

# **Chapter one**

## **Introduction**

### **1.0 Background of the Study**

Although speaking is considered a main language skill that pupils should improve, it has been widely noticed that they face many difficulties in speaking English. This study aims to find out what speaking difficulties are encountered by grade 7 pupils in basic schools in the Sudan. It also aims to find out the main factors that contribute to the existence of these difficulties. The results of this study can help the Ministry of Education, the EFL teachers, the curriculum designers, and the designers of assessment tools to understand the reasons why our young learners in grade 7 basic schools find it difficult to speak in English, and consequently, their plans for change and improvement of the pupils' speaking skill can produce more effective results when these factors are considered.

The use of English as a second language (ESL) or foreign language (EFL) in oral communication is, without doubt, one of the most common but highly complex activities. It is necessary to be considered when teaching English language especially, because we live at a time where the ability to speak English fluently has become a must. It is especially necessary for those who want to advance in certain fields of human endeavor Al-Sibai, (2004, p.3).

For language learning to take place, there are four conditions that should exist, the exposure to language speech, opportunities to use the language, motivation, and instruction. Learners need chances to say what

they think or feel and to experiment in a supportive atmosphere using language they have heard or seen without feeling threatened Willis, (1996, p.7). A fact that is highlighted by second language research is that progress does not occur when people make a conscious effort to learn. Progress occurs as a result of spontaneous, subconscious mechanisms, which are activated when learners are involved in communication with the second language. The subconscious element demands a new range of activities, where learners are focused not on the language itself but on the communication of meaning Littlewood, (1984). Harmer (1982) also argued that in a communicative task, the pupils' attention should be focused on the content of what they are saying, rather than the form. They should use a wide variety of language.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

During the different oral sessions, teachers use different activities and strategies to improve learners' speech, boost up their English and enhance them to well pronounce and utter properly; however, teachers still face some pupils' hindrances. Many pupils do not participate in oral expression courses, do not contribute and do not show any sign of progress which indicate that there is something wrong somewhere with pupils.

### **1.2 Significance of the study**

The main objectives of this study is to shed some lights on the problems that EFL pupils in grade 7 primary schools encounter when speaking English. The research will be conducted to pinpoint speaking difficulties that encountered by grade 7 pupils in basic schools in the Sudan, identify the strategies that teachers would adopt within the classroom to ameliorate the pupils' oral performances and to determine the strategies that teachers

should adopt to bridge the gap and treat these constraints at a very early level. Although many studies have been carried out in the field of teaching oral expression, in the dissertation, the significance is paramount in the sense that it will put an end to such a phenomenon and open doors to speaking English to ultimately treat these kinds of problems in their future oral teaching sessions.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

This study aims at:

1. Identifying the difficulties that face pupils in communicative activities.
2. Finding out the factor behind pupils' negative attitudes towards learning English as foreign language.
3. Identifying the main factors that affect classroom situation.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

1. What are the difficulties that face pupils when participating in communicative activities?
2. What are the negative attitudes that pupil have towards communicating and speaking in English as a foreign language?
3. To what extent the classroom situation affects pupil in the communicative activities?

### **1.5 Research Hypotheses:**

1. Pupils in grade 7 face difficulties when participating in a communication activities.
2. Pupils have negative attitudes towards speaking in English as a foreign language.

3. Pupils are affected by the classroom situation during communicative activities.

## **1.6 Research Methodology**

The methods adopted to achieve the objectives of this study are both descriptive and analytical. The researcher collects the data which are analyzed and discussed. The subjects of this study will include pupils of grade 7 at basic school.

In collecting data, the researcher designs a questionnaire for teachers to answer the questions of the research and verify the hypotheses.

## **1.7 Limits of the Study**

The study focuses on the problem of communication that faces pupils' in grade 7 at basic schools.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review and Previous Studies**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

In every level of learning a language, speaking is the most used factor that is used to measure how someone has mastered the language proficiency. Pupils are always excited to express their thought in English through speaking. Oral expression courses aim to provide suitable place for pupils to practice their speaking skills. Speaking is the most favorite skill by pupils than any other language skill. It is regarded as a major skill to be developed because it is necessary for displaying the language proficiency during the lesson; students participate in different tasks that teachers have to provide. Consequently, the objectives from these series of activities are providing learners with confidence to participate and engage them fully in classroom communication as well as to give them the opportunities to speak effectively.

The focus on pupils on their very beginning stage of learning English is more important, because developing their potentials of speaking in this age is much more needed. Simply they need to start correctly and effectively with their speaking skill.

Through the lines of this chapter, the researcher reviews the theoretical framework and the literature review related to the study topic.

The relevant previous studies are reviewed and discussed in favor to meet the chapter's aim.

## **2.1 The Concepts of Speech Production**

Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information, Burns and Joyce, (1997). Its form and meaning are dependant on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking. It is often spontaneous, open-ended, and evolving. However, speech is not always unpredictable. Language functions (or patterns) that tend to recur in certain discourse situations (e.g. declining an invitation or requesting time off from work), can be identified and charted Burns and Joyce, (1997). For example, when salesperson asks "May I help you?", the expected discourse sequence includes a statement of need, response to the need, offer of appreciation, acknowledgement of appreciation, and a leave-taking exchange. Speaking requires that learners not only know how to produce specific points of language such as grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary ("Linguistic competence"), but also that they understand when, why, in what ways to produce language ("Sociolinguistic Competence"). Finally, speech has its own skills, structures, and conventions different from written language Burns and Joyce, (1997). A good speaker synthesizes this array of skills and knowledge to succeed in a given speech act.

The processes of speech production fall into three broad areas called conceptualization, formulation, and encoding Levelt, (1989). At the highest

level, the processes of conceptualization involve determining what to say. These are sometimes called message-level process. The process of formulation involves translating this conceptual representation into a linguistic form. Finally, the process of execution involves detailed phonetic and articulatory planning.

## **2.2 Definition of Speaking Skill**

Tarigan (1990:3-4) defines that speaking is a language skill that is developed in child life, which is produced by listening skill, and at that period speaking skill is learned.

Based on Competence Based Curriculum speaking is one of the four basic competences that the students should gain well. It has an important role in communication.

Speaking is the productive skill. It could not be separated from listening. When we speak we produce the text and it should be meaningful. In the nature of communication, we can find the speaker, the listener, the message and the feedback. Speaking could not be separated from pronunciation as it encourages learners to learn the English sounds.

Mastering English language needs to master the entire skills and receptive one. Speaking skill occupied an important place in foreign language teaching and learning, as argued by Nunan, (1989, p.39):

*“To most people, mastering the art of speaking is the single most important factor of learning a second or foreign language and success is measured in terms of ability to carry out a conversation in the language.”*

Speaking is an active or productive skill deserves more attention in both first and foreign language because it reflects people's thought and personalities. In fact, we judge people according to their speaking skill. Hedge, (2000) views that speaking is: "*Skill which they are judge while first impressions are being formed*" (p.261). In addition, speaking is skill whereby others are recognized from what they are saying and how they are thinking, so it demands special care like other language skills.

### **2.3 The importance of Speaking**

For many people, the ability to speak in English is so important. It has often been viewed as the most demanding of other four skills. For that, we frequent ask the question "Do you speak English?" to foreign language learners rather than asking them "Do you write in English?". The question shows the importance of speaking as skill because mastering this skill means mastering other skills as Ur, (1996, p.12) states "of all four skills, speaking seems institutively the most important: people who know a language are referred to as "speaker of the language, as if speaking included all other kind of knowing".

Speaking skills demand to be skilled in the other language skills. Therefore, with speaking, students can improve their writing skill and develop their vocabulary and grammar. In addition, good speaker needs good listener to improve his/her oral skill. For instance, EFL learners can express themselves, argue, give opinions, ask request and do other functions of language. So far, speaking is very important inside and outside the



classroom as well as speaking is a complex process whereby people sending and receiving message verbally or none verbally.

## **2.4 Strategies for Developing Speaking Skills**

Many language learners regard speaking ability as the measure of knowing a language. These learners define fluency as the ability to converse with others, much more than the ability to read, write, or comprehend oral language. They regard speaking as the most important skill they can acquire, and they assess their progress in terms of their accomplishments in spoken communication.

Language learners need to recognize that speaking involves three areas of knowledge:

- Mechanics (pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary): Using the right words in the right order with the correct pronunciation.
- Functions (transaction and interaction): Knowing when clarity of message is essential (transaction/information exchange) and when precise understanding is not required (interaction/relationship building).

Social and cultural rules and norms (turn-taking, rate of speech, length of pauses between speakers, relative roles of participants): Understanding how to take into account who is speaking to whom, in what circumstances, about what, and for what reason Brown, D. (2007).

In the communicative model of language teaching, instructors help their students develop this body of knowledge by providing authentic practice that prepares students for real-life communication situations. They

help their students develop the ability to produce grammatically correct, logically connected sentences that are appropriate to specific contexts

Students often think that the ability to speak a language is the product of language learning, but speaking is also a crucial part of the language learning process. Effective instructors teach students speaking strategies -- using minimal responses, recognizing scripts, and using language to talk about language -- that they can use to help themselves expand their knowledge of the language and their confidence in using it. These instructors help students learn to speak so that the students can use speaking to learn (Ibid).

## **1. Using minimal responses**

Language learners who lack confidence in their ability to participate successfully in oral interaction often listen in silence while others do the talking. One way to encourage such learners to begin to participate is to help them build up a stock of minimal responses that they can use in different types of exchanges. Such responses can be especially useful for beginners.

Minimal responses are predictable, often idiomatic phrases that conversation participants use to indicate understanding, agreement, doubt, and other responses to what another speaker is saying. Having a stock of such responses enables a learner to focus on what the other participant is saying, without having to simultaneously plan a response Harmer, (2007).

## **2. Recognizing scripts**

Some communication situations are associated with a predictable set of spoken exchanges -- a script. Greetings, apologies, compliments, invitations,

and other functions that are influenced by social and cultural norms often follow patterns or scripts. So do the transactional exchanges involved in activities such as obtaining information and making a purchase. In these scripts, the relationship between a speaker's turn and the one that follows it can often be anticipated.

Instructors can help students develop speaking ability by making them aware of the scripts for different situations so that they can predict what they will hear and what they will need to say in response. Through interactive activities, instructors can give students practice in managing and varying the language that different scripts contain Harmer, (2007).

### **3. Using language to talk about language**

Language learners are often too embarrassed or shy to say anything when they do not understand another speaker or when they realize that a conversation partner has not understood them. Instructors can help students overcome this reticence by assuring them that misunderstanding and the need for clarification can occur in any type of interaction, whatever the participants' language skill levels. Instructors can also give students strategies and phrases to use for clarification and comprehension check.

By encouraging students to use clarification phrases in class when misunderstanding occurs, and by responding positively when they do, instructors can create an authentic practice environment within the classroom itself. As they develop control of various clarification strategies, students will gain confidence in their ability to manage the various communication situations that they may encounter outside the classroom.

Traditional classroom speaking practice often takes the form of drills in which one person asks a question and another gives an answer. The question and the answer are structured and predictable, and often there is only one correct, predetermined answer. The purpose of asking and answering the question is to demonstrate the ability to ask and answer the question (Ibid).

In contrast, the purpose of real communication is to accomplish a task, such as conveying a telephone message, obtaining information, or expressing an opinion. In real communication, participants must manage uncertainty about what the other person will say. Authentic communication involves an information gap; each participant has information that the other does not have. In addition, to achieve their purpose, participants may have to clarify their meaning or ask for confirmation of their own understanding Lightbown and Spada, (2006).

To create classroom speaking activities that will develop communicative competence, instructors need to incorporate a purpose and an information gap and allow for multiple forms of expression. However, quantity alone will not necessarily produce competent speakers. Instructors need to combine structured output activities, which allow for error correction and increased accuracy, with communicative output activities that give students opportunities to practice language use more freely.

Communicative output activities allow students to practice using all of the language they know in situations that resemble real settings. In these activities, students must work together to develop a plan, resolve a problem, or complete a task. The most common types of communicative output activity are *role plays* and *discussions*.

In role plays, students are assigned roles and put into situations that they may eventually encounter outside the classroom. Because role plays imitate life, the range of language functions that may be used expands considerably. Also, the role relationships among the students as they play their parts call for them to practice and develop their sociolinguistic competence. They have to use language that is appropriate to the situation and to the characters (Ibid).

Lightbown and Spada (2006) state that: Students usually find role playing enjoyable, but students who lack self-confidence or have lower proficiency levels may find them intimidating at first. To succeed with role plays:

- Prepare carefully: Introduce the activity by describing the situation and making sure that all of the students understand it
- Set a goal or outcome: Be sure the students understand what the product of the role play should be, whether a plan, a schedule, a group opinion, or some other product
- Use role cards: Give each student a card that describes the person or role to be played. For lower-level students, the cards can include words or expressions that that person might use.
- Brainstorm: Before you start the role play, have students brainstorm as a class to predict what vocabulary, grammar, and idiomatic expressions they might use.
- Keep groups small: Less-confident students will feel more able to participate if they do not have to compete with many voices.

- Give students time to prepare: Let them work individually to outline their ideas and the language they will need to express them.
- Be present as a resource, not a monitor: Stay in communicative mode to answer students' questions. Do not correct their pronunciation or grammar unless they specifically ask you about it.
- Allow students to work at their own levels: Each student has individual language skills, an individual approach to working in groups, and a specific role to play in the activity. Do not expect all students to contribute equally to the discussion, or to use every grammar point you have taught.
- Do topical follow-up: Have students report to the class on the outcome of their role plays.
- Do linguistic follow-up: After the role play is over, give feedback on grammar or pronunciation problems you have heard. This can wait until another class period when you plan to review pronunciation or grammar anyway.
- Discussions, like role plays, succeed when the instructor prepares students first, and then gets out of the way. To succeed with discussions:
- Prepare the students: Give them input (both topical information and language forms) so that they will have something to say and the language with which to say it.

- Offer choices: Let students suggest the topic for discussion or choose from several options. Discussion does not always have to be about serious issues. Students are likely to be more motivated to participate if the topic is television programs, plans for a vacation, or news about mutual friends. Weighty topics like how to combat pollution are not as engaging and place heavy demands on students' linguistic competence.
- Set a goal or outcome: This can be a group product, such as a letter to the editor, or individual reports on the views of others in the group.
- Use small groups instead of whole-class discussion: Large groups can make participation difficult.
- Keep it short: Give students a defined period of time, not more than 8-10 minutes, for discussion. Allow them to stop sooner if they run out of things to say.
- Allow students to participate in their own way: Not every student will feel comfortable talking about every topic. Do not expect all of them to contribute equally to the conversation Lightbown and Spada (2006).

## **2.5 Teaching of Speaking**

The use of English as a second language (ESL) or foreign language (EFL) in oral communication is, without a doubt, one of the most common but highly complex activities necessary to be considered when teaching the English language especially because we —live at a time where the ability to speak

English fluently has become a must, especially who want to advance in certain fields of human endeavor” Al-Sibai, (2004, p.3).

The focus of teaching speaking, of course, is to improve the oral production of the students. Therefore, language teaching activities in the classroom should aim at maximising individual language use Haozhang, (1997). In the past, oral communication instruction was neglected

### **2.5.1 Oral Language Acquisition**

Oral language acquisition is a natural process for children. It occurs almost without effort. The ability to speak grows with age, but it does not mean that such growth will automatically lead to perfection. To speak in more effective ways requires particular attention and constant practice Zhang et al., (1995). Speaking fluency appears to develop with increased exposure to second language (L2) input Al-Sibai, (2004). Input refers to the language data which the learner is exposed to Zhang, (2009). Although it is widely recognised that input is very essential for language acquisition, it is not sufficient if not followed by interaction and output (the language a learner produces) because the processing of comprehension is different from the processing of production, and the ability to understand the meaning conveyed by sentences differs from the ability to use a linguistic system to express meaning. When input is negotiated and learners produce output in interaction, they selectively —take in□ portions of comprehensible input and choose a correct linguistic form to express themselves. This process makes it possible for the learners to internalise what they have learned and experienced Swain, (1985), as cited in Zhang, (2009).



### **2.5.2 Oral Language Learning**

For language learning to take place, there are four conditions that should exist, and they are the exposure, opportunities to use the language, motivation, and instruction.—Learners need chances to say what they think or feel and to experiment in a supportive atmosphere using language they have heard or seen without feeling threatened (Willis, (1996, p.7). A fact that is highlighted by second language research is that progress does not occur when people make a conscious effort to learn. Progress occurs as a result of spontaneous, subconscious mechanisms, which are activated when learners are involved in communication with the second language. The subconscious element demands a new range of activities, where learners are focused not on the language itself but on the communication of meaning Littlewood, (1984). Harmer, (1982) also argued that in a communicative task, the students' attention should be focused on the content of what they are saying, rather than the form. They should use a wide variety of language. According to Ellis, (2003), this can be done by involving learners in performing two types of communicative tasks: focused communicative tasks and unfocused communicative tasks. Both of these tasks seek to engage learners in using language pragmatically rather than displaying language. They seek to develop language proficiency through communication.—Through communication learners can integrate separate structures into a creative system for expressing meaning Littlewood, (1984,p.91).

### **2.5.3 Factors that Cause Speaking difficulties to EFL Learners**

Zhang, (2009) argued that speaking remains the most difficult skill to master for the majority of English learners, and they are still incompetent in

communicating orally in English. According to Ur, (1996), there are many factors that cause difficulty in speaking, and they are as follows: 1. Inhibition. Students are worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism, or simply shy. 2. Nothing to say. Students have no motive to express themselves. 3. Low or uneven participation. Only one participant can talk at a time because of large classes and the tendency of some learners to dominate, while others speak very little or not at all.

4. Mother-tongue use. Learners who share the same mother tongue tend to use it because it is easier and because learners feel less exposed if they are speaking their mother tongue. Speaking Difficulties Encountered by Young EFL Learners International Journal on Studies in English.

In addition, Rababa'h, (2005) pointed out that there are many factors that cause difficulties in speaking English among EFL learners. Some of these factors are related to the learners themselves, the teaching strategies, the curriculum, and the environment. For example, many learners lack the necessary vocabulary to get their meaning across, and consequently, they cannot keep the interaction going. Inadequate strategic competence and communication competence can be another reason as well for not being able to keep the interaction going. Some learners also lack the motivation to speak English. They do not see a real need to learn or speak English. Actually —motivation is the crucial force which determines whether a learner embarks in a task at all, how much energy he devotes to it, and how long he perseveres Littlewood, (1984, p.53). The development of communicative skills can only take place if learners have the motivation and opportunity to express their own identity and relate with the people around them Littlewood, (1981). Teaching strategies also contribute to this problem

as they are inadequate, and they do not put emphasis on speaking, which results in a meagre development of this skill. Besides, vocabulary items are taught in isolation, and listening materials are not used by the majority of schoolteachers because of the large number of teachers compared with the number of cassettes available. Teacher-training programs were found to be not very successful in changing the teachers' methodology Rababa'ah, (2005). Furthermore, all the other subjects are in Arabic, and English is seen as an academic subject only, which means exposure to the English language is insufficient. The lack of a target language environment can be considered another problem, which of course results in a lack of involvement in real-life situations. Not allowing learners to participate in discourse can be another reason for speaking difficulties. —Children need both to participate in discourse and to build up knowledge and skills for participation|| in order to learn discourse skills Cameron, (2001, p.36). Furthermore, —language is best learned when the learners' attention is focused on understanding, saying and doing something with language, and not when their attention is focused explicitly on linguistic features Kumaravadivelu,( 2003,p.27). It is worthy to mention that researchers recognize that learners can improve their speaking ability by developing learning strategies that enable them to become independent learners Nakatani, (2010). Littlewood, (1981) argued that some teachers use L1 for class management. Nevertheless, this can be another factor that contributes to the problem of speaking difficulties. This is because using L1 means sacrificing valuable opportunities for well-motivated foreign use. In addition, it tends to devalue the foreign language as a vehicle for communication. Learners see it as allocated to communicatively nonessential domains such as drills or dialogue practice,

while the mother tongue remains the appropriate medium for discussing matters of immediate importance. Another main reason for other teachers to use L1 is vocabulary and grammar. Although their attitudes are of disagreement with L1, this is not reflected in their practice Al-Busairi, (1998).

## **2.6 EFL Learners' Oral Participation Difficulties**

### **2.6.1 Linguistic Problems**

According to Thornbury, (2005) who states that:

“being skillful assumes having some kind of knowledge base...knowledge that is relevant to speaking can be categorized either as knowledge of feature of language (linguistic knowledge) or knowledge that is independent of language (extra linguistic knowledge) (p.11).

He emphasizes that linguistic knowledge plays essential role in speaking skills. If and feature from this knowledge is lacking or poorly performed, students can find problems within their speaking development. These difficulties are due to lack of vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar mistakes.

### **2.6.2 Lack of vocabulary:**

To achieve oral skills, students need the appropriate selection of words when they are speaking, and using these words and expression accurately. Thornbury, (2005) states that “Spoken language also has relatively high proportion of words and expression” (p.22).

Thus, learning foreign languages requires a great knowledge of its vocabulary, the phenomenon in our EFL classes is that many students often find some difficulties when they try to express what they want to say,

because they find themselves struggling their limited words and expression. Therefore, these limitations of vocabulary affects the amount of the participation is speaking activities.

### **2.6.3 Pronunciation mistakes**

Speaking a language, English, means having a good pronunciation because the way of pronunciation is the first thing that students are judged and evaluated. EFL students have to practice their pronunciation and to be aware of different rules of sounds and stress, intonation...etc. Bada, Genc and Ozkn, (2011) assert the importance of pronunciation in speaking skill “in speaking, they compete with limited time to recall words, and also take care of their pronunciation...speaking is often dealt with at pronunciation level” (p.122).

Usually students have unpronounced speech that reflects lack of experience with English sounds, rhythms and words stress and students’ poor listening to native speaker or because of teacher’s mispronunciation as non-native speaker. Therefore, pronunciation mistakes are one of the main factors that impede the students from doing their speaking activities freely and without any stress. This is the reason that leads to difficulty of participation.

### **2.6.4 Grammar mistakes**

In fact, grammar knowledge is one of the most important aspects of being a professional is speaking skill, EFL learners have to achieve this knowledge to improve their oral ability without any handles. However, students often prefer to keep silent rather than producing ungrammatical structure of expression because they are scared about being ridiculer behind their

teachers and classmates. As Davies and Pearse, (2000) state “many people do not like speaking in front of large groups of people. This is especially true in a foreign language, because we may worry about producing utterances with many errors or oddities in them” (p.82)

Thus, a grammatical mistake is one of the barriers that prevent students of foreign language from participating.

## **2.7 Review of Previous Related Studies**

There are some studies which have investigated the speaking difficulties encountered by EFL learners.

**Study of Dil, (2009)** investigated Turkish EFL learners’ communication obstacles in English language classrooms, and it reported that anxiety and unwillingness during English speaking process are considered two of the biggest obstacles for EFL learners. Anxiety and unwillingness are caused by the fear of being negatively evaluated when making mistakes, particularly in front of their friends. This study also revealed that students who perceive their English language as —poor feel more anxious and are more unwilling to communicate in English classes than the other students perceiving their English level as —very good, good, and OK.

**Al-Lawati, (1995)** also investigated the difficulties encountered by Omani students in their oral production of English.

**Methodology:** the study followed the descriptive analytical approach.

**Findings:** the study found out that the linguistic domain (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and discourse) constitutes the most serious area of difficulty, and this is because, as explained by teachers, the learners have not yet developed an adequate level in the basic abilities of the language.

It also found that the problem is because—as teachers think—of the curriculum that does not provide enough opportunity for learning and practicing new and varied vocabulary and does not provide enough variety in tasks designed for the teaching of grammar. This results in having very few opportunities for students to practice the speaking skill, especially with the large number of students in class.

**Ambu&Saidi**, (1997) investigated some issues in teaching English speaking in a foreign language classroom and revealed that the huge number of students in the classroom, the insufficiency of the English teaching periods, and the syllabus that does not satisfy the learners' communicative needs are the main reasons for learners' speaking difficulties. Additionally, because speaking is not tested, it is less emphasized by both teachers and students. This is consistent with **Al-Lawati's**, (2002) findings in her study where students reported giving special attention to writing, reading, and listening tasks that are similar to exam items, and both teachers and students reported that they gave least attention to speaking tasks in the textbooks because speaking is completely excluded from exams. **Al-Abri**, (2008) argued that the lack of oral activities in textbooks is a strong reason for students' difficulties in speaking, and thus he recommended including some oral activities in the form of songs, rhymes, and simple stories and more conversational language to enable students to have more fun and enjoy learning to improve their speaking skill.

### **Study of Samira Al Hosni (2014)**

**Title:** *Speaking Difficulties Encountered by Young EFL Learners, Tripoli Lebanon.*

The study investigates the difficulties of speaking encountered by EFL learners.

#### **Research Instruments**

Three instruments were used in the present study, and they are lesson observations, interviews, and curriculum analysis. Class observations were conducted and field notes were taken in order to find more about the speaking difficulties that are encountered by grade 5 students in basic education schools in the actual classroom situation.

#### **Findings**

The study found that the main speaking difficulties encountered by grade 5 students are linguistic difficulties, mother tongue use, and inhibition. Students are unable to speak in English because they lack the necessary vocabulary items and grammar structures. They also lack sentence formation skills, which result in using the mother tongue. Students also think of making mistakes in speaking in front of their classmates very embarrassing, which results in preferring not to speak to avoid such situations.

### **Study of Osman Ahmed Osman (2014)**

**Title:** *The Problems of Speech Production Among Sudanese Learners at Neelain University.*

The main aim of the study is to investigate the problem of speech among Efl learners and see some aspects of problem causes.



### **Instruments of the Study**

The researcher has used a test to collect data from the study sample. The sample of the test consists of 25 students. The purpose was to read some words aloud to evaluate students' pronunciation in vowels, supra segmental features and consonant clusters.

Findings:

The lack of vocabulary is one of the problems that face students when producing speech in English.

### **2.8 Summary**

The researcher has discussed the theoretical framework of the problem of speech encountered by basic pupils in their 7<sup>th</sup> grade in learning English as a foreign language. The speech production concepts are reviewed along with the factors that cause speaking problems and the strategies to overcome the problem.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Design and Methodology of the Study**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the methodology of the research used along with the tools, instruments, method of data collection and analysis. The chapter also discusses the procedures followed in collecting the data and analysis and reliability and validation are provided as well.

#### **3.1 The Methodology Approach Selection**

To fulfill the aim of the study, the researcher has adopted the descriptive analytical approach in this study. The descriptive approach was represented in the theoretical framework discussed in previous chapters. In the analytical approach, the researcher has followed the quantitative approach in achieving data collection and analysis. The quantitative approach is believed to give an overall look at the phenomenon the study tackles.

#### **3.2 Tools and Instruments**

The main aim of this study is to investigate “Problem of speaking among grade 7 pupils” and to achieve this aim the researcher has designed a questionnaire for the teacher in basic schools to give their responses. The researcher believes that the instruments used can give the desired indication of the problem being tackled.

### **3.2.1 The questionnaire**

The aim of designing the questionnaire is to obtain some responses from the samples and get some overall findings about the study topic. The questionnaire consists of 10 items divided upon the three hypotheses of the research. The Likert Scale was used in designing the choices of each statement which range between (“Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly disagree”).

The statements of the questionnaire were designed carefully to focus on the problem being tackled.

### **3.3 Population of the Study**

The study was intended to investigate “speaking among pupils of grade 7” in Khartoum state basic schools. These pupils study English as a school subject.

### **3.4 Study sample**

The sample of the study is a group of (30) teachers randomly chosen from primary schools in Khartoum who they teach English as a foreign language in a designed curriculum. The researcher has chosen teachers randomly to undergo the questionnaire.

### **3.5 Procedures**

In the quest to fulfill the study aims, the researcher has chosen the thirty (30) teachers to undergo a questionnaire sessions. Place was chosen for the participants to take the questionnaire and time was adjusted for the test.

To do that, the researcher has advised the participants to sit in an empty classroom and pick the right answers.

After taking the questionnaire, papers were collected and analysis was done for the obtained data using SPSS package.

The chi-square method of validation was used to test the validity of the hypothesis according to the results obtained and the mini-test was qualitatively analyzed.

### 3.6 Reliability and Validity

The researcher has used some measure to validate the questionnaire, and the tool of data collection and analysis to be valid the researcher has consulted experts to review the designed questionnaire and test, and some modifications have been done in accordance.

The reliability measures have been calculated using SPSS as shown below:

\*\*\*\*\* Method 2 (covariance matrix) will be used for this analysis \*\*\*\*\*

#### RELIABILITY ANALYSIS - SCALE (ALPHA)

N of Cases = 30.0

N of

Statistics for	Mean	Variance	Std Dev	Variables
Scale	15.0000	9.0345	3.0057	6

Item Means	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Max/Min
Variance					

2.5000    2.0000    2.8667    .9667    1.4333    .0818

Reliability Coefficients    6 items

Alpha = .2898            Standardized item alpha = .2300

The value .9667 of the range indicates that the questionnaire is reliable. And it can be represented in percentage as 96.67%.

### **3.7 Summary of the Chapter**

In This chapter, the researcher has discussed the methodology and the tools and instruments used in carrying out the study along with procedures followed.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Data Analysis and the Discussion of the Results**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, the researcher analyzes the obtained data using SPSS program. Brief comments on results table are provided along with charts.

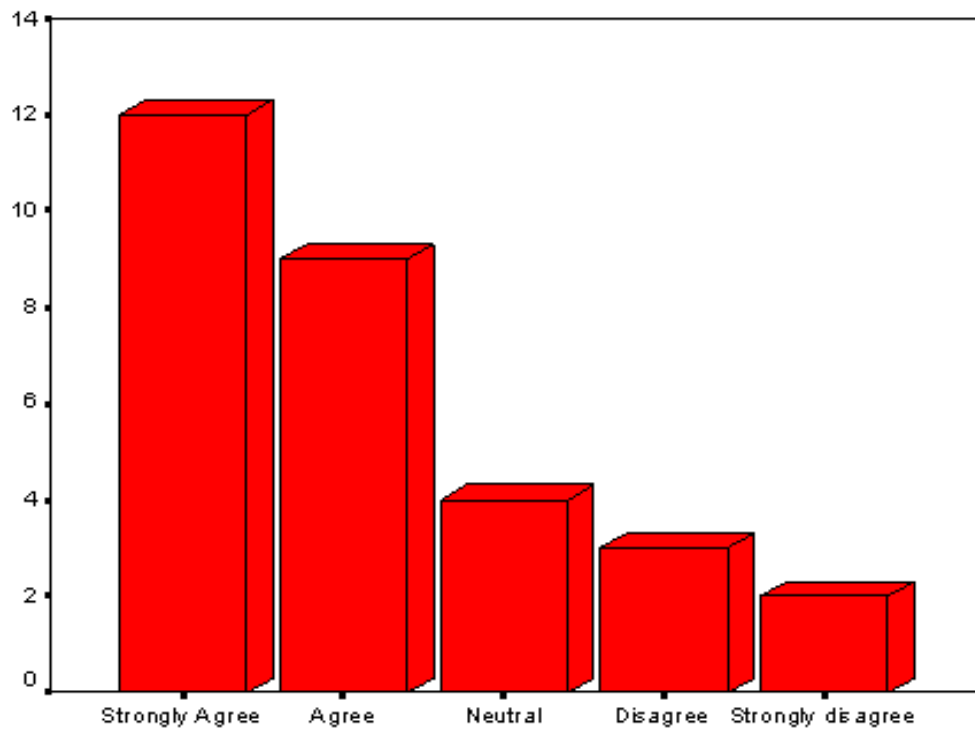
#### **4.1 Descriptive Analysis**

**Table (4.1): Descriptive of First Statement**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	12	36.4
Agree	9	27.3
Neutral	4	12.1
Disagree	3	9.1
Strongly disagree	2	6.1
Total	30	90.9

The above table shows the statistical result of the first statement of the questionnaire. As it is be seen in the table, 12 teachers responded with ‘Strongly agree’, 9 responded with ‘Agree’, 4 responded with ‘Neutral’, 3 responded with ‘Disagree’ and 2 responded with ‘Strongly disagree’. The percentages are 36.4%, 27.3%, 21.1%, 9.1% and 6.1% respectively.

As it can be noticed, the greatest percentage is 36.4% which shows teachers strongly agree with the statement.



*Figure (4.1)*

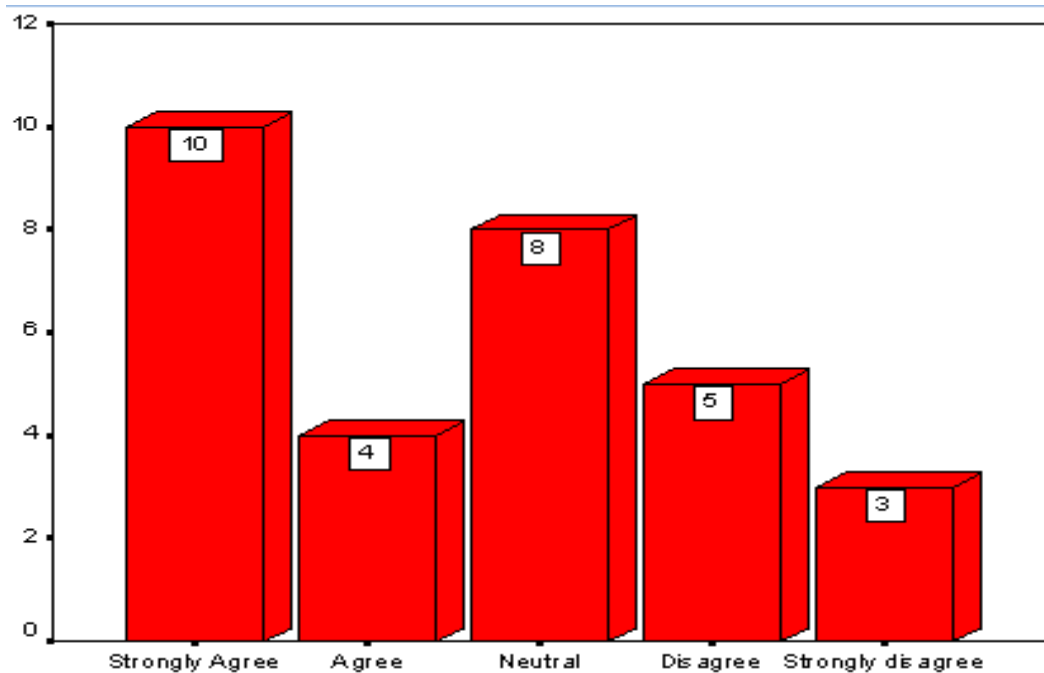
**Table (4.2): Descriptive of Second Statement**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	10	30.3
Agree	4	12.1
Neutral	8	24.2
Disagree	5	15.2
Strongly disagree	3	9.1
Total	30	90.9

The above table shows the statistical result of the second statement of the questionnaire. As it is seen in the table, 10 teachers responded with ‘Strongly agree’, 4 responded with ‘Agree’, 8 responded with ‘Neutral’, 5 responded with ‘Disagree’ and 3 responded with ‘Strongly disagree’. The percentages are 30.3%, 21.1%, 24.2%, 15.2% and 9.1% respectively.

As it can be noticed, the greatest percentage is 30.3% which shows the participants strongly agree with the statement.



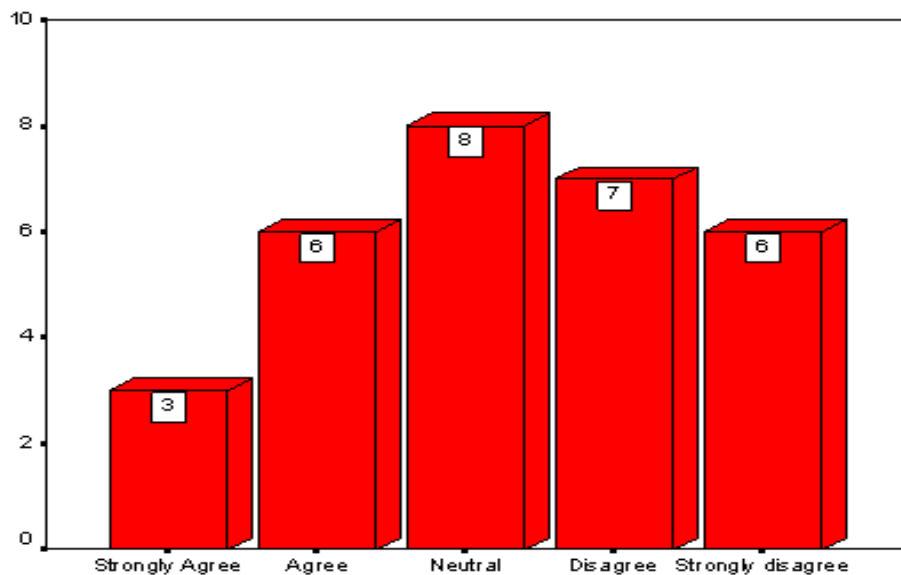


**Figure (2.4)**

**Table (4.3): Descriptive of Third Statement**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	3	9.1
Agree	6	18.2
Neutral	8	24.2
Disagree	7	21.2
Strongly disagree	6	18.2
Total	30	90.9

Table (4.3) shows the statistical result of the third statement of the questionnaire. From the table, it can be seen in the table, 3 teachers responded with ‘Strongly agree’, 6 responded with ‘Agree’, 8 responded with ‘Neutral’, 7 responded with ‘Disagree’ and 6 responded with ‘Strongly disagree’. The percentages are 9.1%, 18.2%, 24.2%, 21.2% and 18.2% respectively. Unlike the previous statements, this one shows most of the participants remain neutral with percentage of 24.2%.



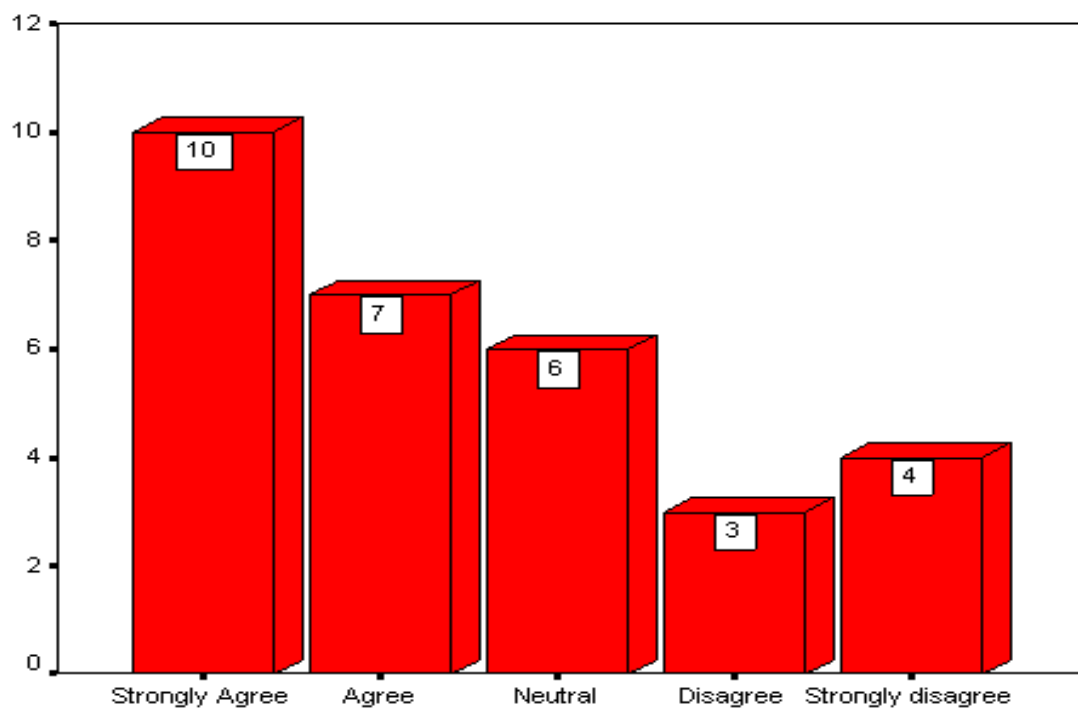
*Figure (4.3)*

**Table (4.4): Descriptive of Fourth Statement**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	10	30.3
Agree	7	21.2
Neutral	6	18.2
Disagree	3	9.1
Strongly disagree	4	12.1
Total	30	90.9

The above table shows the statistical result of the fourth statement of the questionnaire. As it is seen in the table, 10 teachers responded with ‘Strongly agree’, 7 responded with ‘Agree’, 6 responded with ‘Neutral’, 3 responded with ‘Disagree’ and 4 responded with ‘Strongly disagree’. The percentages are 30.3%, 21.2%, 18.2%, 9.1% and 12.1% respectively.

As it can be noticed, the greatest percentage is 30.3% which shows the participants strongly agree with the statement



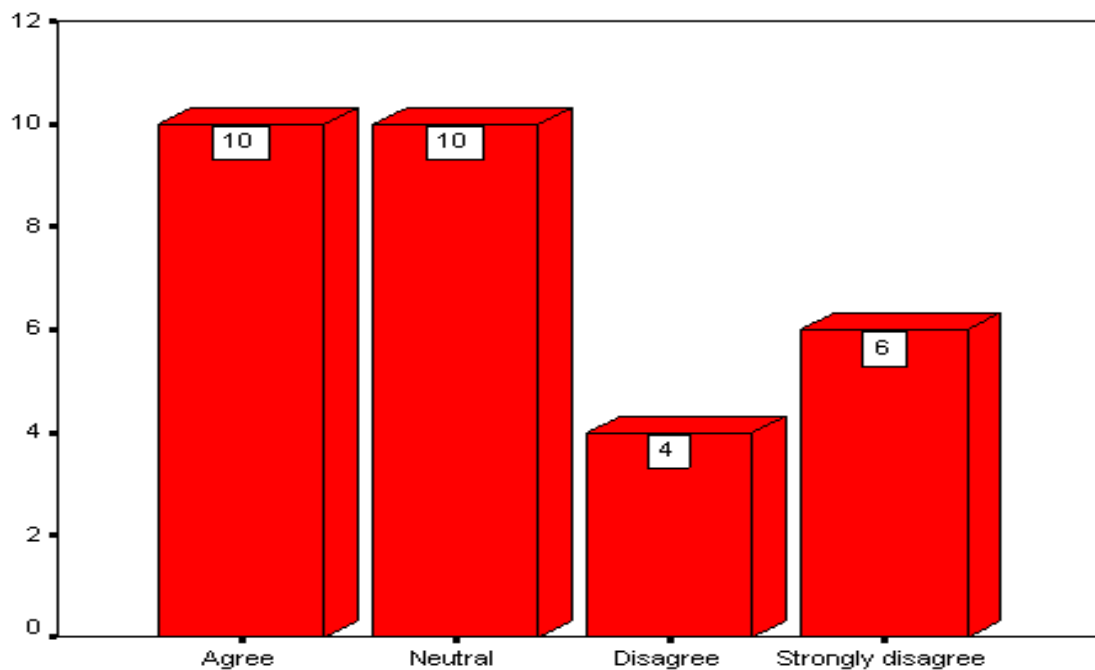
*Figure (4.4)*

**Table (4.5): Descriptive of Fifth Statement**

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	10	30.3
Neutral	10	30.3
Disagree	4	12.1
Strongly disagree	6	18.2
Total	30	90.9

The above table shows the statistical result of the 5<sup>th</sup> statement of the questionnaire. As can be seen in the table, 10 teachers responded with 'Agree', 10 responded with 'Neutral', 4 responded with 'Disagree' and 6 responded with 'Strongly disagree'. The percentages are 30.3%, 30.3%, 12.1%, and 18.2% respectively.

The two choices (Agree and neutral) share the greatest percentage of this statement (30.3%). This result indicates the most of the participants agree with the statement claim.



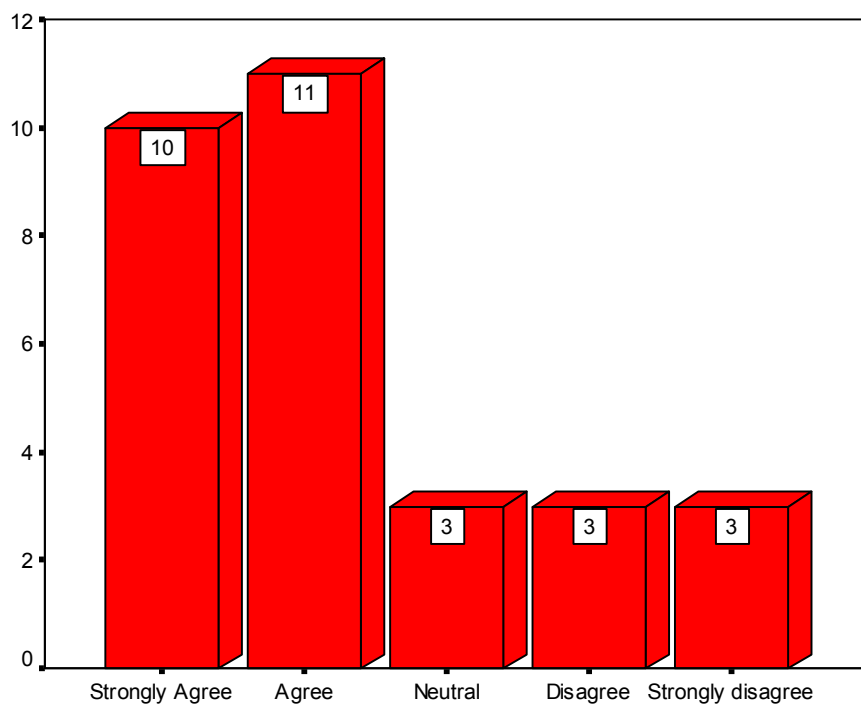
*Figure (4.5)*

**Table (4.6): Descriptive of Sixth Statement**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	10	30.3
Agree	11	33.3
Neutral	3	9.1
Disagree	3	9.1
Strongly disagree	3	9.1
Total	30	90.9

In the six statement as can be seen in the table, 10 teachers with percentage 30.3% responded with ‘Strongly agree’, 11 responded with ‘Agree’ with percentage of 33.3%, 3 responded with ‘Neutral’ and the percentage was 9.1, 3 responded with ‘Disagree’ and with percentage 9.1% and 3 responded with ‘Strongly disagree’ and the percentages are 9.1%.

As the case in the first statement, the greatest percentage is 33.3% which indicates the majority of the participants agree with statement.



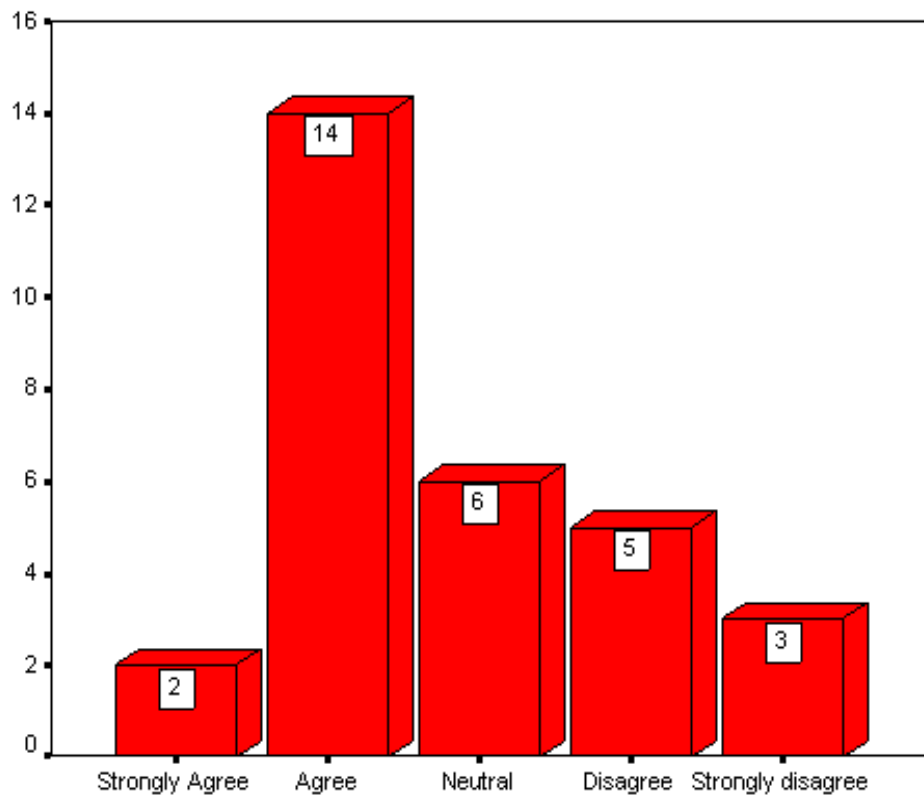
***Figure (4.6)***

**Table (4.7): Descriptive of Seventh Statement**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	2	6.1
Agree	14	42.4
Neutral	6	18.2
Disagree	5	15.2
Strongly disagree	3	9.1
Total	30	100.0

The above table shows, 2 of the participants responded with ‘Strongly agree’ with percentage 6.1%, 14 responded with ‘Agree’ with its percentage 42.4%, 6 responded with ‘Neutral’ with associated percentage 18.2%, 5 responded with ‘Disagree’ and the percentage was 15.2% and 3 responded with ‘Strongly disagree’ with percentages 9.1.

As it can be noticed, the maximum percentage is 42.4% which shows the participants agree with the statement



***Figure (4.7)***

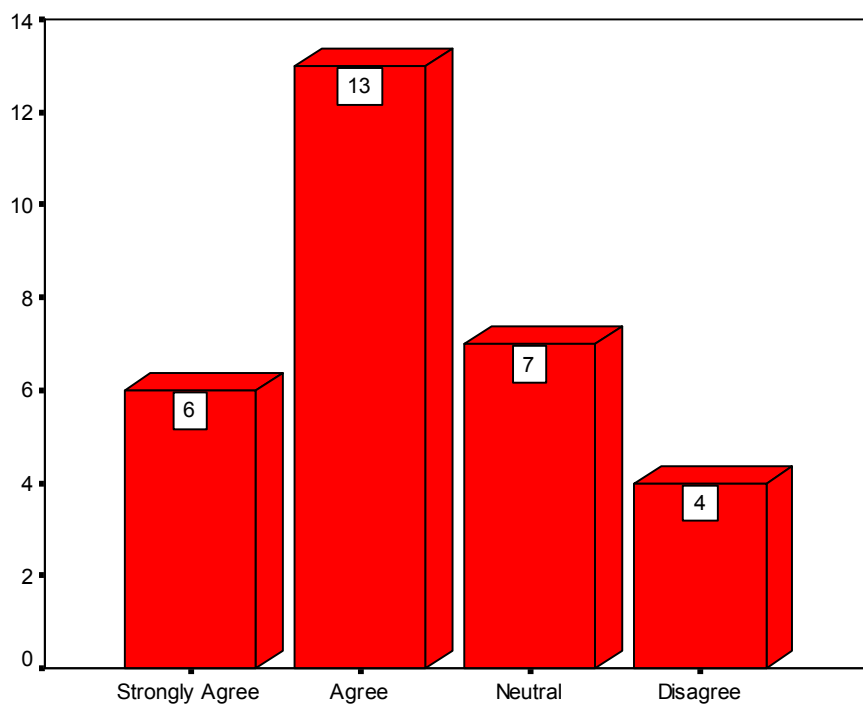


**Table (4.8): Descriptive of Eighth Statement**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	6	18.2
Agree	13	39.4
Neutral	7	21.2
Disagree	4	12.1
Total	30	100.0

The above table shows the statistical result of the 8<sup>th</sup> statement of the questionnaire. As can be seen in the table, 6 teachers responded with ‘Strongly agree’, 13 responded with ‘Agree’, 7 responded with ‘Neutral’ and 4 responded with ‘Disagree’. The percentages are 18.2%, 39.4%, 21.2% and 12.1% respectively.

The percentage (39.4) indicates that the participants agree with the statement.



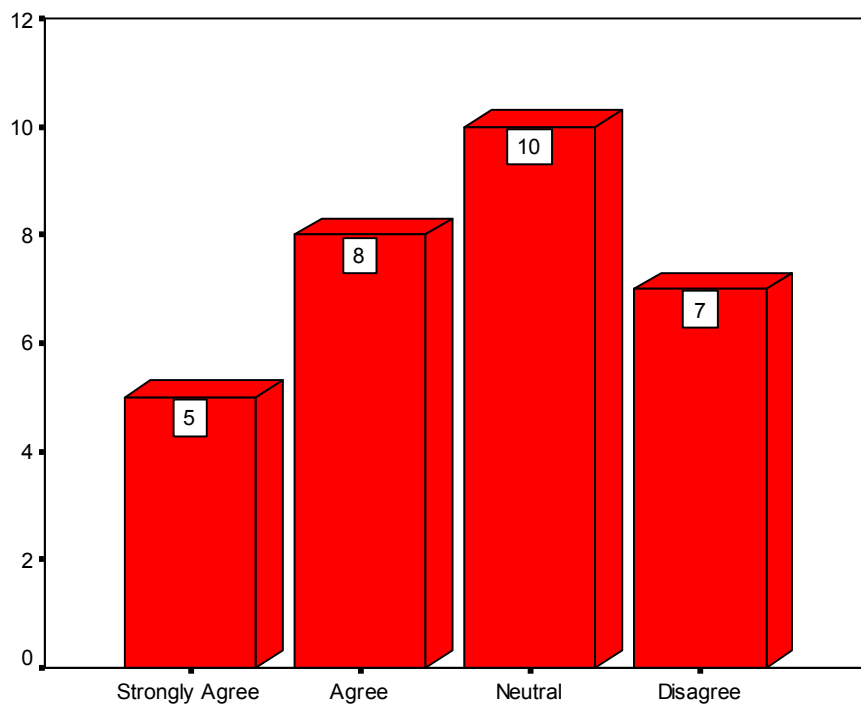
***Figure (4.8)***

**Table (4.9): Descriptive of First Statement**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	5	15.2
Agree	8	24.2
Neutral	10	30.3
Disagree	7	21.2
Total	30	100.0

Table (4.9) shows that 5 teachers responded with ‘Strongly agree’, 8 responded with ‘Agree’, 10 responded with ‘Neutral’ and 7 responded with ‘Disagree’. The percentages are 15.2%, 24.2%, 30.3% and 21.2% respectively.

As it can be noticed, the greatest percentage is 30.3% which indicates that most of the participants remain neutral.



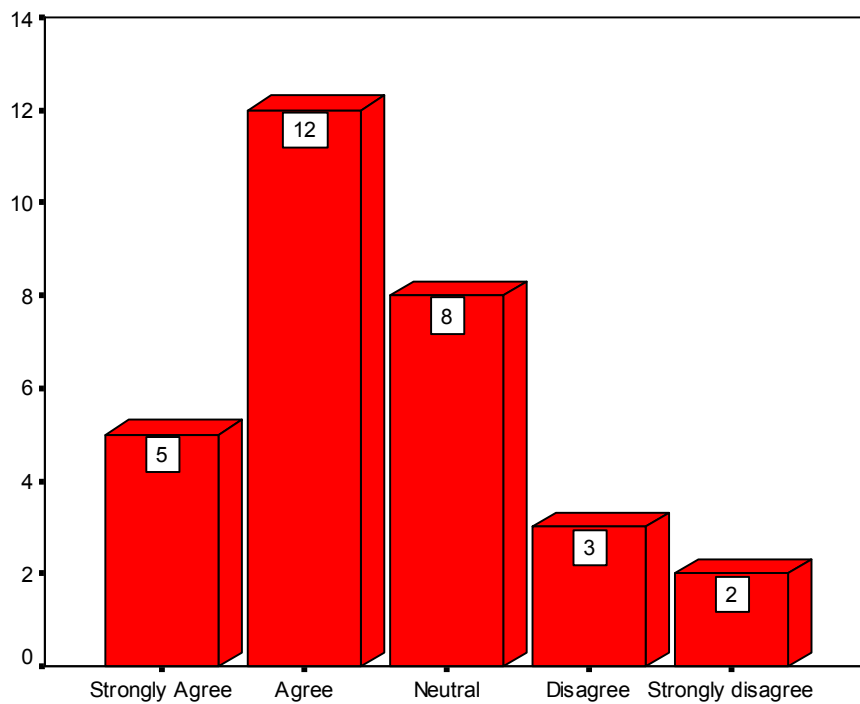
***Figure (4.9)***

**Table (4.10): Descriptive of Tenth Statement**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	5	15.2
Agree	12	36.4
Neutral	8	24.2
Disagree	3	9.1
Strongly disagree	2	6.1
Total	30	100.0

Table (4.10) of the 10<sup>th</sup> statement of the questionnaire shows that 5 teachers responded with ‘Strongly agree’, 12 responded with ‘Agree’, 8 responded with ‘Neutral’, 3 responded with ‘Disagree’ and 2 responded with ‘Strongly disagree’. The percentages are 15.2%, 36.4%, 24.2%, 9.1% and 6.1% respectively.

As it can be noticed, the greatest percentage is 36.4% which shows the participants agree with the statement



***Figure (4.9)***

## **4.2 Overall Result**

**Table (4.11): Chi-square Value Test Statistics of Hypothesis One**

	Chi-Square(a)	Df	Asymp. Sig.
Statement 1	12.333	4	.05
Statement 2	5.667	4	.025
Statement 3	2.333	4	.046
Statement 4	5.000	4	.03

The table represents Chi-square analysis of the first hypothesis. The chi-square is used to test the acceptance of the research hypothesis. The first column of the table shows the statements, the second column is the average or the mean of the choices, the third column is the degree of freedom (N-1) and the last column represents the (significance value, Sig.). The sig. value is required to be equal or less than (0.05) for the statement to be accepted.

As can be shown all the values in the less column of the table are less or equal (0.05) so the statements are accepted.

**Table (4.12): Chi-square Value Test Statistics of Hypothesis two**

	Chi-Square(a,b)	Df	Asymp. Sig.
Statement 8	6.000	3	.012
Statement 9	1.733	3	.030
Statement 10	11.000	4	.027

**Table (4.11): Chi-square Value Test Statistics of Hypothesis Three**

	Chi-Square(a,b)	Df	Asymp. Sig.
Statement 5	3.600	3	.030
Statement 6	11.333	4	.023
Statement 7	15.000	4	.005

### **4.3 Summary of the Chapter**

The researcher has analyzed the data obtained from the questionnaire of teachers. The results were provided in tables and charts along with brief comments for each.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Conclusions, Findings, Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Studies**

#### **5.0 Conclusions**

The study has investigated the problem of speaking as a communicative activity among pupils. The study has adopted the descriptive analytical approach in collecting and analyzing the researcher data. The researcher has divided the research into five chapters, introduction, literature review and previous studies, methodology, data analysis and findings.

Questionnaire has been done for teachers for the purpose of getting the appropriate data about pupils' performance and potentials.

The questionnaire is believed to cover the area where study tries to tackle. The ten items of the questionnaire was divided upon the three hypothesis of the research.

The data analysis was done through SPSS program and tables with brief comments were provided along with demonstrated charts.

#### **5.1 The Findings**

Based on the data analysis results in the previous chapter and the theoretical framework of the research, the study has reached some findings:

- Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing *and* receiving and processing information.



- Pupils of grade 7 have serious problem in speaking and oral communication in general.
- There are some factors that affect the ability of the students to speak, such as anxiety, fear of mistake, and lack of desire and weak base of the language vocabulary.
- The classroom situation has a big impact on setting the mode of the pupils and hence their desire to speak.
- Teachers play big roles in motivating students to speak and can put strategies to eliminate their fear of mistake when speaking.
- The curriculum designed is not appropriate for pupils to take their speaking exercise as it focus only on reading and writing.
- Pupils of grade 7 hardly can participate in oral communication with percentage 30% in every 35 students.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

Based on the obtained findings, the researcher provides the following recommendations:

- There should be great focus on speaking classes from the very early stage of pupil educational career.
- Teachers have to link the ability of learning language with the ability of speaking it; hence they can hold speaking class for pupils to develop their skills.
- The researcher recommends teachers, educationists and tutors to have class discussion for pupils to enhance their ability in speaking.

### **5.3 Suggestions for further Studies**

- The current study investigate the speaking problem from linguistic side, where language learning is link with the surrounding factors, so conducting studies that look beyond the effect of curriculum designed is suggested.
- The study takes the sample from primary schools in Khartoum city only, so the researcher suggests conducting studies that look at the same problem in villages and undeveloped areas.

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# Appendix

**Sudan University of Science and Technology**

**Faculty of Graduate Studies**

**College of Languages**

Teachers' questionnaire

The following is a questionnaire designed for research purpose. It aims to find out pupils' problem in speaking and communicative activities. Please try to give proper responses as they are of critical effect and of great importance, thank you.

*Candidate, Najwa Hussein*

No.	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	Students face great difficulties when participating in communicative activities					
2.	Speaking problem appears very clear when students start communicating					
3.	Class environment has a big role on how students progress in speaking					

4.	Students have anxiety, fear of mistakes and less desire to speak					
5.	Students negative attitudes towards speaking are because they learn a foreign language					
6.	Class-room situation such as group work, motivation can eliminate the fear of mistakes in speaking					
7.	Class-room can provide tutors with students' frequently committed mistakes in communication					
8.	Teachers can work with students step by step to eliminate the anxiety in oral communication					
9.	Communication difficulties have a big impact on students' learning process during their educational career					
10.	Most of the students prefer not to participate in oral communication activities.					