies London: Longman.

5) . Jones, L, and von Baeyer, C. (1983) Functions of American English. Cambridge: Cambridge university press.

6) . Hirsch, K, Lange, E, Millet, S, Blackwell, A, Kukupa, B, and Murphy, T. (1997) Impact words + phrases. Hong Kong: Lingual House.

7) . Richards, J, Hull, J, and Proctor, S. (1991) an Interchange: English for international communication. Cambridge: Cambridge university press.

8) Richards, J, Hull, J, and Proctor, S. (1991 b). Interchange 3 English for international communication. Cambridge: Cambridge university press.

9) . Ellis, G, and Sinclair, B. 1989 Acourse in leaner training. Leaning to lean English: Cambridge: Cambridge University press.

10). Ferrer – Hanreddy, J, and Whally, E. 1996. Mosaic one: A listening \ speaking skills book New York: Mc Graw – Hill.

11). Kenny, T , and Wool, L, 2000. Nice taking with you Tokyo: Macmillan. Skillman, P. and Mcmaill, C. (1996).

12) Springboard to success: communication stragies for the classroom and beyond Saddle River, Nj: prentical hall Regents

13). Mohasco, R, and Arthur, L (1987). Conversation Oxford: Oxford University press.

14). Dornier, Z., thurrell, S. (1992) Conversation and dialogues in action. New York: prentice Hall.

15). Keene, D, and Keene P. (1994) Conversation strategies Brattleboro, VT: Pro lingua associates.



- 16). Keller, E. and Warner, S (1979) Gambits 3: Responders, Closers and inventory. Ottawa: public Service Commission of Canada.
- 17). Clipped, F. (1984). Keep talking Cambridge: Cambridge university press.
- 18). Numan, D, and Miller L (Eds). (1995 new ways in teaching listening). Alexandria, V A: TESOL.
- 19) New ways in teaching speaking. Alexandria, V A: TESOL.
- 20). Nation (Ed.) (1994). New ways in teaching vocabulary Alexandria, V A: TESOL.



Sudan University of Science and Technology
Deanship of Scientific Research
Journal of Humanities Sciences

