

**THAI NGUYEN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

LE HAI YEN

**A STUDY ON FACTORS AFFECTING ENGLISH SPEAKING
SKILLS OF THE 10TH GRADE ETHNIC MINORITY STUDENTS
AT VAN HOA I HIGH SCHOOL**

(Nghiên cứu những yếu tố ảnh hưởng tới kỹ năng nói tiếng Anh của học sinh
dân tộc thiểu số khối 10 ở trường Văn hóa I)

M.A THESIS

Field: English Linguistics

Code: 8220201

THAI NGUYEN - 2019

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**M.A. THESIS
(APPLICATION ORIENTATION)**

Field: English Linguistics

Code: 8220201

Supervisor: Dr. Nguyen Thi Hong Chuyen

THAI NGUYEN - 2019

DECLARATION

I hereby certify that this research entitled “*A study on factors affecting English speaking skills of the 10th grade ethnic minority students at Van hoa I High School*” was conducted and then submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of English Linguistics. This paper was original and has not been submitted for any degree at any other universities or institutions.

Thai Nguyen, September 23rd 2019

Signature

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Thai Nguyen, September 2019

ABSTRACT

Nowadays, English is considered as an international language all over the world. If students are good at English, they can improve their opportunities to broaden knowledge, and get well-paid jobs in the future. However, out of the four language skills, speaking is considered as the most important but difficult aspect to master. This study was conducted to find out the major factors that prevent the students from achieving good English speaking skills. The study was carried out at Van hoa I High School, Thai Nguyen City, Vietnam. The participants of the research were 51 grade 10th students and 6 English teachers at this school. The researcher aimed to a) explore the learners' speaking problems; b) find out the main factors causing them; c) give out some useful and effective suggestions for the learners, teachers and school to improve the students' oral skills. In order to fulfill those purposes, questionnaires, interviews and observations were used as the main research instrument to collect data. The findings proved that there were two main kinds of factors that affected the learners' speaking skills called *internal factors* and *external factors*. The internal ones related to the factors coming from the students themselves, such as anxiety, lack of self-confidence. Meanwhile, the external factors were from the outside aspects which were mainly about the linguistic factors like lack of vocabulary, poor grammar, and weak pronunciation. Additionally, the study also suggested some recommendations to improve the learners' oral skills. For example, in order to minimum the impact of grammatical mistakes to their speaking performance, the learners should outline what sentence structures, tenses and other aspects of grammar they would need for their speech before speaking or teachers should balance the time on the importance of teaching speaking skills and other language skills as well as grammar.

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LIST OF TABLES, FIGURES, DIAGRAM AND ABBREVIATIONS

List of abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

MOET: Ministry of Education and Training

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. General Introduction

According to the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in Vietnam, the core aims of English as a subject is to help the students to form and develop their communication skills through learning four skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing and language skills such as phonic, vocabulary and grammar. The Circular No. 01/2014/TT-BGDĐT (January 24th, 2014) of the MOET defined that when the children finish primary school, they will acquire level 1 of the Vietnamese Six-level Foreign Language Competency Framework. In other words, at this level, the students can basically understand simple actual conversations, and they can apply their English to primarily communicate with English speaking people. Level 2 of this framework is the expected result that secondary school students need to achieve. When the learners reach this level, they can understand the common daily English which relates to basic communication in the real life. For high school students, they need to accomplish Level 3 of the Vietnamese Six-level Foreign Language Competency Framework when they finish grade 12. If the learners reach Level 3, it means that they can figure out and understand the main ideas of the given texts. In addition, the students can also write simple paragraphs about the familiar topics like jobs, school, and entertainment. Furthermore, they can communicate quite well in almost all situations in English. In short, the very end purpose of learning a language is to use the language communicate properly and effectively in the real communicative context. To achieve this expected purpose, speaking skills could not be ignored.

Nowadays, English is considered as an international language all over the world. It has become the common language used in business, technology, and education throughout many parts of the world. Therefore, mastering English is very important for students in every country. With the rapid international integration in Vietnam, it is necessary for future labors to know and acquire good English ability. Consequently, the ones who achieve great English competence will have more chances to get better jobs in the future. Hence, students should concentrate on their English learning to improve it and balance their four English skills. Mekong & Kerubo (2017) conclude that the four major skills in learning a language develop in order. Firstly, the learners should sharpen

their listening skills, which will build the basic foundation to develop their speaking skills. After that, reading skills are expected to be improved. Last but not least, it is writing skill. From this point of view, it can be said that speaking is such an important skill in learning English. Ur (1996, as cited in Bhattacharya, 2017) states that people who know one language are referred to the good speakers of this language. As a result, the English learners' capacity of speaking English is becoming increasingly more important. Gilakjani (2012) claims that "it is vital that speakers of English, whether they are native or non-native speakers, are able to exchange meanings effectively".

However, out of the four language skills, speaking is considered as the most important but difficult aspect to master. According to Fitriani et al. (2015) and Leong et al. (2017), the success of learning a foreign language is accounted by the level of learners' speaking skills. Ur (1996) defines that "individuals who learn a language are referred to as the speakers of that language". Nevertheless, many learners find it hard to express their ideas in spoken ways. Generally, language learners often encounter a lot of problems when speaking a foreign language. Communication is a difficult and complex process to perform. Speakers use communication to inform some pieces of information to the others. They apply the language in various and flexible ways depending on the situation of speaking and depending on their personal goals of speaking. There are many causes prevent students from improving speaking competence. Besides, Fitriani et al. (2015) also point that "English speaking requires the speaker to use the authentic language where it means that the students need to use the language in any occasions or when communicate with the other students in academic context.

There are plenty of common speaking problems that the students struggle with. Firstly, most learners are facing the problem of speaking fluently. Richards & Renandya (2002, as cited in Fitriani, 2015) argue that getting fluency in speaking performance is the main target that a large number of language learners go for. However, there are too many things that the students have to address when speak. For example, they need to use the suitable vocabulary to every single different situation, not only that, the students are required to speak with the correct grammar; and more importantly, they have to produce the proper pronunciation and intonation when speaking English. Hinkel (2005)

states that communication problems take place when the students encounter a word that they do not know the meaning or the form of word. As a consequence, they do not know how and when to use the word and get interrupted in speaking. Secondly, the speaking problems come from the students themselves. Most of the learners report that they often lack of their self-confidence when speaking a foreign language. They often suffer the feelings of shyness and nervousness when producing the ideas in spoken language. Fitriani (2015) claims that in order to have an effective conversation, the speakers should believe in what they are able to talk. The success of oral communication can be affected by the speakers' emotional states. The communication will be clearer when the students are more confident to speak, and vice versa when they are nervous and worry, it is hard for them to make effective communication.

In short, great English speaking competence as a foreign language is no doubt one of the most important, but more difficult and complicated to acquire in comparison with the other language skills.

Although the main aim of teaching and learning English is to motivate the learners to use the language in communicative situations, not only inside but also outside of the classroom (Bhattacharya, 2017), the fact is that English speaking lessons have not been taught properly. The students still encounter a lot of problems when acquiring this skill. There are a range of factors that put the students off speaking English. The first element is the linguistic factors which include the aspects that belonging to language itself such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. These aspects help the students to understand the structure of the language, and use it properly to make the grammatically correct sentences. It is pointed that if the students master grammar of a foreign language, which will lead them to the fluency. However, it has been proved that the learners find it hard to transfer the grammar to their speaking correctly (Bhattacharya, 2017). There is a common fact that many English language learners know a lot of grammar rules, and they can read and write in English perfectly but they cannot speak any complete English sentences. According to Tatham and Morton (2006, as cited in Paakki, 2013), many people report that they can understand the written and spoken language but they cannot speak it properly. Secondly, emotional factors affect quite a lot to the students' oral competence. As its name referred, emotional factors are

the things related to ones' feeling, and the affective factors that inhibit the learners from speaking English well are anxiety, shyness, lack of self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, etc. It has been observed that the learners often get stressed when they speak in front of the class because they are afraid of making mistakes and losing face in front of their friends. Shumin (2002, as cited in Bhattacharya, 2017) points out that “too much nervousness makes learners tongue-tied or lost for words”. Thirdly, learning environment is also one of the factors that ruin learners’ speaking ability. In the work of Bhattacharya (2017), the participants reported that they rarely use English to communicate to each other during the English lessons because they did not have a regular opportunity to speak English in their classes. As a result, they struggled with applying English in the real-life situations. The next factor is due to the listening ability. The fact is that listening and speaking skills are closely related to each other. In order to make the proficient communication, the speakers have to perform the roles of both speaker and listener. The main reason for this is that when the speakers comprehend well what is uttered to them, they can respond to it correctly and effectively. However, when the students try to practice speaking skills, they may neglect the roles of listening skills. Consequently, the success of their conversation in English is limited. The last but not least problem of the learners that affects the improvement of their oral communication skills is the use of their mother language. As mentioned above, the students have few chances in the classroom to practice speaking in English, and one of the reasons might be because they choose to speak in their local language rather than the learned one. Bhattacharya (2017) discusses that “when all the learners share the same mother tongue they tend to use it more than the target language”.

Nevertheless, knowing a language is not as important as using it because “there is no point knowing a lot about a language if you don’t use it” (Scriveher, 2005, as cited in Bhattacharya, 2017). According to Inqbal (2012), speaking English is a kind of skill which requires more than just pronouncing the words but conveying the messages to the others. Along the same lines, Paakki (2013) claims that the purpose of language education is to help the learners to be able to communicate in this language by both writing and speaking. If one of the two is not focused, this aim is not fully achieved. Moreover, Mekonge & Kerubo (2017) point out that speaking skills or oral competence

involving three kinds of speaking situations in which people have to use some specific words. Three major kinds of speaking situations are: “interactive (discuss and dialogues), partially interactive (lecture) and non-interactive (sermons and speeches) speaking situations”. Normally, the non-English speakers are often confused among the three kinds of speaking situations and do not use the suitable words for each one. There is another fact that Mekonge & Kerubo (2017) also mention to explain why a lot of language learners have very poor English speaking skills. This is because English speaking lessons are not taught properly by the teachers; they often disregard them and “focus on other areas of language learning features such as grammar or vocabulary”. As a result, students have few chances to practice speaking English at schools. Moreover, it has been found that the teachers find it hard to teach speaking lessons in effective ways because speaking is a very practical skill to teach. In many classes, grammar-translation technique is used for teaching this skill.

1.2. Statement of the Problem and the Rationale for the Study

Effective use of English speaking skills provides the learners multiple of benefits, not only in their learning but also in life. On the one hand, great speaking ability helps students a lot in their learning. Firstly, when the students achieve good English speaking skills, they can take part in some international learning programs like TED-ED Student Talks which is an international learning program for the students to support them in discovering, and sharing their big ideas in a brief talk in English. If the children are not good at English, they will have no chance to join in such useful program to share their ideas. Great English speaking ability is like a valuable ticket for them to come to the world. Secondly, obtaining good speaking skills helps the learners to broaden their understanding. Nowadays, English is used as a common language in academic fields. Therefore, most of the updated knowledge is not only written but also presented by spoken way in English. When the children acquire excellent English oral skills, they can get closer to the human’s common knowledge. In addition, it is the fact that the developed countries use English as their first language, so it will be very potential chances for the learners to get access to the modern technique and methods when they are good at speaking English. On the other hand, oral competence is linked with a plenty of advantages in real-life. Firstly, it helps the learners to have more choices for their

career. The better linguistic communicative competence provides more chances for the learners to get better jobs in life. Vietnam is a developing country, and it has been opening its economy for a long time, which attracts a plenty of foreign companies to invest in. As a result, it is requiring for the children to acquiring the ability of speaking English fluently. This will be their plus point to the recruiters in the competitive working world today. Secondly, it will be easier and more interesting for the children to travel to other countries if they are good at speaking English. They will need no tour guide for their trips, and they can explore the new things in the new places by themselves. Eventually, the kids will become more mature when experience these things on their own. In short, it can be said that achieving the capacity of speaking English brings numerous of advantages in ones' life.

However, there is the fact that the speaking lessons are not taught properly. Both students and teachers have some certain difficulties when learning and teaching this skill.

Being in touch with some high school students, the researcher realized several difficulties that the students faced with when they learn speaking skills. First of all, they use little English in the classroom and almost not English used outside of the learning environment. There are some possible reasons for that fact; out of them, mother tongue can be considered as the main cause. When all the students in the class share the same local language, they prefer to use their common language that they have mastered already rather than apply English which is a challenging language for them. Furthermore, in Vietnam, English is mainly taught by Vietnamese teachers, so the students might feel less motivated and necessary to speak in the target language because even when they speak in their native language, their friends and teachers can still understand them. Gradually, the learners loose their encouragement in speaking English, and their English speaking skill is not sharpened throughout the speaking lessons. Therefore, they choose not to use English out of the classroom. Secondly, the students seem to underestimate the roles and importance of oral skills in their language learning. Most of them assume that speaking is the less important aspect in learning a language. However, according to Ur (1996), speaking is the most important skills out of the four language skills because when we talk about language learners, we often refer to the

speakers of that language. The testing system in the school is principally responsible for this neglect. In most of the state as well as some private schools in Vietnam, the students' English ability is tested by the paper tests. In other words, speaking is not tested properly as one of the main aims of language teaching and learning process, but they focus on grammar, writing and vocabulary. The elements of speaking skills such as pronunciation, intonation, and fluency are not ignored by the teachers and the school managers.

Also, the teachers face with many problems when teaching English speaking in the classroom. They get the difficulties in finding the suitable and effective teaching methods for such kind of a very practical skills like speaking. Normally the teachers are using teacher-centered teaching method as the major technique for their teaching. In this teaching approach, the teachers will talk almost all of the lesson time, then the children have few chances to raise their voice during the lessons. Besides, the oral communication skill is overlooked by the teachers because the focus on the areas that are tested in the paper tests. As a result, most of the English sections are spent on teaching about grammar, reading and writing but a little bit of speaking.

Vietnam is a Vietnamese speaking society. Consequently, English in Vietnam is described as being used rarely among the population. This leads to the fact that the English language learners have limited conditions to practice English in real-life situations. On the other hand, due to the presence of a large number of Vietnamese students on campus, the children tend to communicate to each other in their shared language instead of the learned one. Because of this case, it is understandable for the fact that English plays a negligible role in daily life of the students. Although English is a compulsory subject from the primary, to secondary and up to high school level, the children still cannot achieve oral competence as expected.

As described above, English play such an important role in today's world, and it will be a huge benefits for the learners if they can attain great English speaking skills. Therefore, English oral communication skills should be paid more attention to teach and learn at school.

By reviewing literatures of different researchers, Diep (2017) found out 7 factors that affected on the learners' speaking skills. They were:

1. Learning environment impacts to English-speaking skills.
2. Lectures impacts to English-speaking skills.
3. Confidence impacts to English-speaking skills.
4. Proficiency impacts to English-speaking skills.
5. Grammar impacts to English-speaking skills.
6. Vocabulary impacts to English-speaking skills.
7. Pronunciation impacts to English-speaking skills.

Along the same lines, Park and Lee (2005) and Tanveer (2007, as cited in Leong et al., 2017) also investigated the connection between oral competence and self-confidence and anxiety. The result showed that the more anxious the students were, the poorer their speaking performance was.

In the same vain, Rabab'ah (2005, as reviewed in Hosni, 2014) pointed out that the factors that had the negative impact on learners' English speaking ability were not only anxiety, but also the learners themselves, the learning curriculum, and the teaching techniques. He examined the participants and the result of the study indicated that some learners lack the motivation to speak English. They did not really have the need to practice and speak in English in real-life.

Hosni (2014) carried out a study on grade 5 teachers and students in basic education schools in Oman. The results represented that the main speaking problems faced by grade 5 students were linguistic features, mother tongue use, and inhibition. He pointed out that the students could not talk in English properly because they lacked the topic vocabulary and they were confused in using correct grammatical range.

Fitriani et al. (2015) examined the dominant problems in learners' oral performance. The result of the research revealed that the most dominant problem encountered by the students was the psychological problems which include the aspects related to ones' emotional states such as self-confidence and anxiety. Furthermore, he pointed that grammar was also one of the biggest barriers that affected the children's speaking performance.

Heriansyah (2012) performed a study towards speaking problems faced by the English Department students of Syiah Kuala University. The results of this study displayed that there were more than ten types of speaking problems faced by the

students. They were divided in two separate kinds which were linguistic problems and non-linguistic problems. The researcher pointed out that the most challenging problems faced by the respondents were: lack of vocabulary, not confident to speak, not used to talking in class, and difficult to express words or sentences.

Actually, there are a range of common English speaking problems shared by the learners who learn English as a foreign language. The following factors are the most common ones found by many researchers in many parts of the world:

- Fear of making mistakes: According to the work of Bhattacharya (2017), 90% of his participants responded that they were afraid of making mistakes when speaking English. Having the same problem, the respondents of Asif et al. (2018)'s study admitted that their confidence in speaking English was not high, so whenever they got the English speaking problems, they switched to their local language straight away.
- Shyness: The survey conducted by Bhattacharya (2017) represented that a high proportion of the students believed that the shyness has big negative impact on their English speaking.
- Use of mother tongue: Bhattacharya (2017)'s study revealed that the majority of the participant tended to use their mother tongue in English classes. The researcher claimed that this might be because the learners often think everything in their mother tongue first, then translate into English. Consequently, when they find it hard to speak in English, they use their native language to express their ideas.
- Topical knowledge: Heriansyah (2012) claimed that the topical knowledge and vocabulary plays a very important role in the success of oral communication. Even when the learners are confident and aware of using only English in the classroom, it will be challenging for them if they do not have enough words to say about the specific topics.
- Mispronunciation: Along the speaking problems, pronunciation is paid a lot of attention to by the learners. As found in Bhattacharya (2017)'s research, a large number of the students are worried about their English pronunciation.

- Role of teacher: There has been a lot of research studying about the teacher's role in improving students' language skills, especially oral skills. The results show that the teacher plays a very important role in developing learners' speaking skills. In term of the question 'Should the teacher use only English in classroom to encourage students to learn English?', Asif et al. (2018) 's work finds out that half of the participants responded 'no' to the question 'Do you think teacher should speak only English in the classroom?'. It means that the ways teachers use suitable language in the classroom affects quite a lot to the students' interest in learning. The researchers claim that the use of mother tongue by the teacher does help to encourage students to learn English more. Apart from that, Bahattacharya (2017) studies about that role of teacher in a very different aspect. He advocates the idea that teachers are responsible for the students' equal chances of speaking inside the classroom, and the teachers should pay equal attention to all members of the class. Furthermore, the teachers should encourage people to overcome their fear of making mistakes by holding many interesting and stimulating activities in the classroom.

In short, students' oral competence is uttered by various factors. However, English speaking skills have not been taught really effectively for the learners. Students still encounter a lot of problems when they are speaking. As a teacher of English at Van hoa I High School in Thai Nguyen province for 10 years, the researcher has been facing a lot of difficulties in motivating students to speak English in class. As a result, teaching English speaking at my school is also the strategic duty of all the teachers and the students. Moreover, since most students at Van hoa I High School in Thai Nguyen city are from different mountainous areas of Vietnam, it is difficult for them to learn English, speaking skills in particular. They often feel shy when speaking English. Moreover, there is another fact which Mekonge & Kerubo (2017) mention to explain why a lot of language learners have very poor English speaking skills: That is because English speaking lessons are not taught properly by the teachers; they often disregard them and "focus on other areas of language learning features such as grammar or vocabulary". The main reason for this is due to the fact that the graduation examinations for high school students are not testing English speaking skills. On the other hand, the most

common character shared by all the participants is being shy and afraid of speaking English. Moreover, their mother tongue (ethnic language) affects quite a lot to their English speaking skills, and the students do not really have essential need to communicate in English. As a result, students have few chances to practice speaking English at schools, which leads to their poor English oral skills. All the time, I would like to help my students to master the language and have ability to speak English confidently, which is the reason why I intend to keep focus on the topic ‘*A study on factors affecting English speaking skills of the 10th grade ethnic minority students at Van hoa I High School*’ to find the solutions to help my students learn English speaking better. After finishing, it is supposed that this study could contribute to a relatively neglected area of research in Vietnam or may be implemented immediately by other teachers at Van hoa I High School for their same classroom problems.

1.3. Aims, Objectives and Research Questions of the study

1.3.1. Aims and objectives of the study

The study aims to explore the difficulties that the 10th grade ethnic minority students at Van hoa I High School have encountered when practicing English speaking skills and factors that cause these difficulties. Besides, it also seeks to find out the suggested solutions to improve the students’ speaking skills.

In the light of that general aim, some specific objectives are drawn up to outline the actual directions of the study as follows:

- 1) To find out the real factors that cause speaking problems of the students
- 2) To give out some effective suggestions to improve the learners’ speaking skills

1.3.2. Research questions

In brief, the objectives of the research could be specified into these research questions:

1. *What are the factors that affect 10th grade ethnic minority students’ speaking skills at Van hoa I High School?*
2. *What could be done to enhance speaking skills for the students?*

1.4. Scope of the Study

The study will be taken place at Van hoa I High School. It is a mountainous school located in Thai Nguyen City, Vietnam. The total number of the students at Van

hoa I High School is around 200. By teaching at this school for a few years, the researcher finds that the school does not provide enough necessary teaching and learning facilities. In term of the participants for the research, a total of 51 ethnic minority students in grade 10 at Van hoa I High School will participate in this study. They are reported to be hard-working and obedient pupils. However, their English skills are not really good, especially speaking skills. Besides, 6 English teachers at this school will be invited to do the questionnaire and take part in the interviews with the researcher. Within the scope of the paper, the study only concentrates on revealing factors affecting students' speaking skills and then suggesting some effective solutions to improve English speaking teaching and learning for the teachers and students.

1.5. Significance of the Study

Speaking skills are considered as the most important aspect of language learning because when talking about language learners, it is often referred to the speakers of that language (Ur, 1996). Furthermore, speaking skills play such a very important role in human's life. Through speaking, people can communicate their thought, their feelings and so on to each other. Richards (2008) explains that: "when people meet, they exchange greetings, engage in small talk, recount recent experiences, and so on, because they wish to be friendly and to establish a comfortable zone of interaction with others". Speaking competence hence is excessive for the learners of any language. Although there have been a number of studies about the factors affecting students' oral performance in the world, there is few research in the field of studying features impacting on speaking skills of grade 10th students in Vietnam, especially at Van hoa I High School. Therefore, this study, to the researcher's knowledge, is very unique and new, at least for EFL learners and teachers at Van hoa I High School. As the study is completed, it is expected to find out the most dominant factors that affect the English learners' speaking skills. After figuring out the main factors causing students' speaking problems, it is also desired to discover the possible solutions that language learners can implement to improve their speaking skills and English teachers can apply to improve their teaching.

1.6. Organization of the research

The study and findings are intended to be shown and discussed in the following chapters:

Chapter I: Introduction, which provide a broad view of the whole research by presenting the current problems, mentioning aims and objectives of the study, and indicating the significance as well as the scope of the study.

Chapter II: Literature Review, which is supposed to provide theoretical background on the factors affecting learners' speaking skills and review the previous literature relating to the topic.

Chapter III: Methodology, which informs readers of the participants, the chosen instruments, procedures of data collection and analysis.

Chapter IV: Findings and Discussion, which presents the description and interpretation of the collected data in light of research questions.

Chapter V: Conclusion which summarizes the major findings discovered by the research and written up in the previous chapter (chap. 4). Moreover, it suggests some pedagogical implication for the problem. The limitations and suggestions for future studies are also discussed in this last chapter.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Definition of speaking skills

2.1.1. Definitions of language

There has been range of definitions of what the language is.

According to Online Oxford Dictionary, language is defined as the method of communication that occurs in human's life. It can be represented by either written or spoken way. The important point of the language is that the orders and use of the words are put in a structured and conventional way which is different from one language to another. In scientific term, language is also called *linguistics*.

Henry Sweet, an English phonetician and language scholar, explains that language is a huge combination of many sub-elements. It is the join of words to make a sentence, and the sentences to transfer an idea or thought. "It is the expression of ideas by means of speech-sounds".

Bashir et al. (2011) suggest that "the language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols", which people in the same culture/country or other who have learnt this language can use to communicate or to interact". He also points out that the language is not produced randomly, but it is governed by grammatical rules to make the sentences make sense.

Though there are plenty of different definitions of the language, in this study the researcher decides not to use any of them but summarize the above definitions: The language is a means of communication used by a particular country or community. It is the combination of words following the specific grammatical rules. The language can be displayed in both written and spoken ways. In this research, the researcher only focuses on the spoken language.

2.1.2. Definitions of speaking skills

In general, the words "speaking skills" is used to refer to the ability of using language verbally to transmit information from one person or group to another effectively in social situations. In EFL class, speaking skills refer to students' ability to speak in English.

Iqbal (2012) defines speaking skill as the oral mode which is more difficult and complex than three other language skills (Listening, Reading, and Writing). He emphasizes that speaking is not mere producing sounds of the words, but combining them to make meaningful messages.

According to Nunan (1995), speaking skill is to pronounce the word orally, to communicate and interact with other people with spoken language, in order to accomplish multiple of communicative purposes like to make a speech or to make a request.

Many other researchers (as reviewed by Leong et al., 2017), including Howarth (2001), and Abd (2016), state that speaking is two-way process. In other words, it is the collaboration between two or more people in the shared context, and in the shared time.

Both Tarigan (1990) and Bygate (1987) mention that speaking skills is closely linked to listening skills. Bygate (1987) states that speaking is the result of listening process, and it is performed to respond to what the people hear. Meanwhile, Tarigan (1990) discusses that speaking skill is produced by listening skills, and it is developed at the child age.

By carefully reviewing the available literature, Fitriani et al (2015) conclude that the success of speaking skills depends a lot on the students' skills in conversation, and it is assessed through their ability to make a conversation in learned language.

All in all, speaking skills can be understood as the verbal language putting the words together, and following the structured rules of that language to make meaningful messages. It is used to transfer and express the ideas and thought of the speakers to the listeners. Speaking and listening cannot be separated but connected intimately to each other. When it is referred as the students' speaking skills, it describes the ability of using the language in oral mode to fulfill the communicative purposes.

2.1.3. The importance of speaking skills

Speaking skills play such a very important role in human's life. Through speaking, people can communicate their thought, their feelings and so on to each other.

Richards (2008) explains that: “when people meet, they exchange greetings, engage in small talk, recount recent experiences, and so on, because they wish to be friendly and to establish a comfortable zone of interaction with others”. This supports the idea that achieving good oral communicative ability is a main aspect of human to be connected to each other. As language is a means of communication, there is no point if someone learns a language but cannot communicate in that language verbally.

Along the same lines, Qureshi (2012) states that “language is a tool for communication” and the communication takes place when there is speech. If we do not have the speech, there will be no communication. Speaking competence hence is excessive for the learners of any language. Without speaking, our communication becomes a mere script. People make oral conversations for a great number of purposes and in different situations. “For a smooth running of any system, the speakers of a language need to be especially and purposefully trained in the skill of speaking” (Qureshi, 2012).

2.1.4. The characteristics of speaking skills

Being fluent and accurate when speaking is always the main goal of the learners when they study any languages. According to Mazouzi (2013, as cited in Leong et al., 2017), speaking activities should be organized within the balance of fluency and accuracy accomplishment. Both fluency and accuracy play the crucial roles in the achievement of the oral performance.

The first element of speaking skills is fluency. It is defined as the ability to speak a language effectively, without having to stop too much or having too many pauses in a speech. Hedge (2000) states that fluency in a language means the speakers can respond to their partners coherently and understandably.

The second characteristic of oral competence is the accuracy when speaking. Accuracy in language, in other words, means being able to use the correct grammatical rules, suitable vocabulary, and accurate pronunciation when a speech is produced. Mazouzi (2013, as cited in Leong et al., 2017) agrees that the students should focus on being correct and completed when speaking.

When it comes to language learning, it often refers to the speakers of that language (Ur, 1996). Therefore, the learners should pay more attention to achieve speaking skills. To reach this goal, they should know how the language system works properly. Students should be aware of the fluency and accuracy of what they say. All of these help learners to be excellent English speakers.

2.2. Features contributed to the English speaking competence.

Along with the popularity of English nowadays, the criterion to evaluate an English language learner is less and less strict. It is not required the language learners to sound as good as the native speakers, as long as they can communicate in learned language effectively.

According to Gilakjani (2012), there are three major features involved in English speaking skills of the language learners:

- **Intelligibility:** It is the students' ability to pronounce the words correctly and recognizably in English.
- **Comprehensibility:** It means the listeners can understand properly what is said by the speakers.
- **Interpretability:** It means the communicative partners can perceive the purpose of what they have listened.

There are ranges of sub-elements of the three features above which help the English language learners achieve excellent English speaking skills.

Firstly, the learners need to learn about the language aspects that build up the sounds of English in order to accomplish the intelligibility of the language. Gilakjani (2012) has summarized the characteristics of English pronunciation as below:

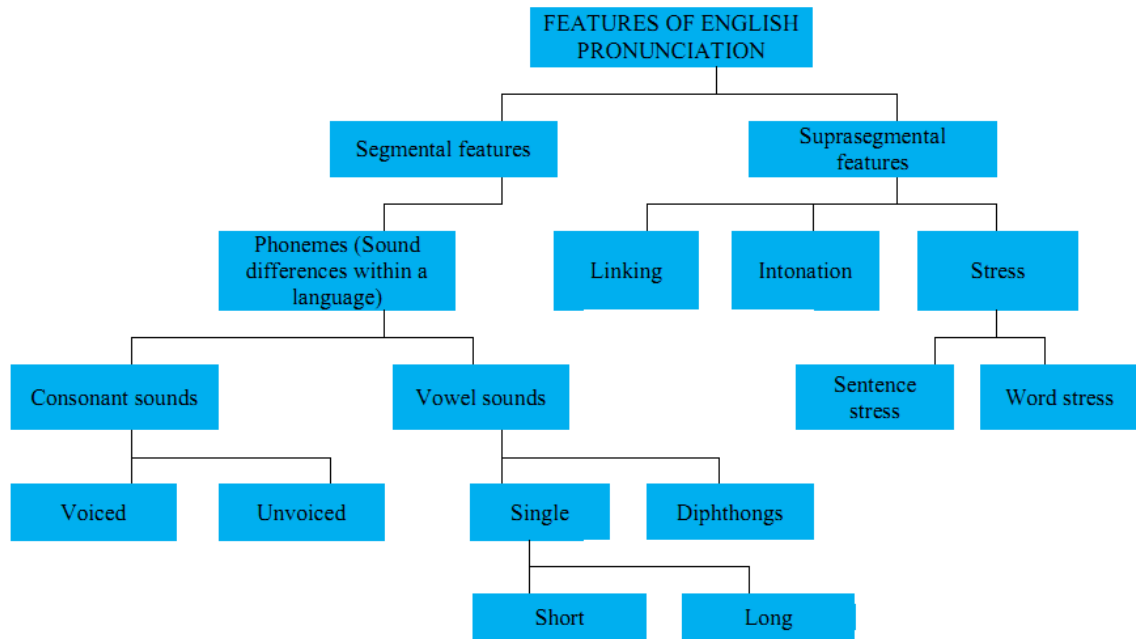


Diagram 1: **Various Features of English Pronunciation**

As described in the figure, there are two features of English pronunciation (the Segmental level and the Suprasegmental level). In English teaching and learning, it is advisable to focus on both two features: Segmental features should be more suitable for the beginning learners, and suprasegmental features is more helpful for higher-ability learners.

Secondly, if the learners want to attain the comprehensibility of the language features, they need to pay attention to the appropriateness of the language. They should concentrate on the appropriateness for themselves. For example, if they are the beginner, then they should not force themselves to sound like a master of the language because it will be hard for them and the listeners to understand what they say. The next appropriateness of the language that they learners should consider is one for the audience. The speakers have to use the suitable words to reach different types of listeners' interest. If they are giving speech about medical aspects, for instance, the specific vocabulary for this field is the best choice. However, if they are using that vocabulary to give out the presentation in educational areas, most of the listeners might not understand what they have said. Last but not least, the speakers also need to care about the appropriateness for the context. In different situations, the speakers should use different vocabulary for them.

Finally, the learners need to concentrate on using correct grammatical rules to achieve the interpretability of the language. The listeners can figure out the purpose of the communication only when employing accurate grammatical structures.

2.3. Speaking problems

Speaking other language like English rather than the mother tongue is a challenge for the learners, because speaking English well requires them to master not only the grammatical structures but also the use of English in different communicative situations (Fitriani et al., 2015). Becoming a good English speaker is not easy. As mentioned before, to achieve great English oral competence, the learners need to use the appropriate language for themselves, for the audience, and for the contexts.

Fitriani et al. (2015) define speaking problems is the things that put someone off speaking or it “makes someone lack of speaking ability”.

According to Leong et al. (2017), speaking problems include *inhibition, lack of topical knowledge, low participation, and mother tongue use*. Along the same lines, Heriansyah (2012) points out that there were twelve kinds of difficulties that the students have come across when learning speaking English, and they were divided into two main kinds of problems, called linguistic problems and non-linguistic problems. The linguistic problems are “lack of vocabulary, lack of grammar knowledge, and poor pronunciation”. Otherwise, the non-linguistic problems are much more; they are “not being brave to speak, not being confident to speak, being afraid of speaking, being afraid of making errors, being afraid of being mocked by friends, being nervous to speak, not used to talking in class, difficult to express words or sentences, and confused how to use appropriate words”. That is to say, the linguistic problems are the things related to the language itself such as vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. On the other hand, the non-linguistic problems are the difficulties related to the emotional states of the speakers.

2.4. Common factors affecting speaking skills

If in order to overcome the speaking problems, both learners and teachers need to comprehend the real factors that affect the students' speaking skills. There are several factors that have been studied so far:

2.4.1. Linguistic factors

Bhattacharya (2017), Hosni (2014), and Fitriani et al. (2015) hold the same definition of what linguistic factors are. They state that linguistic factors are the factors of language structure (grammar), vocabulary and pronunciation. There are some linguistic factors that inhibit the learners from speaking English: not good at grammar, lack of vocabulary, and poor in pronunciation.

- Vocabulary is defined as “the knowledge of meanings of words” (Fitriani et al., 2015). The problem of lacking vocabulary when speaking is that the learners do not have enough words to express their thought into spoken language and they do not know how to combine words into a sentence. Fitriani et al. (2015) argue that the students do know what they are going to say in a language but they have got the difficulties to transferring it into the target language like English because they do not have enough words to use. Thus, the lack of vocabulary is one of the main factors that prevent the learners from speaking English.
- Grammar: According to Oxford Dictionary, grammar is “the rules in a language for changing the form of words and joining them into sentences, and it is a person’s knowledge and use of language”. Being good at grammar helps the learners to understand and use the language effectively and lead them to their fluency. Unfortunately, many learners find it hard to use correctly grammatical rules when they are speaking English. Therefore, there are a lot of pauses when they are speaking English.
- Pronunciation is defined as the way people pronoun the sounds of words in a language and the intonation when they are speaking. “Mispronouncing a single sound or wrong use of stresses and intonations can cause misunderstandings” (Bhattacharya, 2017).

2.4.2. Non-linguistic factors/ Affective factors

Unlike linguistic factors, the non-linguistic factors are the causes coming from the individuals themselves, mostly from their emotional health. According to Bhattacharya (2017), the factors that lead to non-linguistic difficulties in speaking English are “anxiety, shyness, self-esteem, motivation, fear of making mistakes, lack of interest and many more”. In the same vein, Heriansyah (2012) points out 13 causes of these factors: “being afraid of making errors, being nervous to speak, not being confident to speak, often forgetting, dislike learning grammar, afraid of being mocked by friends, not being used to talking in class, better performance or ability in speaking by other students, the use of mother language by other students, no friends at campus or home to practice English, difficult to understand the 12 tenses, seldom hearing English from their teachers, and ideas or opinions not accepted by friends”.

- **Anxiety:** Generally, anxiety is understood as the individuals’ emotional state of being nervous or worried about something. When it comes to learning, anxiety “most pervasively obstructs the learning process” (Arnold & Brown, 1999, as cited in Bhattacharya, 2017). Shumin (2002) claims that when the students are too nervous, they are likely “tongue-tied or lost for words”.
- **Lack of Self-confidence:** The concept of self-confidence is defined as individuals’ belief in themselves of what they can do, what others think about them and what their strengths are. The self-confidence helps the learners to be brave, confident and effective to speak English in front of the crowd (Fitriani et al., 2015). If the learners lack self-esteem, they will feel guilty, shy, and afraid of being criticized and laughed by the others, and afraid of making mistakes. When they are worried about making errors and losing face in front of the class, they will definitely be silent during the speaking lessons. Lack of self-confidence put the students into the situations where they do not believe in what they can do and what they can achieve in the future. Consequently, it ruins the learners’ speaking performance.

2.4.3. Use of mother tongue

Mother tongue is the local language that the learners share among each other. When almost all students in an English class share the same another language rather than the target one, they tend to use that language to communicate with each other because they feel more confident and convenient to talk in their language. According to the work of Hosni (2014), the main reason that makes the students use their shared language is due to the lack of the vocabulary. They say that they do not know how to discuss their ideas in English. Both Hosni (2014) and Bhattacharya (2017) conclude that the use of mother tongue in English classes is closely related to the limit of students' vocabulary. If the students often use their native language in language classes, it is hard for them to improve their English speaking skills.

2.4.4. Role of teachers

The teachers play a vital role in helping the learners to develop their speaking skills. The teachers should pay equal attention to all the students in a class, provide them more time to talk during lesson time, and organizing more interesting and engaging learning activities to attract more learners to take part in the lessons. Besides, it is the teacher who makes the students understand that making mistakes is not the big problems, but to help them to improve their skills. Teachers should adapt different teaching methods and integrate many elements to teach speaking skills for the learners.

2.4.5. Listening ability

Listening and speaking abilities are closely connected to each other. From the work of Bhattacharya (2017), it can be concluded that the higher score the students get in listening tasks, the better their speaking skills are. Thus, listening play a vital role in the improvement of speaking skills. The learners speak to their partners to transfer their ideas and thoughts, and their partners play a role as a listener to perceive what the other talks and response by speaking. That is to say, in order to be a good speaker, they have to be a good listener as well.

2.5. Related research

According to the literature reviewed above, the researcher can say that speaking skills can be understood as the verbal language putting the words together, and following the structured rules of that language to make meaningful messages. It is used to transfer and express the ideas and thought of the speakers to the listeners. There are two major characteristics of speaking that the learners and teachers should pay attention to: they are fluency and accuracy. She summarizes that when the learners try to improve their speaking abilities, they encounter a lot of problems which are sorted in two kinds: linguistic problems and non-linguistic problems. Accordingly, there are two main kinds of factors that prevent the learners from speaking English well: *linguistic factors* which include: not good at grammar, lack of vocabulary, and poor in pronunciation and *non-linguistic factors* that consist of anxiety and lack of self-confidence. Besides, there are some other factors affecting learners' speaking skills. They are: *the use of mother tongue, role of teachers and learners' listening ability*. By reviewing the related research, the researcher gets a plenty of speaking problems and common factors that affect students' speaking skills that would be useful for the current study on the selected participants and context.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Mackey & Gass (2005) claimed that methodology chapter of a study is usually supposed to inform readers ‘all aspects of the study’. This chapter, not as an exception, provides all the information that interested readers need to know to get a deep insight into this research. It includes the information of the participants, the description of the chosen instruments, together with the procedures of data collection and analysis.

3.1. Research questions

This study was carried out to find out the difficulties that the 10th grade ethnic minority students at Van hoa I High School have encountered when practicing English speaking skills and factors that caused these difficulties. The researcher expected to seek for some difficulties such as lack of self-confidence, lack of vocabulary, poor in grammar, poor in pronunciation, low participation, and mother use. Besides, the researcher also aimed to examine the suggested solutions to improve the students’ speaking skills. Some expected suggestions might be organizing interesting and engaging learning activities to attract the students to their learning, reducing teachers’ talking time and providing more chances for the learners to talk, giving out some useful websites or methods for the students to improve their pronunciation and vocabulary, etc. To achieve these aims, the following questions were drawn:

Research questions:

1. *What are the factors that affect 10th grade ethnic minority students’ speaking skills at Van hoa I High School?*
2. *What could be done to enhance speaking skills for the students?*

3.2. Participants

3.2.1. Description of the school

Van hoa I High School is a suburb school, located in the mountainous area of Thai Nguyen City, Vietnam. Based on the information provided by the Vietnam Government, currently, about more than 310,000 people live in Thai Nguyen with nearly 70% of the population live in countryside and mountainous areas. Its population’s

education levels are not equal. Urban people acquire the average educational level whereas countryside and mountainous people achieve low level. Besides the income of people in the mountains is generally below-average and low.

Considering the mountainous community's economics, Van hoa I High School provides insufficient facilities for teaching and learning process. In most of classes, there are no the projectors, speakers and other necessary school equipment for the process of teaching English.

Van hoa I High School currently services over 200 students ranging from grade 10 to grade 12. According the school's report, generally Van hoa I High School students are studious and hard learning. The official learning schedules of the students are in the morning, and in the afternoon.

3.2.2. Description of the students

Grade 10 consists of 51 students in which there are 27 females and 24 males. All of the participants are now living at dormitory of the school.

The majority of the students at Grade 10 come from the low-income and below-average income families. The 51 students at Grade 10 are all obedient. They hardly ever break the school rules and class rules.

However, these students' learning results in the first semester were not really high, which is compared to other grades at Van hoa I High School. Out of 51 students, there was only 1 good student (the average mark is above 8.0), 17 moderately good ones (the average mark is above 6.5 and below 8.0), and the rest got below 6.5 for their average marks. When considering average English marks in semester 1, the researcher realized that these students were not really good at English because there was only 1 students getting the good mark and 17 others getting the moderately good marks.

After a few lessons of observing Grade 10 students' English learning at the classroom (before carrying out the official observations), the researcher can assess the learning situation. Overall, the learning environment of this class sometimes is fun and exciting but in most of the speaking lessons, the students were quite silent. Students, when assigned speaking tasks, were fairly lazy and chose to keep their mouths closed.

However, there were some students who were active and interested in the speaking activities, and they talked in most of the students' talking time.

The researcher decided to choose Grade 10 to carry out the experiments because of two major reasons. Firstly, the researcher currently taught Grade 10 students. Therefore, it was very convenient for her to select this grade to conduct the observations or to give out and collect the questionnaires. Secondly, it was due to Grade 10 students' characteristics. As mentioned above, the students at this grade are very studious and enthusiastic and their speaking skills were not really good. Thus, the researcher wished to find out the real factors that cause their speaking problems and bring in useful teaching and learning approaches for them.

3.2.3. Description of the teachers

6 English teachers at Van hoa I High School were the interviewees for the interviews about teachers' roles in improving students' speaking skills and their opinions about some common difficulties that the learners often encounter when they speak English. Additionally, the teachers were asked to provide some suggestions to avoid students' speaking problems.

3.3. Data collection instrument

In order to find out the answers for the research questions, the researcher will use the phenomenological qualitative and correlational quantitative research approaches. Firstly, she will use the questionnaires which help to collect the numerical data. Then, she uses some tools in qualitative method that are the interviews and the observation. By doing that, the researcher can get the descriptive data which are more reliable to answer the questions of the research.

3.3.1. Quantitative method (Questionnaires)

There are many types of quantitative research approach, but questionnaire is one of the most useful research tools which involve asking the respondents given questions, mostly in written way. The main purpose of questionnaire is to gather the information from the respondents to answer the research questions (Wikipedia, 2018). The questionnaire was chosen firstly to collect data in this study because it is believed to be

one of the most effective research instruments. According to Cohen et al. (2007), questionnaire is a time-saving research tool for the researcher since it can reach a large number of participants at the same time without the presence of the researcher. Many researchers mention that questionnaires provide quick and substantially correct responses of the participants (Linda, 2010 & Othman et al., 2015). As a result, a massive deal of data can be collected at a very short time. More importantly, questionnaire provides the informants opportunities to express their opinions and need freely without being afraid of losing face in front of the others.

However, there are still some drawbacks of this research tool that need to be covered. Firstly, if the questionnaires require students to write their names, the results are somehow not really reliable. Therefore, the researcher will design anonymous questionnaires which allow students to answer the questions honestly. According to Anderson (2004, as cited in Othman & Murad, 2015), the anonymity of the questionnaire is necessary to increase the number of responses and their accuracy. Secondly, due to the fixed format questions of questionnaire, it is hard for the respondents to express their own opinions about the given questions. To deal with this problem, the researcher will offer the informants some spaces where the unanticipated answers can be written. The other drawback is that the researcher sometimes might not understand and figure out the participants' feeling through questionnaires. Therefore, this should be addressed by other tools in the study.

In this study, the researcher will use open-ended questions to exploit more information about the difficulties and challenges that grade 10 ethnic minority students at Van hoa I High School encounter in speaking English and find out some possible suggestions to enhance their speaking skills.

The questionnaires were designed for both teachers and students. There was one questionnaire for students which were used to investigate the students' speaking problems, factors affecting their acquisition of English speaking skills, and their suggestions to help them to overcome these speaking difficulties. The teachers were supposed to answer one questionnaire which was mainly about the current state of teaching and learning English resources at Van hoa I High School, and their opinions about the students' speaking problems and the factors causing them.

3.3.1.1. Students' questionnaire

This questionnaire consisted of four sub-sections.

SECTION A: General information

Before getting started with the questionnaire, the students were asked to answer the question: *How often are you assigned these kinds of tasks in English class?*, which part would help the researcher to generally know what was the current state of the speaking lessons in the studied classes.

SECTION B: Students' common speaking problems

This section provided the researcher with the students' opinions about the common speaking problems that they often encountered. The problems were separated into two different types namely *Linguistic problems* and *Non-linguistic problems/ Psychological problems*.

SECTION C: Factors affecting the acquisition of good English speaking skills.

The third part of the questionnaire aimed to explore the factors that affect the students' speaking skills. Section C helped the researcher to find out the answer for the research question 1: *What are the factors that affect 10th grade ethnic minority students' speaking skills at Van hoa I High School?*

3.3.1.2. Teachers' questionnaire

This questionnaire aimed at approving what had been found from students' questionnaire. There were 4 sections in this questionnaire as follow:

I. A checklist for teaching and learning resources in Van hoa I High School.

II. English learning environment in the school

III. English teachers' teaching methods

The aim of the first three parts of this questionnaire give the researcher the overview about the current state of teaching and learning English at Van hoa I High School.

IV. Teachers' opinions about students' speaking problems and the factors causing these problems.

This section aimed to seek the data to address the first research question about the factors affecting the students' speaking skills.

3.3.2. Qualitative methods

3.3.2.1. Interviews

Cohen et al. (2007) describes that interview is a useful qualitative method to gather the data for the study. This tool allows the participants to use “multiple-sensory channels: verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard” to respond. The interview helps the researcher gain further information that the respondents might not express in the questionnaires. According to Bhattacharya (2017), the in-depth interview is one of the most common types of qualitative research methods.

In this study, face-to-face interviews with 3 English teachers at Van hoa I High School will be used to elicit information about teaching methods they apply to teach English speaking skills for students. Furthermore, from these interviews, the researcher hope to find out whether there are some solutions that will help students to improve their speaking skills. Furthermore, there were face to face interviews between the researcher and 10 random students to make clear some unclear points in the questionnaires and to seek for the students' suggestions to help them improve English speaking skills.

To help participants have positive attitudes during the interview, it should be taken place in welcome and friendly atmosphere. Vietnamese may be used to ensure that the interviewees understand clearly the questions and they then can express what they think correctly. Moreover, the interviews will be recorded for further analysis if the participants agree.

3.3.2.2 Observations

Observations belong to the Ethnographic research (one of the types of qualitative research method) which “is the most in-depth observational method that studies people in their naturally occurring environment” (Bhattacharya, 2017). There are several outstanding features of observation as a research tool. Among them, the most distinctive one is that observation provides the researchers “the ‘live’ data from naturally occurring social situations” (Cohen, et al., 2007). The researcher adapts this research instrument

because it is potential to gather the more valid and reliable information than other research tools because it might explore the things that the participants might not express freely in questionnaires and interviews. To collect the data to test the outlined hypotheses, the researcher decides to use the *highly structured observations*. As described in Cohen, et al. (2007)'s book, "the highly structured observation will already have its hypotheses decided and will use the observational data to conform or refuse these hypotheses". There is one common disadvantage of observation is that the observation result might be affected by the observer's bias and opinion. Therefore, it is necessary for her to outline the behaviors to be observed before making the observations. During the observations, the observers are required to keep silent, not to make any disruption and questions for the subject participating in the observed situations. Besides, it is advisable for the researcher to use the five-point scale to rate the observations' results. A five-point scale of observed behavior (Cohen, et al., 2007): *1 = not at all; 2 = very little; 3 = a little; 4 = a lot; 5 = a very great deal of* (Table of Observed Behaviors was put in Appendices). In order to gather the data to answer the research questions, the researcher will attend four sample Speaking lessons in some random classes at Van hoa I High School to collect more in-depth and correct information about the process of English teaching and learning at Van hoa I High School. The purpose of observing English speaking classes is to recognize the current strengths and weaknesses of both teachers and students in order to suggest some solutions for this study.

3.4. Data collection procedure

Before conducting the research, the researcher informed the grade 10th students at Van hoa I High School about the purposes of the study and asked for their active cooperation. Besides, the researcher also asked for the agreement of the English teachers at this school to provide the information for the research by taking part in the teachers' questionnaire and interview.

Firstly, the questionnaires for both students and teachers were delivered to collect the data from the participants. After getting in all the completed questionnaires, the researcher started to analyze the results.

Then, the face-to-face interviews between the researcher and the learners, and the researcher with the teachers were carried out. By getting the interviews done after analyzing the questionnaire results, the researcher could find out the deeper and more accurate data to support for her final results of the study. The interviewer would take note and record the interviewees' answers at the same time.

Finally, four English speaking lessons were observed by the researcher. The researcher acted as an overt observer, she would take notes during every observation, and complete the observing journal to collect the data for the research.

3.5. Data analysis

3.5.1. Data analysis tool: Microsoft Excel 2013

Microsoft Excel is one of the Microsoft's productions, and more than 30 years after its initial introduction, Excel remains the world's leading spreadsheet software (It was brought out firstly in 1985). Microsoft Excel is a spreadsheet program used to analyze the numerical values or data in tables, and then present them in the visual diagrams or charts. Excel is a useful tool for scientific and statistical analysis with large data sets. Excel's statistical formulas and graphing can help researches perform variance analysis, chi-square testing, and chart complex data. Besides, the researcher is used to using Microsoft Excel to analyze and categorize the information for many years. In this study, the data was collected and analyzed based on the results of questionnaires. For analyzing the questionnaire data, the researcher puts it in some different categories.

3.5.2. Procedure of analyzing the data

3.5.2.1. Questionnaires

Stage 1: Check the questionnaires carefully to make sure that the respondents have answered all the questions and supplied answer must be understandable and valuable.

Stage 2: Gather statistics by counting and calculating data.

Stage 3: Analyze the received data and discuss them in the form of tables, figures for better exemplification.

3.5.2.2. Interviews

Stage 1: Check note-taking with the recordings that were taken during the interviews to make sure that the researcher did not miss any information that the interviewees provided.

Stage 2: Summarize the conducted data and analyze it basing on the two research questions.

3.5.2.3. Observations

Stage 1: Gather the data from *Observation Checklist*.

Stage 2: Summarize the received information and arrange them into different levels from *not at all* to *a very great deal of*.

Stage 3: Analyze the ordered data and discuss them.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. An overview of the results

In this chapter, the responses of questionnaires were shown, analyzed and discussed. They pointed out the students' speaking problems and the factors causing them, and then some suggestions were given out to help both teachers and learners to improve the learners' speaking competency. Thus, the research questions were answered. The detailed results were discussed in this section below:

Research questions:

- 1) *What are the factors that affect 10th grade ethnic minority students' speaking skills at Van hoa I High School?*
- 2) *What could be done to enhance speaking skills for the students?*

4.2. Results

4.2.1. Research Question 1: What are the factors that affect 10th grade ethnic minority students' speaking skills at Van hoa I High School?

Results from questionnaires

4.2.1.1. Students' Questionnaire

4.2.1.1.1 SECTION A: General information:

How often are you assigned these kinds of tasks in English speaking class?

1a. Conversation

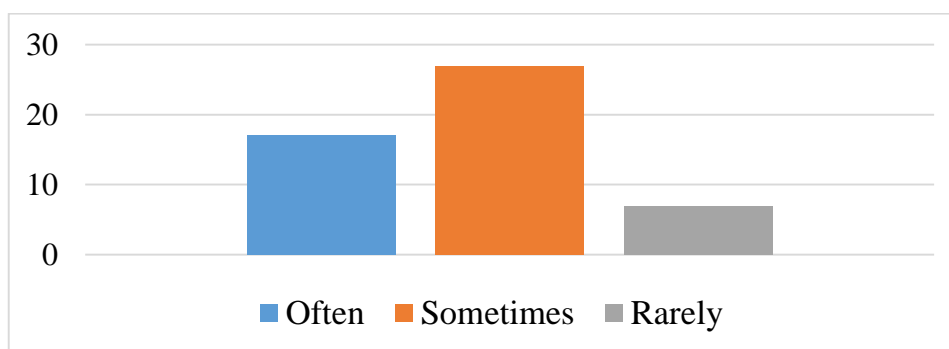


Figure 1: How often conversation tasks were assigned in speaking lessons

It can be seen clearly from the bar chart that the conversation tasks were sometimes given to the students. 27 out of 51 participants reported that they were sometimes assigned conversation tasks in their speaking lessons, and more than 15 of them said that they were often asked to make conversations in the classrooms.

2a. Questioning

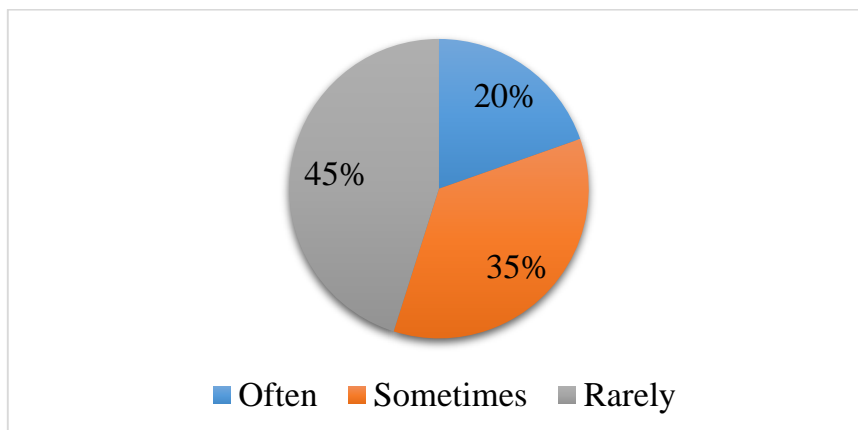


Figure 2: How often questioning tasks were assigned in speaking lessons

The figure revealed that most of the pupils agreed that their teacher rarely and sometimes gave those chances to question in English, accounting for 45% and 35% respectively. That is to say, the teachers had not seen the questioning task as an important task to develop the students' speaking skills.

3a. Explaining

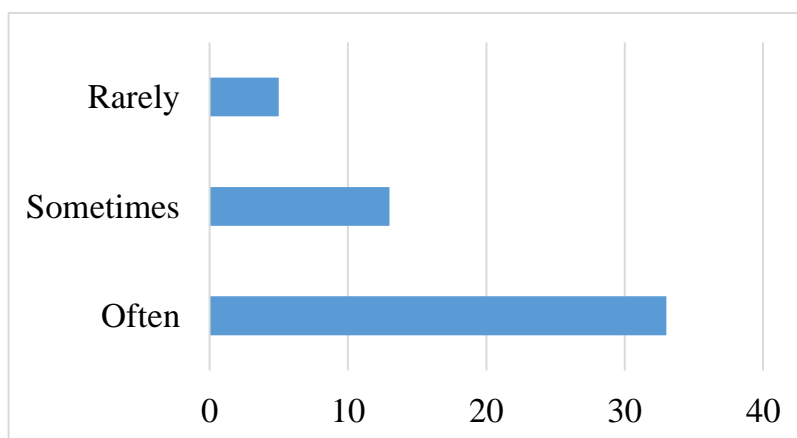


Figure 3: How often explaining tasks were assigned in speaking lessons

While more than 30 respondents claimed that their teacher often gave them time to explain things in English, there were still 5 of them said that they rarely saw this kind of speaking task in the classroom.

4a. Discussion

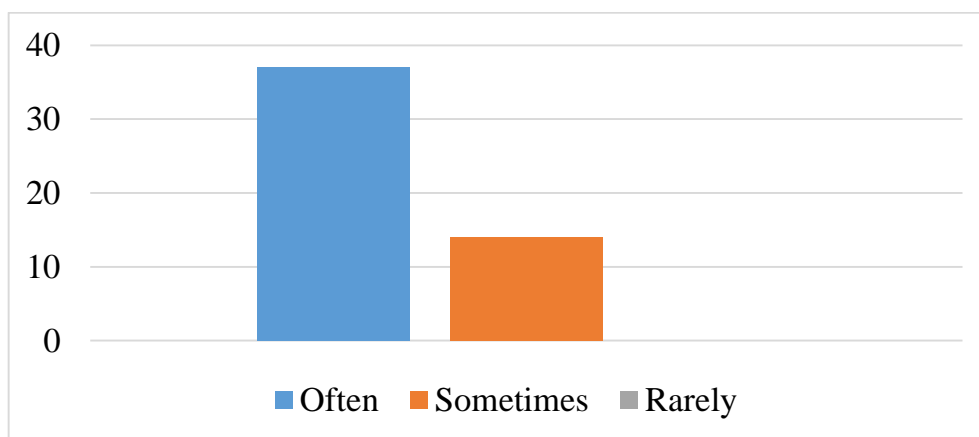


Figure 4: How often discussion tasks were assigned in speaking lessons

The data obtained here revealed that the discussion task was one of the most common tasks in the speaking lessons at Van hoa I High School. There were no learners choosing the rarely option.

5a. Presentation

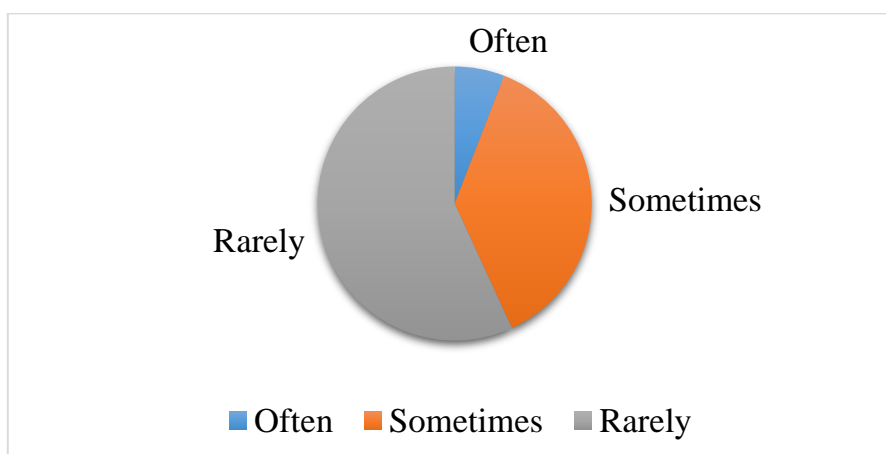


Figure 5: How often presentation tasks were assigned in speaking lessons

The respondents disagreed on how often the teacher gave them presentation tasks. However, the majority of the subjects admitted that the teacher rarely organized presentation activities in the speaking lessons, the number accounted for 57%.

6a. Interview

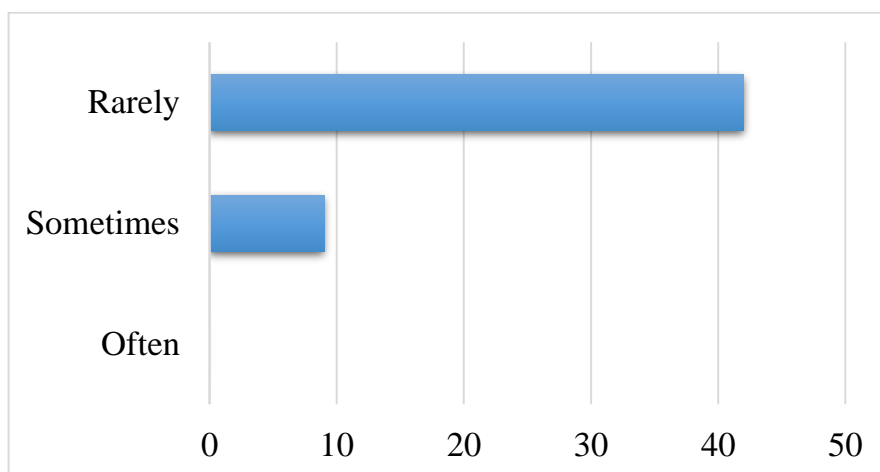


Figure 6: How often interview tasks were assigned in speaking lessons

According to the bar chart, we could clearly conclude that interview is one of the rarest tasks for developing students' speaking skills at Van hoa I High School.

7a. Dialogue

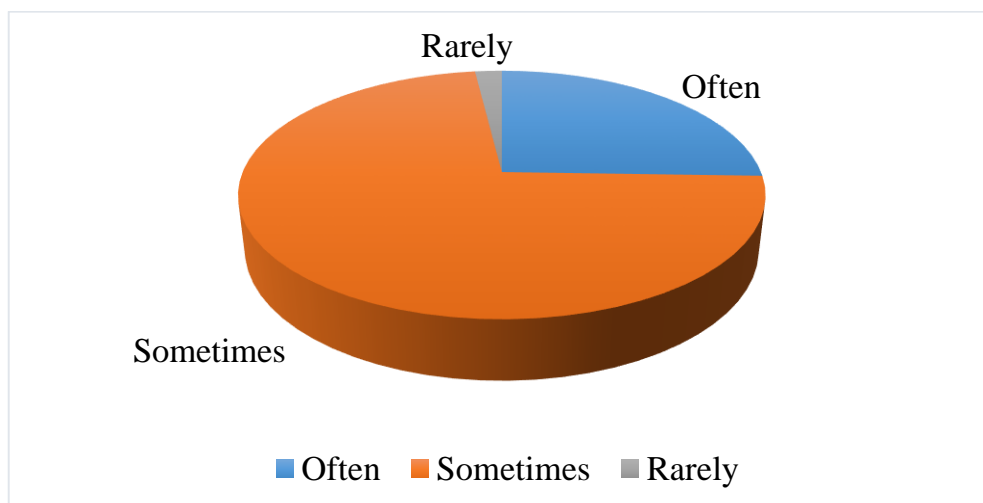


Figure 7: How often dialogue tasks were assigned in speaking lessons

The pie chart indicated that 73% of the respondents agreed that the frequency that their English teacher got them to make a dialogue in English speaking lessons was sometimes. There were only few of them (1 out of 51 participants) claimed that she/he hardly ever saw a dialogue task in the classroom.

8a. Giving example

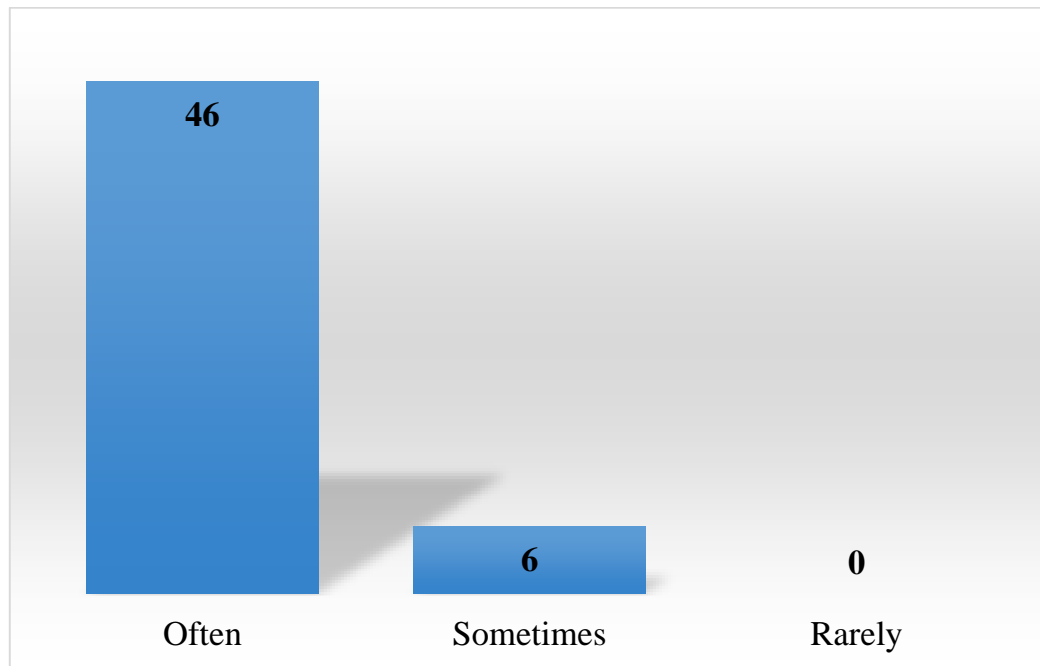


Figure 8: How often giving example tasks were assigned in speaking lessons

The data pointed out that almost all learners reported that they often had opportunities in the classroom to give out example by speaking English in speaking lessons. No one chose the rarely option. That was to say, giving example was considered as one of the most common learning activities in the classroom at Van hoa I High School.

Conclusion: All in all, it could be said that the different speaking tasks were preferred at different levels by the teachers at Van hoa I High School. By looking at the pupils' responses to the question *How often are you assigned these kinds of tasks in English speaking class?*, the researcher could say that *Explaining, Discussing, and Giving example* were the most popular speaking tasks that the students did in their speaking class. There were some more difficult tasks which teachers here rarely assigned for the learners, such as *Making presentation, and Making interview*. Therefore, the students might feel bored when learning speaking because they were often given the same kinds of easy tasks in every lesson without being challenged the new ones.

4.2.1.1.2. SECTION B: Students' common speaking problems:

How often do you encounter the following common problems when you are speaking English?

4.2.1.1.2.1. Linguistic problems

1b. Using wrong tenses

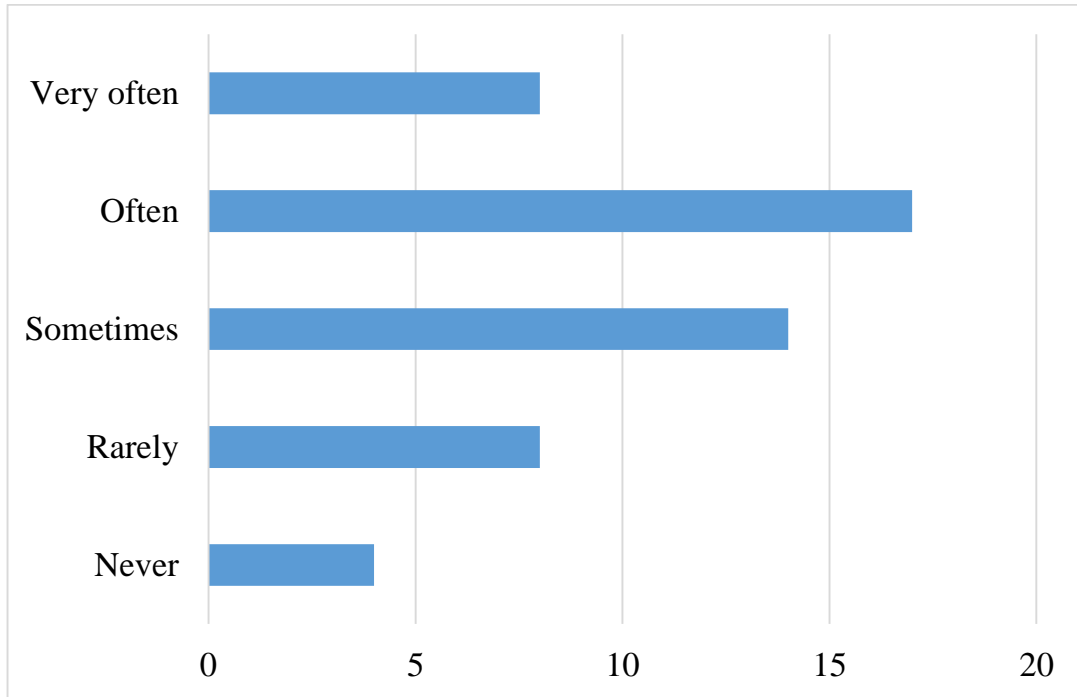


Figure 9: Using wrong tenses

The figure presented for the students' grammatical mistakes of using wrong tenses when speaking. It could be seen from the bar chart that the majority of the respondents very often and often used incorrect tenses while speaking. That was to say, the use of different tenses in English was a big speaking problems because it made the students get troubles when they tried to speak fluently in English.

2b. Getting troubles when distinguishing part of speech

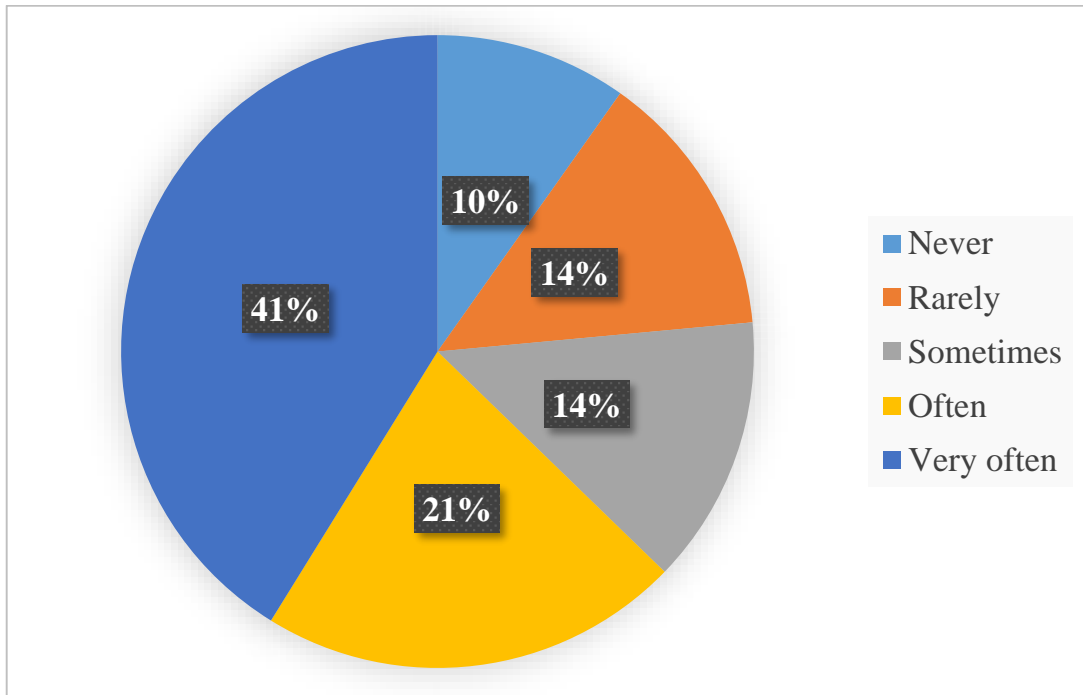


Figure 10: Getting troubles when distinguishing part of speech

The frequency of getting troubles when distinguishing part of speech of the participants varied from *Very often* to *Rarely*. The figure revealed that most of the pupils found out that they very often got this speaking difficulty, accounting for 41%. This may mean that the learners cared too much about the types of the words when they were speaking, so whenever they got stuck in distinguish the part of speech of a word, they had to stop speaking to think for a while, which affected the fluency in their speaking.

3b. Feeling difficult to use different sentence structures

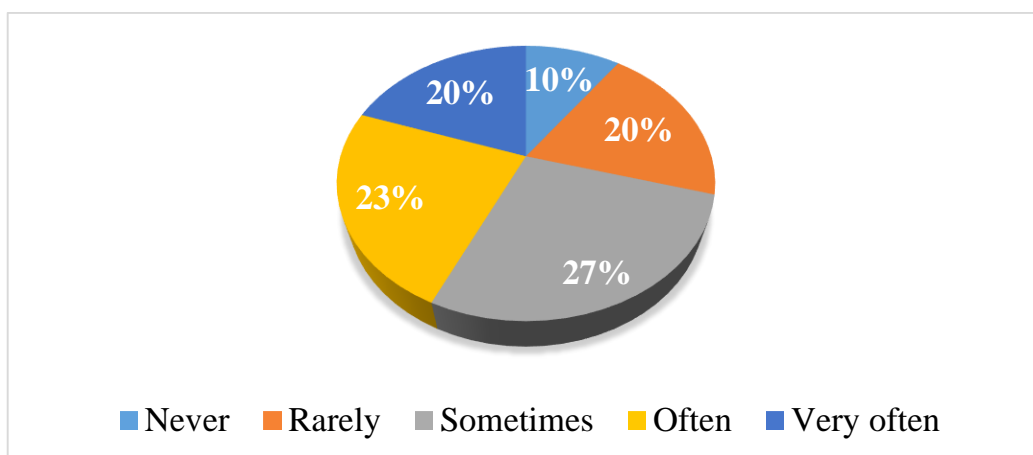


Figure 11: Feeling difficult to use different sentence structures

The pie chart indicated that some students reported that they never and rarely had difficulty using different sentence structures, which means that they were not affected much by the grammatical sentence structures while speaking. However, the percentage of people choosing *Very often* and *Often* were still 13% higher. That was to say, the greater part of the learners still paid too much attention on the grammar when speaking English.

4b. Getting troubles to choose the appropriate vocabulary; 5b. Using wrong synonyms/antonyms & 6b. Not being able to translate given words spontaneously

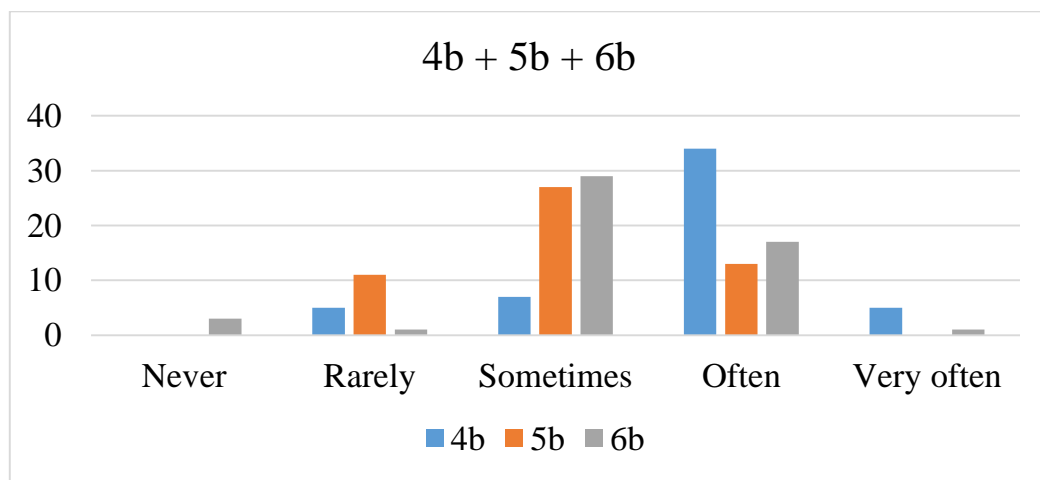


Figure 12: Vocabulary problems

The data showed that while most of the respondents sometimes used wrong synonyms/antonyms and could not translate given words spontaneously, the majority of them often encountered the problems of using the suitable words to speak. That may mean that the biggest problem with English vocabulary which the students got when they spoke English was that they did not have enough vocabulary to use flexibly in different communication contexts.

7b. Mispronouncing the English words, 8b. Using wrong intonation towards the English words & 9b. Giving wrong word stress towards the English words

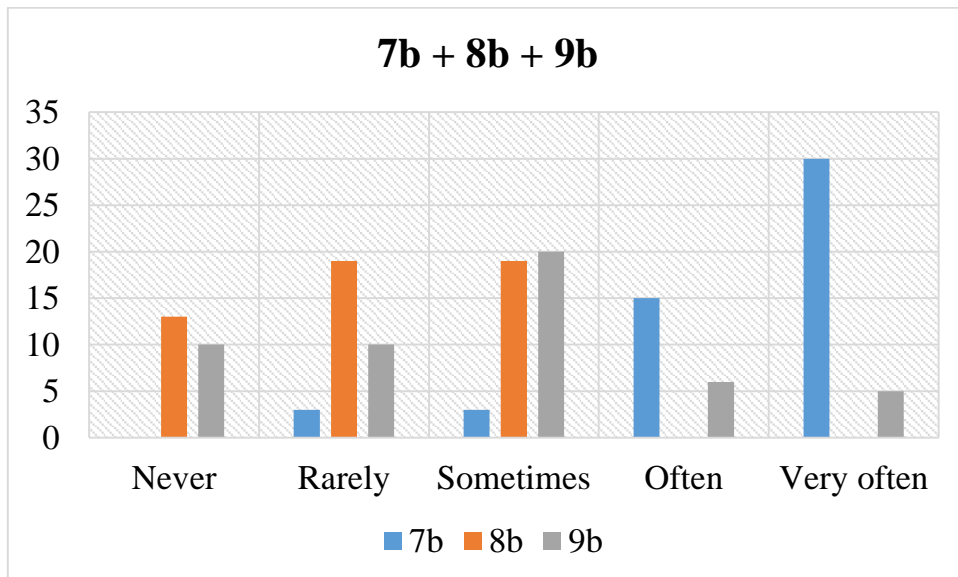


Figure 13: Pronunciation problems

The figure presented for the students' problems with pronouncing the English words. It could be seen from the bar chart that while almost all the learners got troubles with giving the word stress, they did not really find pronounce the English words correctly and using suitable intonation difficult. That was to say, pronouncing the English words individually was not such a big problem with the participants, but using right word stress was.

10b. Having no motivation to speak like native speakers & 11b. Being influenced by native language towards English pronunciation

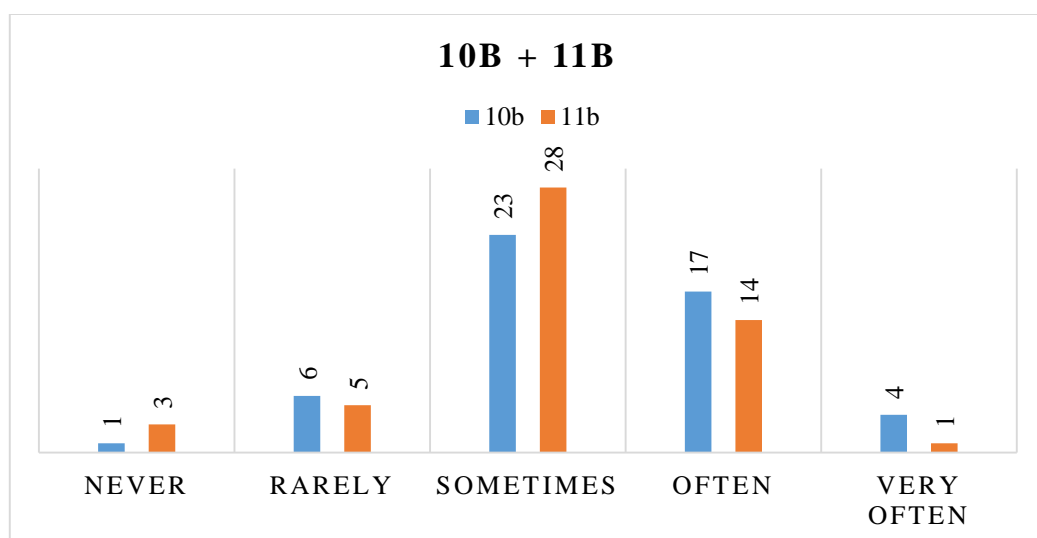


Figure 14: Being influenced by mother tongue

According to the bar chart, it can be said that the high proportion of the learners sometimes and often lost motivation in speaking English and were influenced greatly by their mother tongue on their English pronunciation.

4.2.1.1.2.2. Non-linguistic problems/ Psychological problems

12b. Being not confident to speak English in front of the class; 13b. Being not confident to share opinions to the classmates in English

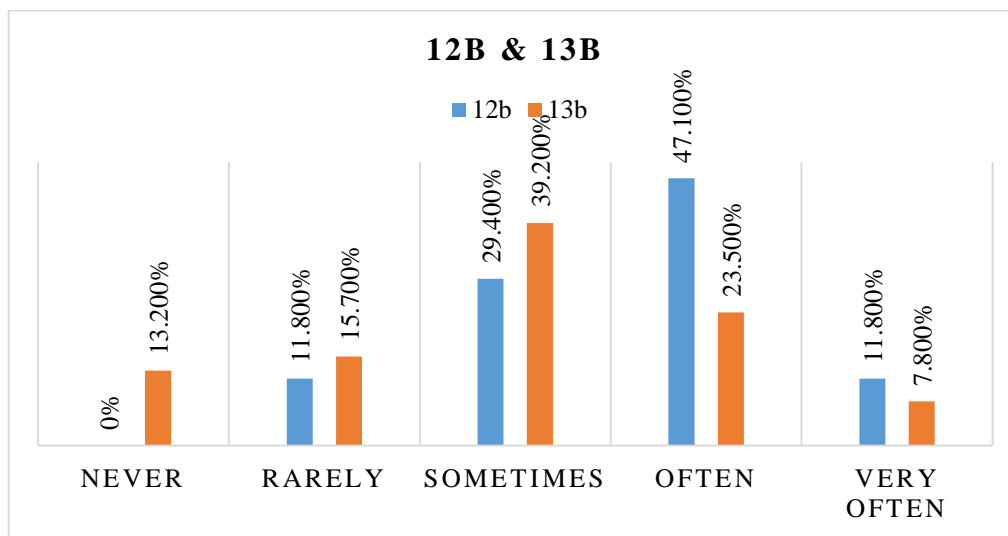


Figure 15: Being not confident when speaking English

For the problems of lacking confidence while speaking English, there were two separate questions for the students (12b and 13b). Question 12b asked them about their self-confidence to speak in front of the whole class, and question 13b aimed to ask their self-confidence in their small group. The data showed that a high proportion of the students either sometimes or often lost their confidence to speak English, even in their small group (39.2% choosing sometimes and 23.5% choosing often) or in front of the whole class (29.4% choosing sometimes and 47.1% choosing often). However, Fitriani (2015) claims that in order to have an effective conversation, the speakers should believe in what they are able to talk. The success of oral communication can be affected by the speakers' emotional states.

14b. Being worried about the classmates will underestimate me when I speak English &
 15b. Believing that I will not be able to be a good English speaker

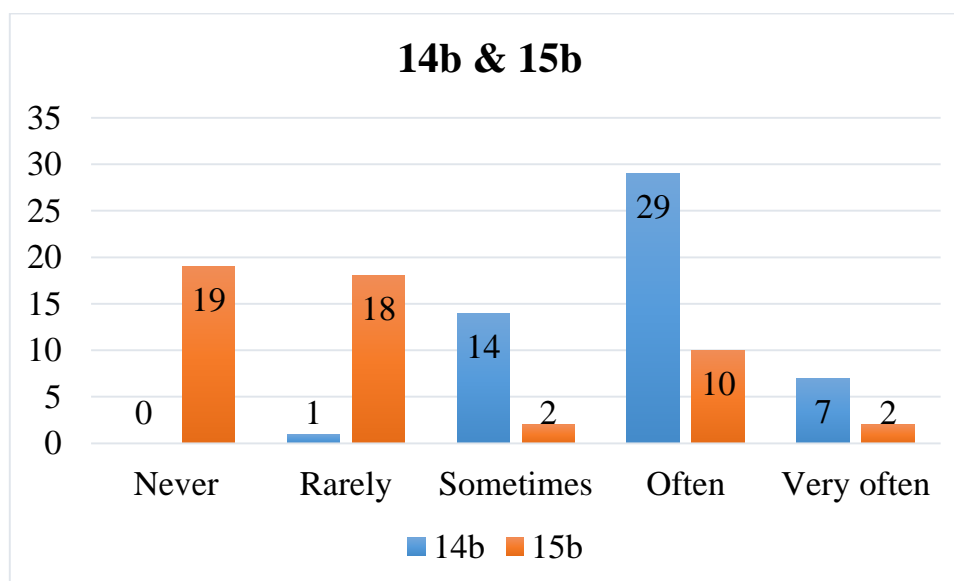


Figure 16: Being worried about losing face in front of friends when speaking English

The obtained data showed that whereas most of the respondents never or rarely got the problem of believing in themselves to be able to become good English speakers, the majority of them were often or even very often worried about being underestimated by their friends when speaking English. This stopped them from raising their voice in speaking lessons.

16b. Getting so nervous when speaking English, so I forget things to speak; 17b. Trembling when being called to speak in class; 18b. Feeling frightened when lecture asks to answer questions in English class & 19b. Getting depressed when lecture corrects my answers in English class

No.	Questions	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
16b	Getting so nervous when speaking English, so I forget things to speak	0%	9.8%	3.92%	21.57%	64.71%
17b	Trembling when being called to speak in class	9.80%	7.84%	33.33%	49.02%	0%

18b	Feeling frightened when lecture asks to answer questions in English class	11.76%	15.69%	45.10%	13.73%	13.73%
19b	Getting depressed when lecture corrects my answers in English class	29.41%	50.98%	5.88%	9.80%	3.92%

Table 1: Anxiety when speaking English

The table revealed that just about a half of the participants rarely got depressed when lecture corrects my answers in English class. This might be because at this time, they were not required to talk much but just listen to the teachers; therefore, almost all the learners chose the options of *Never* and *Rarely*. However, a high proportion of the pupils felt anxious when they had to speak English in some certain situations such as when being called suddenly in the class and when being asked to give the answers to the questions. Moreover, 64.71% of them forgot things to speak because they got too nervous. According to Heriansyah (2012), when the students do not have anything in their head to speak, they will definitely be silent during the speaking time.

20b. Other problems (specify)

Apart from the listed problems, some respondents provided one more speaking problem that they encountered. The problem they got was misunderstanding the questions of the teacher. Therefore, even when they were very confident to speak in English and they had a lot of ideas to share, but they gave the wrong answers. Gradually, as a result, they lost their self-confidence and were worried about losing face when speaking English in front of the class.

4.2.1.1.3. SECTION C: Factors affecting the acquisition of good English speaking skills

1c. Family background

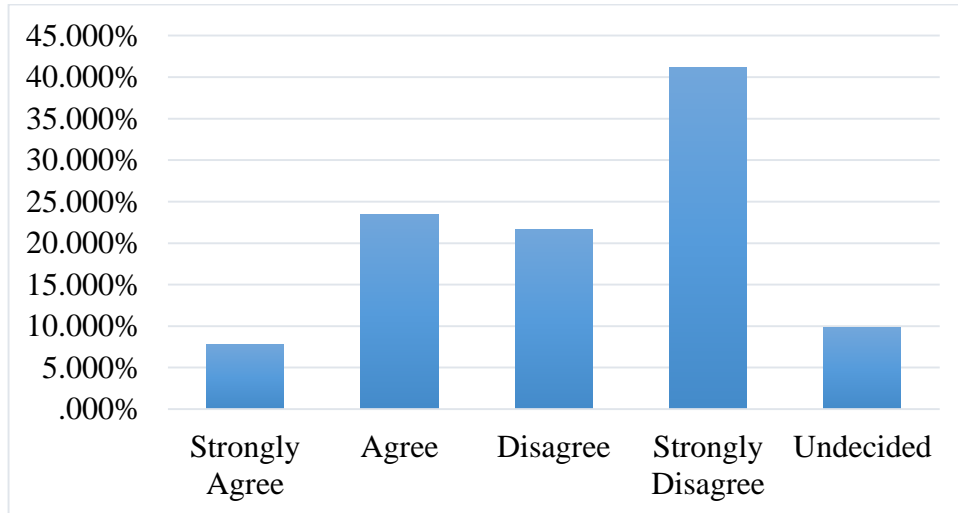


Figure 17: Family Background

The obtained data showed that whereas nearly 10% (strongly agree) and 25% (agree) of the students admitted that their family background was one of the most influent factors to their acquisition of English oral competence, the majority of them did not think so (21.6% of disagree and 41.2% of strongly disagree). Although they are the mountainous pupils, most of them do not believe that their family background impacted too much on their English acquisition.

2c. Mother tongue influence on acquisition of English pronunciation

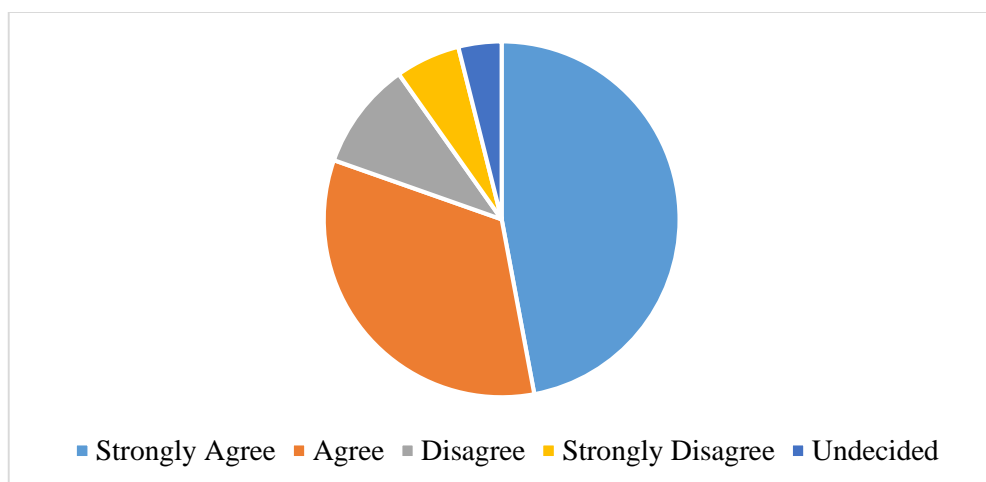


Figure 18: Mother tongue influence on acquisition of English pronunciation

The high proportion of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with the statement that their mother tongue influent on their English pronunciation, accounting for 47% and 33% respectively. It might be explained by looking at Figure 13: Pronunciation problems and Figure 14: Being influenced by mother tongue when most of them got many difficulties to pronounce the English words correctly and they were often influenced by the mother tongue to sound unlike native speakers.

3c. Lack of motivation

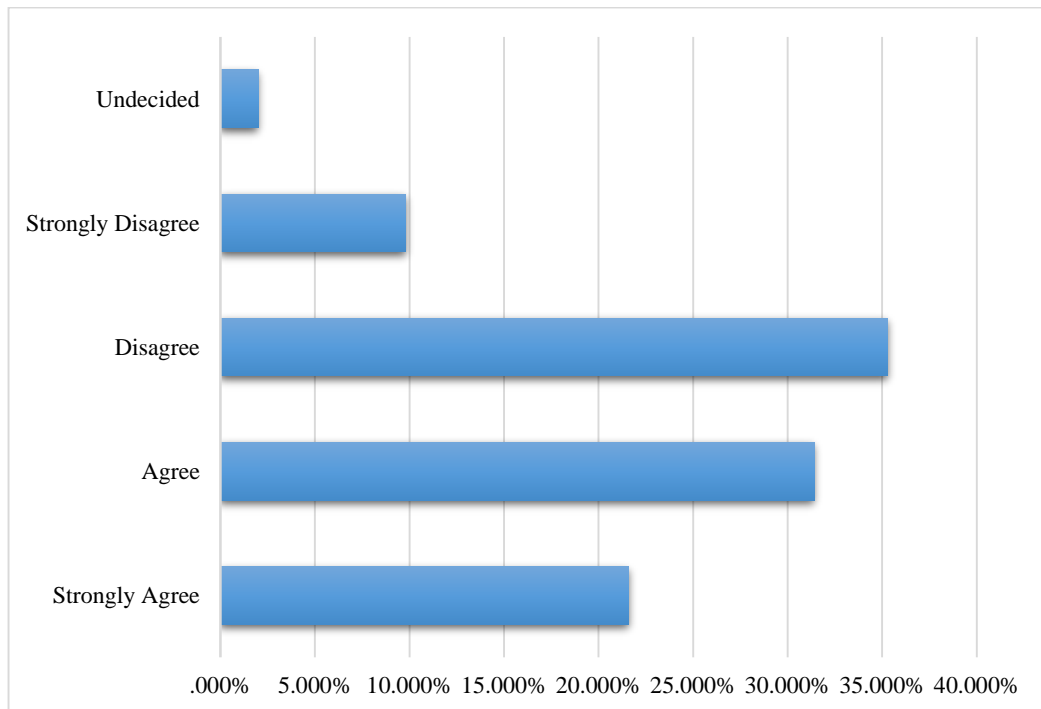


Figure 19: Lack of motivation

The bar chart indicated that the number of the subjects who strongly agreed and agreed was nearly equal to that of disagreeing and strongly disagreeing. That was to say, for half of the participants, the lack of the motivation was the direct factor lead to their poor English speaking skills, but for the other half motivation was not one of the important features contributing to their oral competence.

4c. Lack of proper use of vocabulary

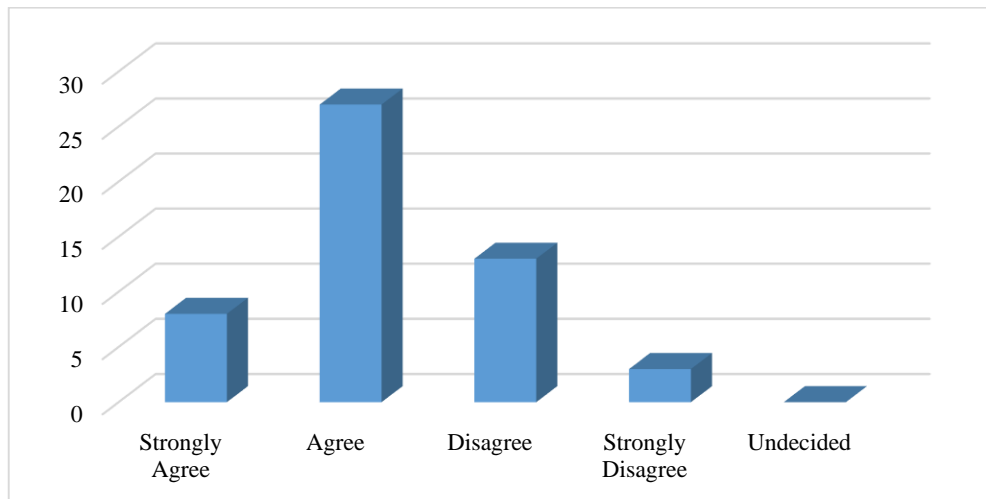


Figure 20: Lack of proper use of vocabulary

Looking at the bar chart, we could see that the high percentage of the members strongly agreed and agreed with the factor of lacking proper use of vocabulary which put their speaking skills down. This factor was demonstrated by the high proportion of the students getting troubles in choosing the appropriate vocabulary and translating given words spontaneously (Figure 12: Vocabulary problems).

5c. Poor listening skills

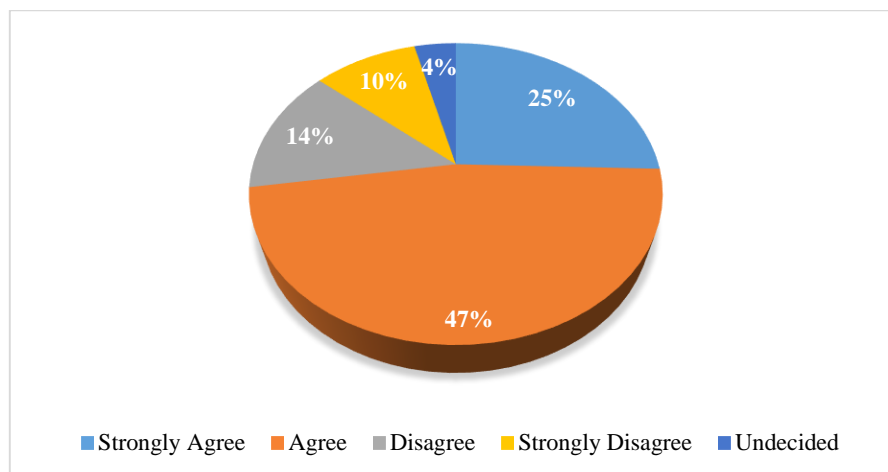


Figure 21: Poor listening skills

The data showed that just about 50% and 25% of the learners agreed and strongly agreed that if they were not good at listening, their speaking skill was poor, too. That is true because Bhattacharya (2017) claims that in order to make the proficient

communication, the speakers have to perform the roles of both speaker and listener. Moreover, when the students did not achieve good listening skills, they could not listen and understand the teachers' questions very well. As a result, they gave out the wrong answers and the purpose of communication were not reached (*Question 20b.*)

6c. Poor English grammar

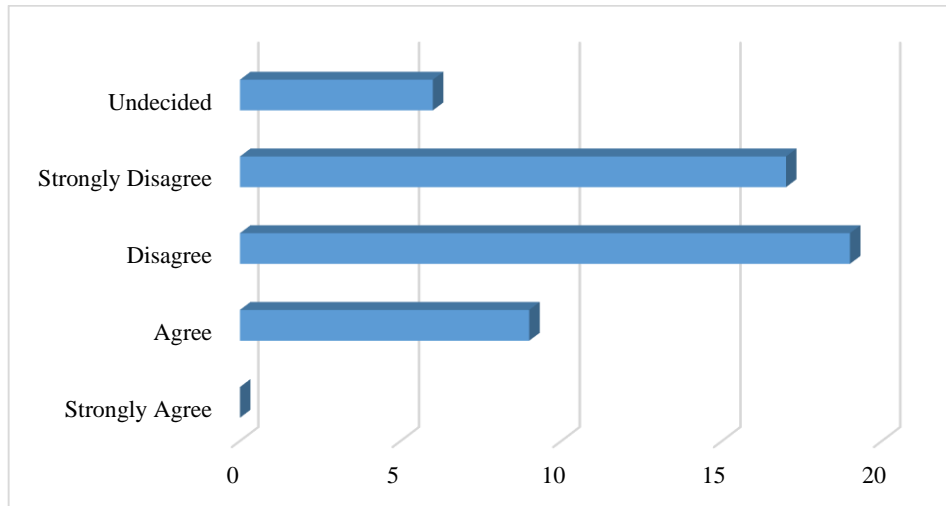


Figure 22: Poor English grammar

The figure presented for the students' opinion towards English grammar influencing their speaking skills. It could be seen from the bar chart that the majority of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with this factor. Although there was a fact that many of them encountered grammatical problems while speaking English (*Figure 9, 10 and 11*), they did not think that grammar affected their acquisition of speaking competence.

7c. Lack of confidence

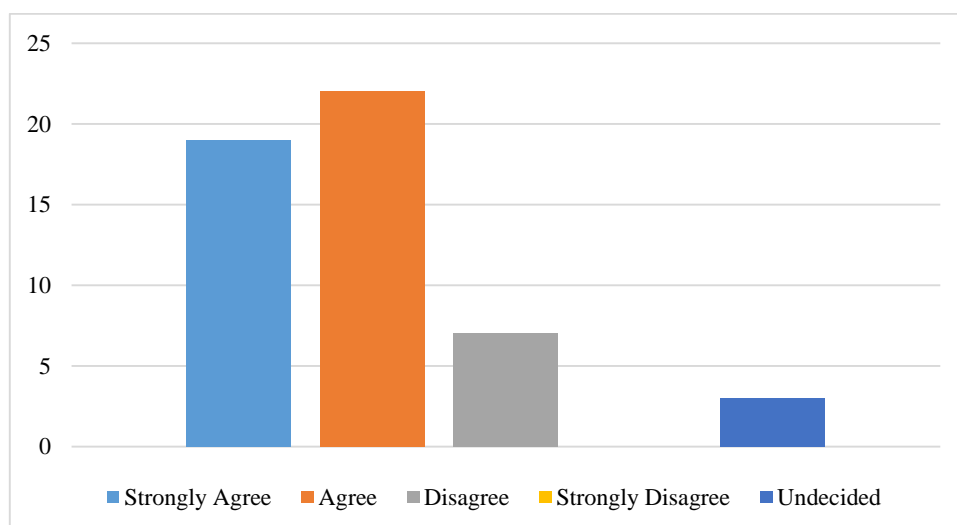


Figure 23: Lack of confidence

For the factor *Lack of confidence*, there was no one strongly disagreeing with it. The majority of the students agreed and strongly agreed that the quality of their speaking performance was considerably affected by the level of their self-confidence. Actually, most of the learners lost self-confidence when speaking English in front of the others, and they chose not to speak in order to save their self-image (Figure 15: Being not confident when speaking English).

8c. Anxiety

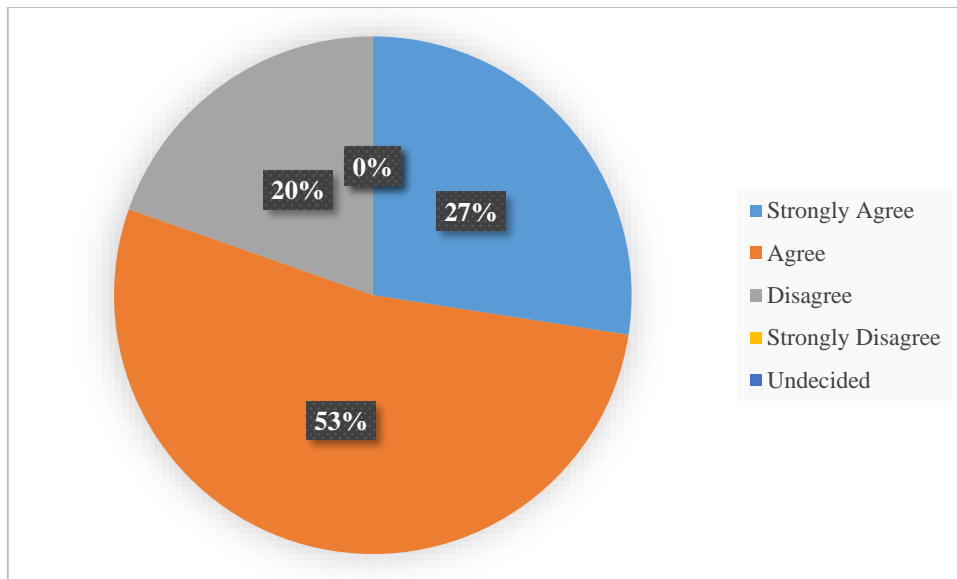


Figure 24: Anxiety

The data showed that although there were 10 out of 51 students disagreed with the factor of anxiety, a very high proportion of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed with it, accounting for 27% and 53% respectively. It seemed to be one of the most common factors impacting on the language learners' acquisition. According to Arnold & Brown (1999, as cited in Bhattacharya, 2017), when it comes to learning, anxiety “most pervasively obstructs the learning process”. Shumin (2002) claims that when the students are too nervous, they are likely “tongue-tied or lost for words”.

9c. Peer interaction influence

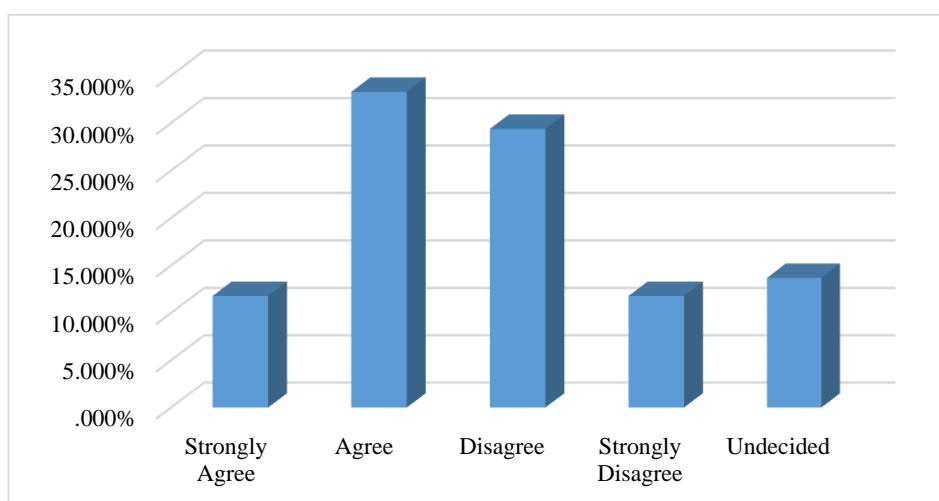


Figure 25: Peer interaction influence

The bar chart illustrated that peer interaction influence was not really a major factor contributing to the students' poor speaking skills. Looking at the figure, we could see that there were equal number of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed versus who disagreed and strongly disagreed with the given factor.

10c. Others (specify)

In this provided space, some participants wrote down one more factor that influenced their speaking competence which was the role of the teachers. In order to understand more about this factor, the researcher decided to save this factor to the interview part with the students to find out their opinions.

4.2.1.2. Results from Teachers' Questionnaire

4.2.1.2.1. A checklist for teaching and learning resources in Van hoa I High School

Serial No.	Type of instructional resource	Available	Adequate	Inadequate	Accessible	Not there
1d.	English text books	1	5	0	0	0
2d.	Radio	0	1	4	1	0
3d.	Television	0	0	2	4	0
4d.	Computer	0	1	2	3	0
5d.	Projector	0	1	1	4	0

6d.	Cassette recorder	0	1	5	0	0
7d.	Language laboratory	0	0	0	0	6
8d.	Speaker	1	0	5	0	0

Table 2: The availability of teaching and learning resources

The table revealed that at Van hoa I High School, there were not enough necessary resources for teaching and learning English. The teachers disagreed a little bit with the availability of some resources; this might be because some classrooms were equipped with the projectors, speakers or televisions but the majority was not installed. The lack of teaching and learning resources might lead to the problems that teachers could not organize interesting and effective learning activities for the students.

4.2.1.2.2. English learning environment in the school

1e. Does your school have a language policy?

Questionnaire items	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	0	0%
No	6	100%

Table 3: English policy at Van hoa I High School

Looking at the table, we could say that the language learning environment at the school was not really encouraging to the students because it did not have a language policy. The school might not pay enough attention to develop the students' language skills in real situations. This led to the lack of learners' motivation to learn English.

4.2.1.2.3. English teachers' teaching methods

1e. Which of the following method(s) do you mostly use when teaching speaking skills in English (circle as many responses as you apply)

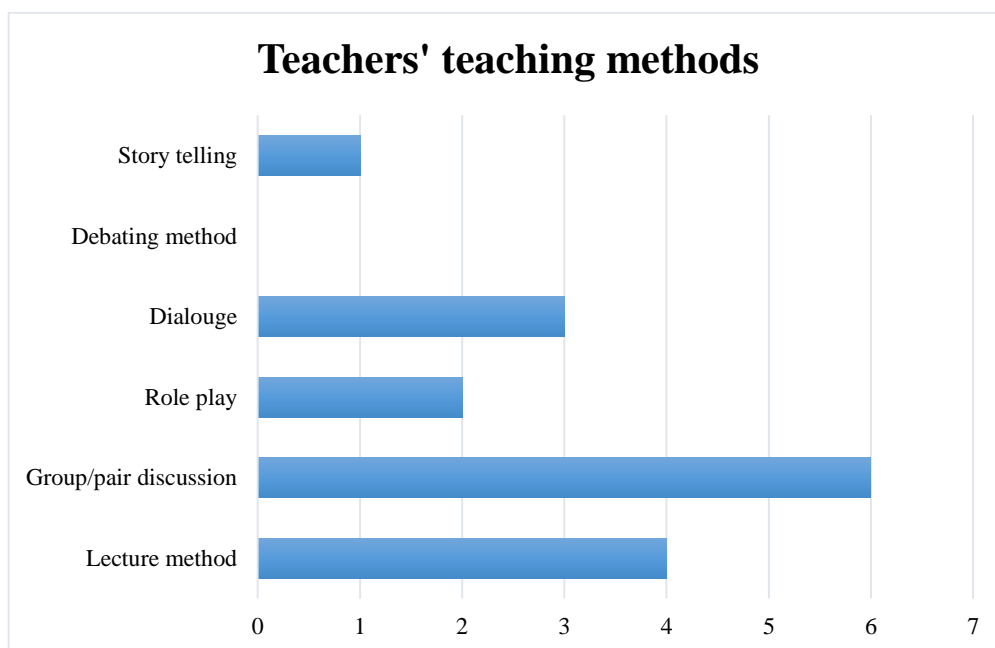


Figure 26: Teachers' teaching methods

The obtained data showed that *group/pair discussion*, *lecture method* and *dialogue* were the three most common methods used by the teachers in speaking lessons. However, those methods were the very popular and outdated teaching approaches to teach speak where the teachers speak almost all of the time or the students speak something following a format. As a consequence, the students might feel less motivated and interested in speaking lessons.

2e. How often do you encourage students to use spoken English in a week? (circle where appropriate).

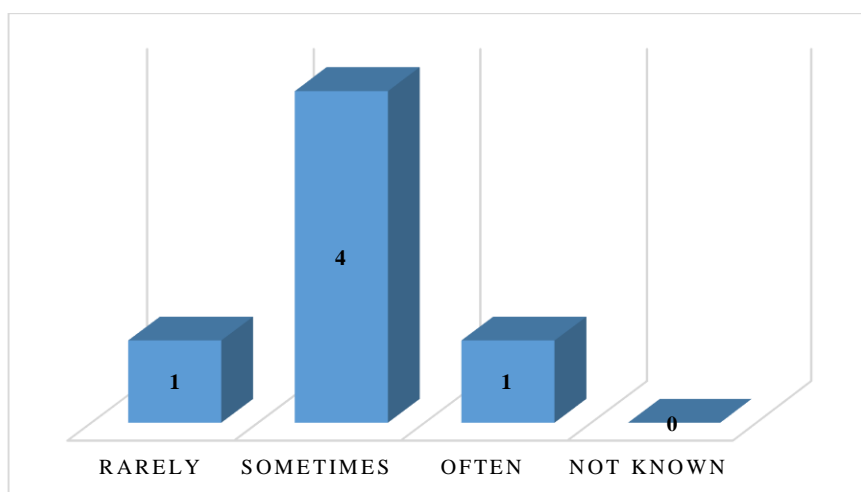


Figure 27: Frequency of encouraging students to speak English

There were only 1 out of 6 teachers encouraged the learners to use spoken English in the classroom. The rest of them either rarely or sometimes did so. Being so, we may say that the students had not received enough external encouragement and motivation to use spoken English in the learning situations.

3e. What other languages do you use in teaching English?

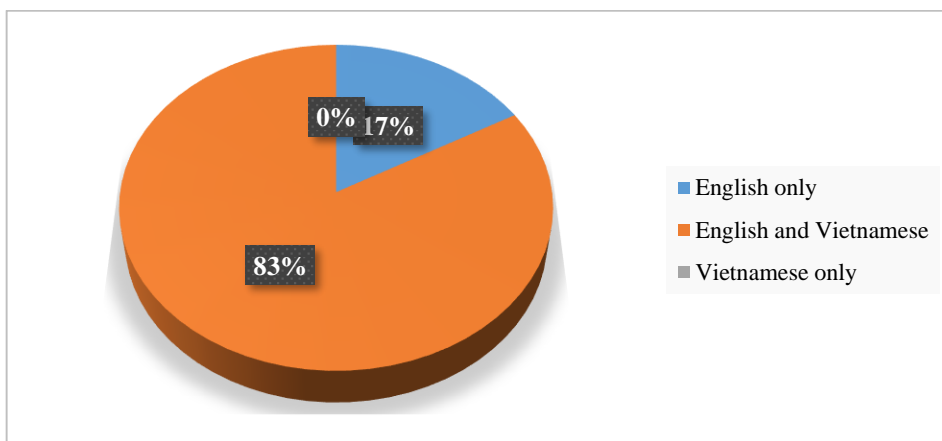


Figure 28: Language used to teach

The pie chart indicated that a high proportion of the teachers did not use English only in English speaking class, which affected significantly to the development of learners’ speaking skills not only to their vocabulary but also their willingness to speak English in the class.

4.2.1.2.4. Teachers’ opinions about students’ speaking problems and the factors causing these problems

4e. How the common problems affect your students’ acquisition of English speaking proficiency

Serial No.	Common problems	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
i.	Mispronunciation of words	0%	0%	33.3%	50%	16.7%
ii.	Repeating themselves	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	33.3%	16.7%
iii.	Wrong use of tense	16.7%	0%	66.7%	16.7%	0%
iv.	Mother tongue influence	0%	16.7%	33.3%	50%	0%
v.	Lack of words (vocabulary)	0%	0%	0%	16.7%	83.3%

Table 4: Teachers' opinions about students' speaking problems

As the table presented, we could see that the majority of the teachers believe that their students often and very often got those common speaking problems namely *Mispronunciation of words, Repeating themselves, Mother tongue influence and Lack of words*. It can be said that the responses of the teachers were match with the provided data of the students.

5e. How the following factors affect students' acquisition of English speaking skills

Serial No.	Factors	A very great deal of	A lot	A little	Very little	Not at all
I.	Family background	1	5	0	0	0
II.	Mother tongue influence	2	3	0	0	1
III.	Lack of motivation	0	1	3	2	0
IV.	Lack of proper vocabulary	1	5	0	0	0
V.	Poor listening skills	0	0	1	4	1
VI.	Lack of confidence	3	3	0	0	0
VII.	Anxiety	0	3	2	1	0
VIII.	Peer influence	0	0	4	2	0

Table 5: Teachers' opinions about the factors causing students' speaking problems

The table showed the responses of the teachers to the influence of some factors to the students' speaking acquisition.

On one hand, there were some differences between teachers' and students' answers towards the factors. While most of the students disagreed and strongly disagreed with the factor of family background (4.1.3. - 1c), all the teachers thought that this factor had a very great deal of and a lot of impact of students' speaking development. Additionally, most of the teachers also claimed that their poor listening skills did not influence too much on the learners' speaking acquisition meanwhile the students did not think so (4.1.3 - 5c). Furthermore, anxiety was thought to be one of the most influential

factors leading to the learners' speaking problems by the students, the teachers had the balanced view about this factor.

On the other hand, both the teachers and the students hold the similar opinion of some factors: *Mother tongue, lack of motivation, lack of proper vocabulary, lack of confidence and peer influence.*

4.2.2. Research Question 2: *What could be done to enhance speaking skills for the students?*

Results from interviews

4.2.2.1 Results from teachers' interviews

Q1: Do you use English as medium of instruction for teaching of English in your class?

All the three interviewed teachers admitted that they did not use English as medium of instruction for teaching English in their class while almost all the teachers responded in the questionnaire that mother tongue affects a great deal of and a lot to the students' speaking problems (4.2.1.2.4. - 5e). When being asked for the reasons, they explained that this was because they worried that their students' English ability was not good enough to understand everything taught in English. Therefore, they chose to use both English and mother tongue to teach to make sure they understand clearly what the teachers were talking about.

Q2: Do you think competency in communication in English is very necessary? Why (not)?

All of the interviewees said "yes" to this statement. They all believed that English speaking skills were very important for the language acquisition of the students.

Q3: Do you balance the time of teaching speaking skills with other skills and grammar? Why (not)?

100% of the interviewed teachers reported that they did try to balance the time of teaching speaking with that of other language skills, but it seemed not to work. This was because most of the tests they were giving to the students focusing too much on grammar and reading skills, not speaking skills. As a result, they had to spend more time teaching and practicing grammar and reading for the students and ignored speaking skills.

Q4: How do you think about the idea that English is better medium of instruction than Vietnamese?

All the interviewees agreed that if they could use English only to teach, give instructions and interact with the students, it would be huge opportunities for the learners to enrich their vocabulary, and improve their listening skills, especially their speaking skills.

Q5: Do you have any suggestions for the school/ the English teachers and the students in helping students to improve their speaking skills?

By answering this interview questions, the teachers offered a lot of suggestions for the researcher.

Firstly, the school should have language policy in some areas such as library for English learners to speak English only; moreover, budget should be allocated for necessary teaching and learning resources, and the school should also organize some more English competitions and contests to motivate the students to learn English.

Secondly, the English teachers can improve their English speaking lessons by many ways. They can use English only in the class by speaking slowly and using simple words, so that the students can understand what their teachers are talking. Furthermore, the teachers also need to study more new teaching speaking methods to engage students into accomplishing learning tasks.

Last but not least, the students suggested to be harder to learn new words so as to improve their vocabulary.

4.2.2.2. Results from students' interviews

Q1: How do you think about the roles of teachers influencing in your English speaking skills?

All the interviewed students agreed that teachers play a very important role in the development of their speaking competence. They reported that when their English teachers used Vietnamese to teach or communicate with them, they tended to respond in Vietnamese instead of English. This might be the reason students reported in the questionnaire that most of them lack of motivation in speaking English in the classroom (4.2.1.1.3. - 3c). Furthermore, the students believed that if their English teachers

achieved good English pronunciation, then theirs will be correct. However, the interviewees said that the pronunciation of their English teachers did not sound like it was right sometimes, which made their pronunciation worse accordingly. Additionally, the learners also admitted that they were not really interested in some of the learning activities that the teachers gave out. As a result, their participation in the lessons was sometimes low.

Q2: Can you give any suggestions for yourself, and for other students to enhance their speaking skills?

The interviewees were so enthusiastic to give the researchers some ways to help themselves and others to improve their English speaking performance. Firstly, to achieve the fluency and accuracy of speaking, the students should make an outline for what they are speaking about. In the outline, there should be some ideas to the topic and the words and sentence structures used to express the ideas. Secondly, the learners should learn words in the same topic to make it easier to remember the vocabulary. Finally, they should also listen to the English materials more such as English music, English films, English news, and so on to enhance their listening skills and their pronunciation.

Results from observations

1 = not at all; 2 = very little; 3 = a little; 4 = a lot; 5 = a very great deal of

No.	Observed Behaviors	Class	1	2	3	4	5
1f.	Teacher provides the effective instructions of the learning tasks in English.	1				X	
		2			X		
		3			X		
		4		X			
2f.	Teacher pronounces English words correctly when she teaches the students.	1			X		
		2		X			
		3		X			
		4		X			
3f.	Teacher keeps trying to use different tasks to promote students to speak more in the lesson.	1				X	
		2				X	
		3			X		
		4			X		
4f.	The given speaking tasks are interesting and suitable with students' speaking levels.	1			X		
		2		X			
		3		X			
		4			X		
5f.	Teacher's talking time is less than students' talking time.	1					X
		2				X	
		3			X		
		4		X			
6f.	High achievers dominate the students' talking time.	1			X		
		2				X	
		3				X	
		4					X

No.	Observed Behaviors	Class	1	2	3	4	5	
7f.	Students pause their speech whenever they have got grammatical mistakes.	1				X		
		2				X		
		3						X
		4						X
8f.	Students pronounce wrongly most of the English words that they use.	1			X			
		2				X		
		3				X		
		4						X
9f.	Using wrong word stress towards the English words makes students' speech sound unnaturally.	1				X		
		2					X	
		3					X	
		4						X
10f	Students use inappropriate vocabulary for a specific communicative context.	1					X	
		2					X	
		3					X	
		4					X	
11f	Students are silent when being called to speak.	1		X				
		2				X		
		3				X		
		4						X
12f	Students speak English shyly and unconfidently in front of the class.	1			X			
		2				X		
		3						X
		4						X

Table 6: Observations' results

The table represented the researcher's observation results of four random speaking lessons at Van hoa I High School. As can be clearly seen from the table, there were many differences among the four lessons, basing on the five-point scale of observed behavior (reviewed in Cohen, et al., 2007). Firstly, while the teacher of Class 1 provided instructions in English very effectively, the three other teachers gave out the instructions in English but then translated them into Vietnamese (*1f.*). Secondly, most of the observed teachers mispronounced some of the English words during their teaching (*2f.*). Looking at *3f* in the table above, we could see that generally, the teachers made quite a lot of efforts to organize different learning task to attract students into their learning, and they were quite engaging and suitable with the learners' speaking level and interest (*4f.*). However, the teachers' talking time was still more than that of the students (*5f.*). As a result, the students had a few chances to practice speaking in the class. Additionally, the lower achievers even had little chances to raise their voice in the speaking class because their partners who were better at speaking dominating the little talking time for students (*6f.*). Besides, a great number of the learners in all four classes paused their speech whenever they got a grammatical mistakes (*7f.*). It was a new finding for the research because both teachers and learners did not consider grammatical difficulty as a factor affect the learners' speaking skills but the result from observations demonstrated that grammar was one of the main factors affecting students' speaking performance. In term of the students' pronunciation, the researcher could conclude that the students encounter a big problem with pronouncing the English words. Students in three out of four observed classes got a lot of or even a great deal of pronunciation difficulties because they pronounced wrongly most of the English words (*8f.*). As a result, poor pronunciation was also one of the factors leading to the students' low speaking skills since using wrong word stress towards the English words makes students' speech sound unnaturally (*9f.*). Moreover, all the observed learners were poor in vocabulary; they were all using inappropriate vocabulary for a specific communicative context (*10f.*). Looking at the results in *11f*, we could say that most of the participants got a lot and a great deal of anxiety when being called to speak English in the classroom. Last but not least, the lack of self-confidence also affected significantly

to the learners' oral performance. Almost all the pupils spoke English shyly and unconfidently in front of the class (12f).

4.3. Discussion

Based on the results attained from questionnaires, interviews and observations, the researcher would like to summarize as well as suggest some recommendations to the learners, teachers and schools to improve the students; speaking skills.

There were a plenty of factors affecting the pupils' oral competence. However, there were some major ones which were lack of vocabulary, grammatical problems, weak pronunciation, anxiety, etc. All of those factors will be categorized into two separate kinds namely internal factors and external factors.

By finding out the students' speaking problems, and asking the participants to give out some suggestions to developing the learners' speaking skills, the researcher would provide some recommendations. All of them would be discussed and showed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Summary of the study

The final chapter was supposed to summarize the major findings which had been discovered by the research and written in the previous chapter results and discussion. Moreover, the researcher also suggested some pedagogical implications for improving learners' speaking skills. In addition, the researcher also shared limitations of the study in this section and provided suggestions for further research.

5.2. Major findings of the study

As mentioned at the beginning, this research aimed at exploring the answer for the following questions:

1. *What are the factors that affect 10th grade ethnic minority students' speaking skills at Van hoa I High School?*
2. *What could be done to enhance speaking skills for the students?*

5.2.1. The factors that affect 10th grade ethnic minority students' speaking skills at Van hoa I High School

Basing on the findings of Chapter 4, we could say that there were a range of factors that impacted on the learners' speaking acquisition at Van hoa I High School. The factors could be divided into two groups: Internal factors (factors from the students themselves), and external factors (factors caused by the outside things).

5.2.1.1. The internal factors

Firstly, lack of proper use of vocabulary was one of the main factors that affected the participants' speaking skills (4.2.1.1.3.-4c & 4.2.1.2.4.-4e). In fact, a high proportion of the participants got troubles to choose the appropriate vocabulary for a specific communicative context and were not able to translate given words spontaneously (4.2.1.1.2.1.-4b, 6b & 4.2.3.-10f). The second factor was their poor listening skills (4.2.1.1.3.-5c). Because of not good at listening, the learners then misunderstood the

questions, which led to their wrong answers. As a result, the purpose of communication was not achieved (4.2.1.1.2.1.-20b). Besides, lack of self-confidence was believed as one of the most influential factor that prevent the subjects from speaking perfect English (4.2.1.1.3.-2c & 4.2.1.2.4.-4e). When the pupils lost their confidence to speak, they would not be willing to share their ideas in front of the classroom (4.2.1.1.2.1.-12b, 13b), or they would speak shyly and unnaturally (4.2.3.-12f). Furthermore, anxiety also put the students off speaking (4.2.1.1.3.-8c). The majority of the participants got so nervous when speaking English, so they forgot things to speak (4.2.1.1.2.1.-16b), and they trembled when being called to speak in class (4.2.1.1.2.1.-17b). The last but not least internal factor was their poor grammar (4.2.3.-7f). It was found out that the students paused their speech whenever they got grammatical mistakes.

5.2.1.2. The external factors

To begin with, mother tongue affected greatly to the learners' acquisition of English pronunciation (4.2.1.1.3.-2c). It made it difficult for the students to learn the proper English pronunciation (4.2.1.1.2.1.-10b), and to sound like native speakers (4.2.1.1.2.1.-11b). Secondly, the lack of teaching and learning resources and motivation in learning environment at school influenced quite a lot to the development of students' speaking skills at Van hoa I High School (4.2.1.2.1. & 4.2.1.2.2.). Finally, teachers were one of the influential factors to the learners' oral skills because they play a vital role in improving or limiting the learners' speaking skills (4.2.1.1.3.-10c). The participants reported that when their English teachers used Vietnamese to teach or communicate with them, they tended to respond in Vietnamese instead of English. Furthermore, the students believed that if their English teachers achieved good English pronunciation, then theirs will be correct. Additionally, the learners also admitted that they were not really interested in some of the learning activities that the teachers gave out. As a result, their participation in the lessons was sometimes low. (4.3.2-Q1).

5.2.2. Suggestions to enhance speaking skills for the students

5.2.2.1. Suggestions for the students

Depending on the suggestions of both teachers and students from the interviews and the researcher's recommendations towards the learners' speaking problems, there were a plenty of useful ways to help the pupils to enhance their speaking skills. Firstly, in order to minimize the impact of grammatical mistakes to their speaking performance, the learners should outline what sentence structures, tenses and other aspects of grammar they would need for their speech before speaking. Then, they should not learn by heart the English words without arranging them, but they should learn the words in the same topic so as to remember easily and effectively. Furthermore, they could use mind-mapping technique to help them improve their vocabulary quicker. According to Buzan & Buzan (1994), mind mapping, which "provides a universal key to unlocking the potential of the brain", is the creative technique to take note the information. Thirdly, there were the same ways to help the students to improve both pronunciation and listening skills. They should listen to English sources more such as English films, English music, or English news. After that, the learners should try to repeat what they hear and imitate the ways the people speak. Next, because the students often lost their self-confidence when speaking English in front of the others, they should practice speaking on their own at home first to increase their confidence. To do so, they could stand in front of the mirror and speak to themselves. Or if they have a camera recorder, it would be good to film themselves when they speak, so they know what their strengths and weaknesses are to improve them. When all of these above suggestions have been done, the students will get over the anxiety that they had got when speaking English.

5.2.2.2. Suggestions for the teachers

As mentioned above, teachers played a crucial role in developing the learners' oral competence. Therefore, it was necessary to give the teachers some advice to help their students to enhance their speaking skills. Firstly, the most important thing is to balance the time and the importance of teaching speaking skills with other language skills and grammar. When the students have more chances to learn and speak English, their English will be obviously better. Secondly, the teachers should also update

themselves with new teaching approaches in order to engage their pupils into accomplishing the learning tasks at school. Thirdly, English should be the only language used in English classes. By doing so, the students can improve their listening skills and enrich their vocabulary, especially they can have the habit to respond in English. Last but not least, the teachers should try to become a limitless learning source for the students, which means that he/she often give students the useful methods or materials to help them improve their learning, not only at school but also at home.

5.2.2.3. Suggestions for the school

School is where the teaching and learning process takes place. Thus, it should build up a positive and encouraging learning environment for the students to improve their study. Firstly, the school should have a language policy in some specific areas or at a specific time during a week. If they can do that, the students will have more opportunities to speak English outside of classroom context. Furthermore, the school should organize more extra-curriculum activities using English such as English speaking contest, English debates, English talented singers and so on to get the students interested in learning English. Finally, to make the teaching and learning process takes place effectively, it needs to be enough in term of facilities and resources. Hence, the school should consider to allocate the budget to invest in teaching and learning resources.

5.3. Pedagogical implications and suggestions

By answering the second research question, all the pedagogical implications and suggestions were given out. However, it was worth to note that although the suggestions were to deal with the learners' speaking problems and the factors causing them, not all of them might be suitable and effective for every student. Hence, it will be useful if the pupils try using them and find out the most suitable learning methods for themselves to enhance their oral competence.

5.4. Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

The research questions were answered by the data which were mainly conducted from the questionnaires and interviews. It means that the research was mainly based on teachers' and students' opinions. Thus, it was hard to judge the trustfulness and reliability of the participants' responses. Additionally, the subjects of this research were the students of a specific grade, so the findings could not be valid and generalized for the different subjects in the different context. Furthermore, the size of participations was limited to Grade 10 consisting of 51 students because of the limit of time and finance allocated for the research. Hence, the results were restricted to this specific group of students of Grade 10, Van hoa I High School.

This research explored the factors that affect grade 10th students' speaking skills only. It would be more effective and interesting if the further studies find out the problems and factors of grade 10th students at some other high schools at the same time to compare and find out the most common factors impacting learners' speaking competence. Additionally, the further studies can collect more reliable and trustful information for suggestions to enhance the learners' oral skills by having two groups of students: non-experimental and experimental groups. Our research puts a requirement for other studies to widen the number of participants in different contexts to receive the generalization of the results. Besides, as mentioned above, the given suggestions have not been tested, thus, to evaluate the usefulness of them, the time for implementing suggestions should be allocated.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Appendix 2: TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Appendix 3: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

Appendix 4: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

Appendix 1:

STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction:

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information that will be used to establish factors that affected the acquisition of speaking skills in English in order to achieve speaking proficiency. You have been selected as one of the respondents and your responses are going to be of great contribution to this study. The information that you are going to provide will be treated confidentially and for research purposes only. Please be sincere and honest in your responses. **DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME.**

SECTION A: General information

How often are you assigned these kinds of tasks in English speaking class? Put a tick (✓) where appropriate:

Serial No.	Tasks	Often	Sometimes	Rarely
1a	Conversation			
2a	Questioning			
3a	Explaining			
4a	Discussion			
5a	Presentation			
6a	Interview			
7a	Dialogue			
8a	Giving Example			

SECTION B: Students' common speaking problems

Rate on a scale of 1-5, how often do you encounter the following common errors when you are speaking English? Tick (✓) where appropriate:

1 = Never; 2 = Rarely; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Very often

Serial No.	Common errors	1	2	3	4	5
1. Linguistic problems						
1b.	Using wrong tenses					
2b.	Getting troubles when distinguishing part of speech					

3b.	Feeling difficult to use different sentence structures					
4b	Getting troubles to choose the appropriate vocabulary					
5b	Using wrong synonyms/antonyms					
6b	Not being able to translate given words spontaneously					
7b	Mispronouncing the English words					
8b	Using wrong intonation towards the English words					
9b	Giving wrong word stress towards the English words					
10b	Having no motivation to speak like native speakers					
11b	Being influenced by native language towards English pronunciation					
2. Non-linguistic problems/ Psychological problems						
12b	Being not confident to speak English in front of the class					
13b	Being not confident to share opinions to the classmates in English					
14b	Being worried about the classmates will underestimate me when I speak English					
15b	Believing that I will not be able to be a good English speaker					
16b	Getting so nervous when speaking English, so I forget things to speak					
17b	Trembling when being called to speak in class					
18b	Feeling frightened when lecture asks to answer questions in English class					
19b	Getting depressed when lecture corrects my answers in English class					

20b. Others (specify):

.....

.....

SECTION C: Factors affecting the acquisition of good English speaking skills.

Below are factors that affect students from becoming fluent speakers of English. Tick the appropriate response(s) based on the degree of influence using the scale given below:

SA = Strongly agree A = Agree D = Disagree

SD = Strongly disagree U = Undecided

Serial No.	Factor	SA	A	D	SD	U
1c	Family background					
2c	Mother tongue influence on acquisition of English pronunciation					
3c	Lack of motivation					
4c	Lack of proper use of vocabulary					
5c	Poor listening skills					
6c	Poor English grammar					
7c	Lack of confidence					
8c	Anxiety					
9c	Peer interaction influence					

10c: Others (specify):

.....

Thank you for your cooperation!

Appendix 2:

TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction:

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information that will be used to establish factors that affected the acquisition of speaking skills in English in order to achieve speaking proficiency. You have been selected as one of the respondents and your responses are going to be of great contribution to this study. The information that you are going to provide will be treated confidentially and for research purposes only. Please be sincere and honest in your responses. DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME.

I. A checklist for teaching and learning resources in Van hoa I High School.

The aim of this checklist is to establish whether the teaching and learning resources used in teaching speaking skills are available, adequate or inadequate and accessible. The researcher managed to get this information by ticking (✓) where appropriate.

Serial No.	Type of instructional resource	Available	Adequate	Inadequate	Accessible	Not there
1d.	English text books					
2d.	Radio					
3d.	Television					
4d.	Computer					
5d.	Projector					
6d.	Cassette recorder					
7d.	Language laboratory					
8d.	Speaker					

II. English learning environment in the school

Does your school have a language policy?

A. Yes

B. No

If yes, what is its state recently?

.....

How is it being implemented by students?

.....

III. English teachers' teaching methods

1e. Which of the following method(s) do you mostly use when teaching speaking skills in English (circle as many responses as you apply)

- a. Lecture method
- b. Group/ pair discussion
- c. Role play
- d. Dialogue
- e. Debating method
- f. Story telling

Others:.....

2e. How often do you encourage students to use spoken English in a week? (circle where appropriate).

- a. Rarely
- b. Sometimes
- c. Often
- d. Not known

3e. What other language do you use in teaching English?

.....

IV. Teachers' opinions about students' speaking problems and the factors causing these problems.

4e. Rate on a scale of 1-5, how often do you students encounter the following common errors when they are speaking. Tick (✓) where appropriate:

Serial No.	Common errors	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
i.	Mispronunciation of words					
ii.	Repeating themselves					
iii.	Wrong use of tense					
iv.	Mother tongue influence					
v.	Lack of words (vocabulary)					

Others (specify):

5e. Rate on a scale of 1-5, how the following factors affect students' acquisition of English speaking skills. Rate them appropriately by ticking (✓) the correct level.

1 = not at all; 2 = very little; 3 = a little; 4 = a lot; 5 = a very great deal of

Serial No.	Factors	1	2	3	4	5
I.	Family background					
II.	Mother tongue influence					
III.	Lack of motivation					
IV.	Lack of proper vocabulary					
V.	Poor listening skills					
VI.	Lack of confidence					
VII.	Anxiety					
VIII.	Peer influence					

Others (specify):

We welcome your responses. Thank you very much for your participation in this study.

Adapted from: Mekonge, K. V. (2017). Factors Affecting Students' Acquisition of Speaking Skills in English Among Secondary Schools in Turkana East.

Appendix 3:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

Q1: Do you use English as medium of instruction for teaching English in your class?

Q2: Do you think competency in communication in English is very necessary? Why (not)?

Q3: Do you balance the time on teaching speaking skills and other skills as well as grammar? Why (not)?

Q4: How do you think about the idea that English is better medium of instruction than Vietnamese?

Q5: Do you have any suggestions for the school/ the English teachers and the students in helping students to improve their speaking skills?

Appendix 4:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

Q1: Do you think what the roles of teachers in improving your English speaking skills is ?

Q2: Can you give any suggestions for yourself, and for other students to enhance their speaking skills?

Appendix 5:

OBSERVATIONS CHECKLIST

Teacher's name:

Observer's name:

Class	Date of teaching	Start time	Finish time
1			
2			
3			
4			

Observation Table

1 = not at all; 2 = very little; 3 = a little; 4 = a lot; 5 = a very great deal of

No.	Observed Behaviors	Class	1	2	3	4	5
1f.	Teacher provides the effective instructions of the learning tasks in English.	1					
		2					
		3					
		4					
2f.	Teacher pronounces English words correctly when she teaches the students.	1					
		2					
		3					
		4					
3f.	Teacher keeps trying to use different tasks to promote students to speak more in the lesson.	1					
		2					
		3					
		4					
4f.	The given speaking tasks are interesting and suitable with students' speaking levels.	1					
		2					
		3					
		4					

5f.	Teacher's talking time is less than students' talking time.	1					
		2					
		3					
		4					
6f.	High achievers dominate the students' talking time.	1					
		2					
		3					
		4					
7f.	Students pause their speech whenever they have got grammatical mistakes.	1					
		2					
		3					
		4					
8f.	Students pronounce wrongly most of the English words that they use.	1					
		2					
		3					
		4					
9f.	Using wrong word stress towards the English words makes students' speech sound unnaturally.	1					
		2					
		3					
		4					
10f	Students use inappropriate vocabulary for a specific communicative context.	1					
		2					
		3					
		4					

11f	Students are silent when being called to speak.	1					
		2					
		3					
		4					
12f	Students speak English shyly and unconfidently in front of the class.	1					
		2					
		3					
		4					