



Investigating the Problems of Teaching Oral English Communication Skills in an EFL context at the Tertiary Level

Prodhan Mahbub Ibna Seraj

PhD student, corresponding author, TESL, School of Education, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, mahbub@graduate.utm.my

Hadina Habil

Assoc. Prof., Language Academy, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, hadina@utm.my

Md. Kamrul Hasan

Assoc. Prof., English Language Institute, United International University, Bangladesh, mkamrulhasan77@gmail.com

Although a good number of studies have been conducted on the problems EFL learners face to develop oral English communication skills, only a few studies tackled the problems EFL teachers face when teaching oral English communication skills at the tertiary level globally and in the Bangladeshi EFL context. Thus, the objectives of this study are to explore the problems faced by EFL teachers and the relationship between teachers' demographic factors and the problems of teaching oral English communication skills (OECSSs) at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. To obtain these objectives, the researchers employed an explanatory sequential mixed-method research design by distributing an adapted survey questionnaire and conducting a semi-structured interview. Data were collected from 46 EFL teachers who were teaching at the department of English at 15 different public and private universities in Bangladesh. The synthesized results from quantitative and qualitative data show that the most frequent problems that EFL teachers face are the use of mother tongue, inappropriate teaching method, learners' passiveness, and lack of motivation, lack of oral practice environment, lack of supporting tools, lack of authentic materials and large class size. Besides, there is no statistically significant relationship between teachers' demographic factors and the problems the teachers face while teaching oral skills at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. In light of the results, this paper recommends that empirical studies should be conducted to provide teachers with methods that would integrate features of the smartphone, such as WhatsApp, call recorder, voice recorder etc. for teaching oral English communication skills.

Keywords: oral English communication skills, teachers' problems, EFL, tertiary level, teaching

Citation: Ibna Seraj, P. M., Habil, H., & Hasan, M. K. (2021). Investigating the Problems of Teaching Oral English Communication Skills in an EFL context at the Tertiary Level. *International Journal of Instruction*, 14(2), 501-516. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2021.14228a>

INTRODUCTION

In the era of the fourth industrial revolution, English has become the global language which is learned to acquire knowledge and meet the demand of the current job- market by English as a foreign language (EFL) graduates with content knowledge as well as oral communication skills and competencies in the global EFL context (Aliyu, 2017; Pandey, 2014; Zukurnain & Kaur, 2014). Notwithstanding, there is an immediate prerequisite for endorsing a globally acceptable standard of EFL learners' oral English communication skills (OECSs) in EFL contexts (Asulu & Kasyap, 2014).

Concerning the EFL English Proficiency Index, the status of English proficiency in Bangladesh is within the band categorized as very low proficiency (EPI, 2019). On the other hand, Bangladesh economic environment has been transforming considerably towards a market-based economy from a state-dominated economy over the last few decades. To cope with this pace in a transitional economy, tertiary education, in general, is receptive to the deviations in the structure of the economy (Dutta & Islam, 2017). Moreover, the online economy is getting popular, where market presenters need to communicate with the people who speak other languages but can communicate in English. After graduation, learners have to compete with these market values. Thus, the demand for English proficiency is undeniable for countless practical factors that broaden the horizon of opportunities for graduates nationally and globally (Aliyu, 2017; Zukurnain & Kaur, 2014).

Concerning the importance of English, learners should be skilled in oral English communication for maintaining offline and online communications in all aspects. To develop EFL learners' oral English communication skills, both teachers and learners face several problems in an EFL context. In the global EFL context, a considerable number of studies have investigated the problems EFL learners face at different levels of education to develop learners' oral skills (Afshar & Asakereh, 2016; Alam, 2013; Alyan, 2013; Khudhair, 2019; Polishchuk, 2018; Tsang, 2017; Yanagi & Baker, 2016) whereas few studies were investigated from EFL teachers' perspectives (Abda, 2017; Bruner et al., 2015; Chen & Goh, 2011a; Demir, 2017; García, 2012; Nuraini, 2016). In Bangladesh, though learners have to take at least one English course from primary to the tertiary educational level, their performance is not up to the mark (Rahman et al., 2015). Even when they complete their tertiary education, they still lag in this skill. Research studies have been mostly conducted on the problems that learners have faced (Farooqui, 2007; Khan, 2007; Rahman, Rahman & Begum, 2015) but not much has been done to investigate the problems beyond learners' poor oral skills.

There are a few studies that investigated the problems EFL teachers faced to develop learners' oral English communication skills at the tertiary level in Bangladesh (Chowdhury & Shaila, 2013). In other words, we can state that although a good number of studies have been conducted on the problems developing EFL learners' oral English communication skills from learners' perspectives, studies are also required to investigate the problems EFL teachers face while teaching oral skills in global EFL contexts (Adhikari, 2011; Musliadi, 2016; Nuraini, 2016).

Therefore, the objectives of this study are to explore the problems faced by the EFL teachers when teaching oral communication skills at tertiary level education in Bangladesh. Finally, this study would suggest some implications for education policymakers for dealing with these problems. Moreover, this study would contribute to providing insights for teachers and education policymakers to rethink curriculum design and teaching methodology for learners' oral English communication skills development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Though developing EFL learners' oral English communication skills is a complex phenomenon in an EFL context, most of the studies that have been conducted focused on the problems EFL learners face at different levels of education to develop learners' oral skills in different global EFL contexts (Afshar & Asakereh, 2016; Alam, 2013; Alyan, 2013; Khudhair, 2019; Polishchuk, 2018; Tsang, 2017; Yanagi & Baker, 2016). A limited number of studies investigated the problems EFL teachers face at the tertiary level in different global EFL contexts (Abda, 2017; Bruner, Sinwongsuwat, & Radić-Bojanić, 2015; Chen & Goh, 2011; Demir, 2017; García, 2012; Nuraini, 2016) and in Bangladeshi context (Chowdhury & Shaila, 2013).

In the Chinese context, a study of mixed-method research design among EFL teachers of 44 universities, using open-ended questions and semi-structured interview found that EFL teachers at the tertiary level faced problems like large class size, lack of teaching resources, planning and implementing oral activities, learners' passiveness, class time constraint and low efficacy of both learners and teachers while teaching oral skills (Chen & Goh, 2011). In the Indonesian context, qualitative research related to investigating EFL teachers' problems reported that the teachers faced internal problems like learners' extensive use of native language, learners at puberty period, lack of exposure, innate phonetic ability, identity and language ego and motivation and external problems like large class size, learners' autonomy and teaching method (Musliadi, 2016; Nuraini, 2016).

Besides, García (2012), in his qualitative study, reported that lack of learners' oral practice environment, oral activities, and time constraint challenged Mexican EFL teachers to teach and develop learners' oral competency at higher education. In the Serbian and Thai context, except for large class size and learners' passiveness, learners' mixed ability was also reported as a problem for EFL teachers for teaching oral skills at the tertiary level (Bruner, Sinwongsuwat, & Radić-Bojanić, 2015). Along with these problems as mentioned above, Turkish EFL teachers faced other problems like learners' attitudes, teachers' lack of pedagogical knowledge, lack of technological support, and problems regarding curriculum and assessment procedures (Demir, 2017). Similar problems were reported in a qualitative study by Adhikari (2011) in the Nepalese context.

Furthermore, in the Sudanese context, a study with quantitative research design among 30 EFL teachers reported that teachers' low income, lack of the target language environment, inappropriate teaching materials, improper teaching methods, and under qualification were EFL teachers' major problems to teach the English skills (Abdalla &

Mustafa, 2015). An extensive mixed-method study was conducted among fresh students, senior students, and university teachers in the Iranian context and it was reported that EFL teachers faced the above-mentioned problems along with a lack of cooperation spirit among students, competitive situation leading to an unfriendly atmosphere, lack of due focus on speaking skills in the educational system, lack of efficient facilities in language laboratories, instructors' pronunciation not being good enough and insufficient courses in speaking at the tertiary level (Afshar & Asakereh, 2016). This study also stated that there was no significant difference among the fresh students, the senior students, and the teachers' perceptions of oral skills problems.

In the Bangladeshi context, a quantitative study conducted among 52 teachers of different private universities found that teachers faced problems like learners' lack of exposure to the real-life interaction in English, their nervousness, the influence of the L1, adverse social environment and large class size while teaching oral skills at the tertiary level (Chowdhury & Shaila, 2013).

From the above discussion, it can be stated that for developing EFL learners' oral English communication skills, more studies need to investigate the problems EFL teachers face during teaching oral English communication skills in the global and Bangladeshi contexts. In order to investigate the problems encountered during the teaching of oral English communication skills from both EFL learners and teachers' perspectives, the majority of the previous studies were conducted using a qualitative research design. Few studies used the mixed-method research design to investigate the problems EFL teachers face while teaching oral skills. Moreover, no studies investigated the relationship between teachers' demographic factors and the problems they have faced while teaching oral English communication skills in the global EFL and Bangladeshi context. To address the research gap, the researchers have set the following purpose of the study.

Purpose of The Study

This study explores the problems EFL teachers faced and the relationship between teachers' demographic factors and the problems they faced during oral English communication skills teaching at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. To obtain these objectives, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What are the problems faced by EFL teachers while teaching oral English communication skills (OECSs) at the tertiary level in Bangladesh?
2. Are there any statistically significant differences between teachers' demographic factors and the problems they face during oral English communication skills teaching at the tertiary level in Bangladesh?

METHOD

To investigate the problems EFL teachers face and the relationship between teachers' demographic factors and the problems they face during oral English communication skills teaching at the tertiary level in Bangladesh, an explanatory sequential mixed-method research design was employed, using quantitative and qualitative data in this

study. Explanatory sequential mixed method design begins with quantitative data and ends with qualitative data where quantitative is more emphasized than qualitative to investigate the research objectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this study, the researchers used an adapted survey questionnaire from Afshar and Asakereh (2016) and a semi-structured interview to collect data. For quantitative data analysis, both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were conducted to determine the central tendency of the problems and the relationship between demographic factors and the problems. Themes from qualitative data were narrated to support the quantitative findings.

Participants

The participants of this study were 46 ($n = 46$) faculty members who were teaching English as a foreign language at 15 different public and private universities in Dhaka, Sylhet, and Bogra. The participants were selected through employing a purposive sampling technique. Initially, hard copies of the questionnaire were distributed among 70 faculty members. Out of these numbers, 50 faculty members participated in this survey. Four participants were excluded as they did not complete the survey questionnaire. All the participants had completed their higher education in the English department, and they currently teach English at different universities. Their native language is Bengali. According to Creswell and Clark (2017), at least 30 participants for the quantitative study and 1 or 2 participants for narrative qualitative study are adequate for conducting any research. Besides, this study followed the principles of selecting participants from the studies of Saeed Al-Sobhi and Preece (2018) in which 4 EFL teachers were selected for conducting qualitative research approach and Alipour (2018) in which quantitative research approach was conducted among 36 EFL teachers for investigating the problems EFL teachers faced while teaching oral skills. Thus, considering the above-mentioned information, it can be stated that the total number of participants was adequate for conducting this study since the total number of participants in this study was 46.

For the current study, out of the 46 participants, 29 were male (63%), and 17 were female (37%). The responses were collected from June to August 2019. The participants who participated in this study hold different ranks at their respective faculties, such as lecturer (58.7%), assistant professor (37%), and associate professor (4.3%). The participants' detailed demographic factors are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Demographic information

Field	Category	N	%
Gender	Male	29	63
	Female	17	37
Designation	Lecturer	27	58.7
	Assistant Professor	17	37
	Associate Professor	2	4.3
Teaching experience	1-5 yrs.	26	56.5
	6-10yrs	9	19.6
	11yrs+	11	23.9
Level of teaching	Undergraduate	9	19.6
	Graduate	2	4.3
	Both	35	76.1
Teaching sector	Public University	9	19.6
	Private University	37	80.4

Data Collection procedure

For the quantitative part of the study, a set of 14 items of the questionnaire was adapted from Afshar and Asakereh (2016) to solicit EFL teachers' problems during oral English communication skills. The questionnaire had two sections; the first section consisted of demographic factors, and the second section consisted of the items regarding the problems EFL teachers face. The demographic factors of the participants were 1= male, 2= female; 1= lecturer, 2= Asst. Professor and 3= Assoc. Professor; 1=1-5 years, 2=6-11 years and 3= 11+years' experience; 1= teaching at the undergraduate level, 2= teaching at the graduate level, and 3= teaching at both as well as 1= teaching at public university and 2= teaching at private university. The items of this questionnaire followed a five-point Likert-scale as Strongly Disagree=1; Disagree=2; Neutral=3; Agree=4; Strongly Agree=5.

Before collecting data, a pilot test was conducted to check the items' validity and reliability. Furthermore, the questionnaire was sent to three experts who had similar backgrounds, and they were asked to read and suggest if they would have any remark. The experts' views were taken into consideration to revise and prepare the final questionnaire. This step assisted in adjusting the confusing language items and the deletion of redundant items. For the reliability of the final questionnaire, the Cronbach's alpha of the reliability coefficient was 0.739. According to Cortina (1993), if Cronbach's alpha is between .70 to .10, the items of the questionnaire are considered a standard marking point. The values of Cronbach's alpha of this questionnaire showed that the items of the questionnaire had internal consistency. The Cronbach's alpha values also confirmed the suitability of the items in the questionnaire to regulate the research objectives and the content was comprehensible to teachers.

The interview was conducted by selecting participants purposefully for soliciting themes regarding the problems EFL teachers faced. After interviewing the four teachers, the emergent themes were narrated to cross-check the quantified results. Among the four

participants, three were males, and the remaining one was female. The interview lasted around 15 to 20 minutes.

Data analysis process

To obtain the quantitative findings of the research questions, descriptive and inferential statistics were calculated with SPSS version 25. The results were calculated for the frequency distribution as shown in Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviations of all the items were computed from the descriptive analysis and shown in Table 3. For the inferential statistics, bivariate correlation using the Pearson coefficient with a two-tailed test was used to determine the relationship between teachers' demographic factors and the problems EFL teachers faced (Table 4). On the other hand, qualitative data were transcribed and imported into NVIVO version 12 for coding and sub coding to develop themes to support quantitative findings. Five themes emerged from the data such as traditional teaching method, lack of oral practice environment, authentic materials, use of mother tongue, and the role of demographic factors.

FINDINGS

For the present study, both research questions have been addressed by quantitative and qualitative data. Data were processed and analyzed with SPSS (Version 25.0) for the quantitative findings and NVIVO (Version 12) for the qualitative findings with a view to obtaining the objectives of this study. The findings are discussed in the following subsections.

Quantitative Findings:

For quantitative results of both research questions, after collecting the data, the responses were presented as an excel sheet to prepare and analyze the results through SPSS (Version 25.0) for specific descriptive and inferential calculations. The quantitative findings are discussed below.

Problems EFL teachers Faced

To solicit the problems faced by EFL teachers while teaching oral English communication skills, the findings of descriptive statistics are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2
Frequency of the problems scale

Frequency of the problems				
Valid	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly Disagree	4	0.62	0.62	0.62
Disagree	58	9.01	9.01	9.01
Neutral	82	12.73	12.73	21.72
Agree	219	34.01	34.01	55.73
Strongly Agree	281	43.63	43.63	100
Total	644	100	100	

Table 2 illustrated the frequency and percentage for the five Likert scale items as calculated by SPSS 25.0. The total number of responses is 644 (100%) resulting from the 46 respondents' answers to the 14 statements of this domain. The total responses are as follows:

281 (43.63%) 'Strongly Agree.'

219 (34.01%) 'Agree'

82 (12.73%) 'Neutral'

58 (9.01%) 'Disagree'

4 (0.62%) 'Strongly Disagree'

The result illustrated above showed that the scales of 'Strongly Agree' and 'Agree' are more recurrent than other scales. By using 'Neutral' as a midpoint of 3, these analyses revealed that there were several problems EFL teachers faced while teaching oral English communication skills through traditional teaching methods at the tertiary level.

Table 3
Descriptive analysis of the problems * (N=46)

Teachers' perceptions	Mean	Standard Deviation
I think the traditional teaching method I follow is unsupportive to teach Oral English Communication skills.		
I think there is a lack of using authentic materials (e.g., audio/visual) to teach Oral English Communication skills in the traditional teaching method	3.98	1.02
I think there are inconsistent contents in the syllabus to teach Oral English Communication skills in the traditional teaching method.	4.00	1.10
I think it is difficult to plan for teaching oral activities by the traditional teaching method.	4.22	0.76
I think it is difficult to implement oral activities in the class.	4.37	0.80
It is difficult to teach Oral English Communication skills because of the large class through the traditional teaching method.	4.35	0.92
It is difficult to understand the student's weakness in Oral English Communication skills in the traditional teaching method.	4.35	0.67
There are multimedia facilities in the classrooms at my university.	4.50	0.69
I think teachers need supporting tools (e.g. technology/lab) to teach Oral English Communication skills.	4.74	0.53
I think the traditional teaching method causes students to be inactive participants in the class.	4.39	0.74
I think teachers have a cultural shock to teach Oral English Communication skills in the traditional teaching method.	3.35	1.03
I think teachers are too egoistic to speak with students in English under the traditional teaching method.	3.35	1.06
I think in the traditional teaching method, undergraduate students have lack of oral practice environment inside and outside the classroom.	4.26	.98
I think it is difficult to motivate students to engage in Oral English Communication activities through a traditional teaching method	4.37	0.80

Table 3 shows the descriptive item analysis of this domain concerning the problems teachers faced to teach oral English communication skills. To interpret mean scale, the

researchers used 3.00 as the midpoint, the mean values of all items of the perception domain are higher than the midpoint. From the data analysed above, items 9 (4.74), 8 (4.50) and 10 (4.39) show that a more substantial segment of the teachers felt that the lack of supporting tools and learners' inactive participation were the major problems even though the classroom was equipped with multimedia facilities to teach oral English communication skills. The results of item 6 (4.35), 7 (4.35), 4 (4.22), and 5 (4.37) show that most of the teachers faced the problems regarding large class size, identifying students' weaknesses, planning and implementing oral tasks in the class through traditional teaching method. Most of the respondents agreed upon the items 13 (4.26), 3 (4.00), 2 (3.98), and 14 (4.37) that the traditional teaching method could not provide an oral practice environment, authentic materials, consistent content of the syllabus and increase learners' motivation for the learners at the tertiary level. The mean values of the items 11 (3.35) and 12 (3.35) showed that teachers had cultural and egoistic problems to speak in English with their students. Again, item 1 (3.33) showed that the traditional teaching method that followed was not supportive of teaching oral English communication skills at the tertiary level.

Relationship between the demographic factors and the problems

An inferential statistical calculation was conducted to identify the relationship between demographic factors, such as gender, position, teaching experience, level of teaching, and teaching sector and the problems EFL teachers face. In other words, a two-tailed Pearson correlation was conducted, and the results are presented in Table 4

Table 4
Correlations between demographic factors and problems

	Problem	Gender	Designation	Experience	Level of Teaching
Gender	-.025	----			
Designation	-.035	-.137	-----		
Experience	-.017	-.186	.757**	-----	
Level of Teaching	.060	.022	.383**	.407**	---
Teaching Sector	.120	-.077	-.179	.070	-.131

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) $p < .01$

As shown in Table 4, results from the study show that there was no statistically significant correlation between gender, designation, experience, level of teaching, teaching sector, and the problems of teaching oral English communication skills. On the other hand, the designation was found to be highly, significantly, and positively correlated with experience at the 0.01 level, $r(45) = .757$; $p = .000$. This suggests that the teachers who are more experienced had higher positions in rank (Professor, Associate Professor etc.) as well. In addition, designation was correlated positively and significantly with level of teaching at the level 0.01 level $r(45) = .383$; $p = .009$. This suggests that the teachers who were higher ranked were teaching at a higher level too. Moreover, there was a moderate, significant, and positive correlation between teachers' experience and teaching level. This suggests that the teachers who are more experienced were teaching at a higher level also.

Qualitative Findings

Similarly, vis-à-vis quantitative data analysis, both research questions were also addressed by qualitative data in this present study. After analysing qualitative data with NVIVO 12, the results from the semi-structured interview are presented as follows. Five themes such as teaching method, lack of oral practice environment, authentic materials, use of mother tongue, and the role of demographic factors for teaching oral English communication skills at the tertiary level in Bangladesh emerged from the data.

Teaching Method

Regarding the questions on the teaching method, the respondents reported that the teaching method that they were following was traditional and lecture-based. Whatever teachers taught in the class, learners had to follow. Again, the traditional teaching method did not allow the students to speak much inside and outside the classroom. One interviewee said, "It is difficult to provide learners oral task in traditional teaching method as teachers and students need to follow the instruction of a textbook." Another interviewee reported, "Traditional teaching method is not suitable for teaching oral skills because it emphasizes memorization rather than practice the skills."

Lack of oral practice environment

Concerning learners' oral practice environment, all the respondents reported that as there was a lack of oral practice environment inside and outside the classroom, teachers could not steer the learners' oral development. One interviewee stated, "Learners have sufficient linguistic knowledge, but they could not speak properly because they do not have much practice." Besides, another interviewee reported: "if we could provide enough oral practice environment learners' oral development would be held prompt." Thus, creating an oral practice environment is a challenge for EFL teachers in Bangladesh.

Authentic materials

In response to the question regarding authentic materials, most of the teachers replied that there was a lack of authentic materials to teach oral English communication skills. One of the respondents said, "audio-visual materials are needed to teach oral skills." The other respondent said, "audio-visual aids can help learners use oral skills in their practical life." Thus, the lack of authentic materials is a challenge for teachers to teach oral English communication skills in EFL contexts like Bangladesh.

Use of mother tongue

Regarding the use of language, the teachers responded that both teachers and learners tended to use their mother tongue considerably inside and outside the classroom. One teacher said, "Learners spoke in their mother tongue whenever they are in the class and out of the class." The other respondents replied, "Teachers have a tendency to use mother tongue with learners." Therefore, teachers' rigorous use of the mother tongue is also a challenge for developing learners' oral skills.

Role of demographic factors for teaching OECSs

Regarding the influence of teachers' demographic factors, e.g., gender, position, experience, teaching level, and sector, all the teachers agreed that demographic factors did not affect teaching oral skills at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. One respondent said, "There is no effect on teachers' demographic factors on the problems that teachers faced." The other said, "All the teachers faced the same problems while teaching oral English skills."

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to answer these two questions: "What are the problems that EFL teachers face to teach OECSs at tertiary level in Bangladesh?" and "Are there any statistically significant differences between teachers' demographic factors and the problems they face during oral English communication skills teaching at the tertiary level in Bangladesh?" These questions were answered based on the data obtained from the survey questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The findings of the study illustrate that EFL teachers who participated in the study agreed that there were some problems they faced while teaching oral English skills at the tertiary level in Bangladesh.

The first problem in teaching oral skills commonly shared by Bangladeshi EFL teachers was the difficulty with the existing teaching method. As the teaching method at the tertiary level in Bangladesh is lecture-based, students did not have a chance to maximize their learning. For this reason, it would be difficult for a teacher to prevail over students' oral practice environment inside and outside the classroom through this teaching method. This finding was supported by the studies of Abdalla and Mustafa (2015) and Musliadi, (2016) where EFL teachers opined that improper teaching method was one of the problems for teaching oral English communication skills in the EFL context.

The second oral skills teaching problem frequently reported by Bangladeshi EFL teachers was the extensive use of mother tongue inside and outside the classroom by both teachers and students. The participants in the interview have stated that this happens because Bangladesh is a monolingual country. Students seldom feel the necessity of oral communication in English outside the classroom. For this reason, students' oral English communication skills performance is unsatisfactory even after the completion of their undergraduate level in Bangladesh. This finding was aligned with the studies of Musliadi (2016) and Ahmed and Qasem (2019) in which the participants reported that the use of mother tongue was the other problem to teach oral English communication skills in the EFL contexts.

The third oral skill teaching problem recurrently stated by the majority of Bangladeshi EFL teachers was the lack of an oral practice environment. In the context of Bangladesh, it seems the problem is even more serious as Bangladeshi EFL students cannot find opportunities to have direct contact with native speakers of English. This finding was supported by the studies of Adhikari (2011) and Abdalla and Mustafa (2015).

The fourth oral skill teaching problem commonly shared by Bangladeshi EFL teachers was the large class size. The participants stated that classes at the tertiary level were usually overcrowded which makes it difficult to teach oral English communication skills. Because of the large class size, students could not get an equal chance to participate in their lessons. This finding was aligned with the studies of Nuraini (2016), Madalińska-Michalak and Bavli (2018) and Ahmed and Qasem (2019).

The fifth oral skill teaching problem was the lack of supporting tools. This finding was supported by the study of Afshar and Asakereh (2016). The participants stated that there was a lack of audio-visual tools for teaching oral skills. Similarly, most of the universities do not have language labs. In this regard, the features of smartphones, like YouTube, Voice Recorder, MP3 can be useful.

The sixth oral skill teaching problem commonly reported by Bangladeshi EFL teachers was the students' lack of motivation and their passiveness. Students did not feel the motivation to practise oral skills inside and outside the classroom as they feared others would comment on their language. On the other hand, the traditional teaching method did not allow the learners to be active participants in the lessons. At the same time, it is very difficult for a teacher to accelerate learners' oral English communication skills performance through traditional teaching method in an EFL context. This finding was supported by the studies of Abdalla and Mustafa (2015), Nuraini (2016), Madalińska-Michalak and Bavli (2018) and Ahmed and Qasem (2019).

The seventh oral skill teaching problem was the lack of authentic materials. The participants stated that traditional teaching method depends on paper and pen but for developing students' oral English communication skills teachers need to provide authentic audio-visual recordings to their students to practise patterns of speech productions and communication behaviours in that language. This finding was aligned with the study of Abdalla and Mustafa (2015).

Besides the above-mentioned problems of teaching oral skills at the tertiary level, EFL teachers also opined that there were problems with syllabus design, planning and implementing oral activities inside and outside the classroom in Bangladesh. Apart from these findings, EFL teachers had some other problems like teachers' low proficiency, lack of teachers' training, and teachers' time constraints in the classroom (Ahmed & Qasem, 2019; Dansieh, 2018). Thus, this study indicates that EFL teachers were unable to provide learners oral practice environment for developing their oral English communication skills in an EFL context like Bangladesh. Nevertheless, the researchers believe that this is a common phenomenon in many EFL contexts around the globe. In this regard, the researchers would recommend addressing the issue of integrating the features of smartphones, such as WhatsApp, YouTube, Voice Recorder, Call Recorder, etc. with the existing teaching methods inside and outside the classroom for engaging learners through ubiquitous oral practice environment and authentic materials for developing oral English communication skills.

Furthermore, for answering research question no 2, inferential results show that there were no statistically significant differences between teachers' demographic factors and

the problems they face while teaching oral English communication skills. This means all the teachers faced similar problems for teaching oral skills at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. Thus, according to the deviation of gender, position, teaching experience, teaching level, and sector of the teachers, there was no deviation of problems for teaching oral skills at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. However, there was a positive and significant correlation between teachers' designation and teachers' level of teaching. Similarly, there was a moderate, significant, and positive correlation between teachers' experience and teaching level. To the best knowledge of the researchers, there is no evidence found in the previous studies that showed the relationship between the university EFL teachers' demographic factors and the problems they faced during teaching oral communication skills. Therefore, for developing the tertiary level learners' oral English communication skills performance, many barriers exist in the traditional teaching method from EFL teachers' perspectives at different universities. These problems need to be addressed in order to develop the tertiary level learners' oral skills in Bangladesh and EFL contexts.

CONCLUSION

This research study was conducted to explore the problems EFL teachers faced and the relationship between teachers' demographic factors and the problems for teaching oral English communication skills at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. Based on the findings, EFL teachers of different universities faced several problems that have become hindrance to enhance the oral communication skills of the learners at the tertiary level. The most frequent problems were lack of supporting tools, learners' passiveness and lack of motivation, lack of oral practice environment, and large size class. Furthermore, there were no statistically significant differences between teachers' demographic factors and the problems the teachers face while teaching oral skills at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. However, there were positive and significant correlations between teachers' designation and teachers' level of teaching, teachers' experience and teachers' level of teaching.

Because of EFL learners' weak performance in oral English communication skills, this study would recommend a paradigm shift into teaching oral skills methodology for providing more exposure to oral practice in the Bangladeshi context and in global EFL contexts. In conclusion, the findings of this study suggest that EFL learners need an oral practice environment, engagement into lessons, authentic materials, and small class size to develop oral English skills. Thus, policymakers and teachers should address the issue by using the features of smartphones, such as WhatsApp, Voice Recorder, Call Recorder, etc. inside and outside the classroom. They also would concentrate on how these features of smartphone ensure learners' oral practice environment, learners' activeness, manage large class size, and provide authentic materials. The findings also provide an opportunity for comparing the results of this study with future study in other EFL contexts. As for the limitations, this study only solicited the problems of EFL teachers faced during teaching oral English skills at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. Thus, this study would contribute to the expanding body of knowledge for policymakers

and teachers when dealing with the problems of teaching that make oral skills teaching challenging for EFL teachers in the EFL contexts.

REFERENCES

- Abda, K. (2017). Assessing the Factors That Affect Teaching Speaking Skills: The Case of Robe Teachers' College, English Department Second Year Students. *International Journal of Humanities & Social Science Studies*, 6959(285), 2349–6959.
- Abdalla, MohamedEltayeb & Mustafa, E. (2015). Problems of Teaching and Learning Spoken English in Sudan. *SUST Journal of Humanities*, 16(4), 43–53.
- Adhikari, B. R. (2011). Teaching Speaking in the Nepalese Context: Problems and Ways of Overcoming them. *Journal of NELTA*, 15(1–2), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.3126/nelta.v15i1-2.4602>
- Afshar, H. S. & Asakereh, A. (2016). Speaking skills problems encountered by Iranian EFL freshmen and seniors from their own and their English instructors' perspectives. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 13(1), 112–130. <https://e-flt.nus.edu.sg/v13n12016/afshar.pdf>
- Ahmed, S. T. S., & Qasem, B. T. A. (2019). Problems of Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language in South Yemen: A Case Study of Lahj Governorate. *ELS Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies on Humanities*, 2(4). <http://journal.unhas.ac.id/index.php/jish>
- Alam, Q. (2013). Improving English Oral-Communication Skills Of Pakistani Public Schools Students. *International Journal of English Language Teaching*, 1(2), 17–36. <http://www.eajournals.org/wp-content/uploads/Improving-English-Oral-Communication-Skills-Of-Pakistani-Public-Schools-Students.pdf>
- Alipour, S. (2018). The Effect of Lesson Study on Iranian EFL Teachers' Perception of Teaching. *Language Teaching Research Quarterly*, 5(April), 45–58. <https://doi.org/10.32038/ltrq.2018.05.03>
- Aliyu, M. M. (2017). Developing Oral Communication Skills through Collaborative Learning: Implications for Nigerian Teachers. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 2(5), 127–130. <https://doi.org/10.24001/ijels.2.5.15>
- Alyan, A. A. (2013). Oral Communication Problems Encountering English Major Students: Perspectives of Learners and Teachers in Palestinian EFL University Context. *Arab World English Journal*, 4(2), 160–172. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1553-2712.2011.01214.x>
- Asulu, Y. S., & Kasyap, R. V. J. (2014). Need of Teaching Oral Communication Skills in Technical Institutes of A . P : A Critical Outlook. *International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities*, 2(3). <https://ijellh.com/OJS/index.php/OJS/issue/view/6>

- Bruner, D. A., Sinwongsuwat, K. & Radić-Bojanić, B. (2015). EFL oral communication teaching practices: A close look at university teachers and A2 students' perspectives in Thailand and a critical eye from Serbia. *English Language Teaching*, 8(1), 11–20. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v8n1p11>
- Chen, Z., & Goh, C. (2011a). Teaching oral English in higher education: Challenges to EFL teachers. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 16(3), 333–345. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2010.546527>
- Chen, Z., & Goh, C. (2011b). Teaching oral English in higher education: Challenges to EFL teachers. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 16(3), 333–345. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2010.546527>
- Chowdhury, N., & Shaila, S. M. (2013). Teaching speaking in large classes: Crossing the barriers. *Stamford Journal of English*, 6(1989), 72–89. <https://doi.org/10.3329/sje.v6i0.13904>
- Cortina, J. M. (1993). What is Coefficient alpha? an examination of Theory and Applications. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 78(No 1), 98–104. http://psychweb.psy.umt.edu/denis/datadecision/front/cortina_alpha.pdf
- Creswell, J. W., & Clark, L. P. (2017). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Fifth). SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Dansieh, S. A. (2018). Teaching Oral English in an ESL Setting: Some Challenges Observed by Teachers in Upper-West Ghana. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 8(6), 172. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v8n6p172>
- Demir, Y. (2017). What, How and Why? A Multi-Dimensional Case Analysis of the Challenges Facing Native and Non- Native EFL Teachers. *PASAA*, 54(December), 141–176. <http://ezproxy.lib.uconn.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1171211&site=ehost-live>
- Dutta, B., & Islam, K. M. (2017). Responsiveness of Higher Education to Changing Job Market Demand in Bangladesh. *Higher Education for the Future*, 4(1), 60–81. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2347631116681218>
- EPI, E. (2019). *EF English Proficiency Index*. www.ef.com/epi
- Farooqui, S. (2007). Developing Speaking Skills of Adult Learners in Private Universities in Bangladesh: Problems and Solutions. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 47(1), 94–110.
- García, C. B. (2012). *A study on Oral Competence in the English Language*. <http://idiomas.ens.uabc.mx/plurilinkgua/docs/v4/1/CarolinaarticleOralcomEN.pdf>

- Khan, H. R. (2007). Problems of Oral Communication in English among Bangladeshi Students. *East West University Journal*, 1(1). <http://dspace.ewubd.edu/handle/2525/2791>
- Khudhair, S. M. (2019). Major speaking problems that adult EFL learners face while communicating. *Amazonia Investiga*, 8(21), 334–340. <https://www.amazoniainvestiga.info/index.php/amazonia/article/view/110>
- Madalińska-Michalak, J., & Bavlí, B. (2018). Challenges in teaching English as a foreign language at schools in Poland and Turkey. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 41(5), 688–706. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2018.1531125>
- Musliadi. (2016). The Problems of Teaching Speaking with Respect to the Teaching Methodology: Task-Based Language Teaching. *Ethical Lingua*, 3(1), 74–88.
- Nuraini, K. (2016). The Barriers of Teaching Speaking English for EFL Learners. *ELLITE- Journal of English Language, Literature, and Teaching*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.32528/ellite.v1i1.159>
- Pandey, P. K. (2014). Better English for Better Employment Opportunities. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Approach and Studies*, 1(4). <http://ijmas.com/pastissuedetails.aspx?ID=6>
- Polishchuk, O. (2018). Communication Barriers Faced By English Language Learners At a University Level: Factors and Solutions. *Science and Education*, 23(8), 44–48. <https://doi.org/10.24195/2414-4665-2017-8-6>
- Rahman, Z., Rahman, A. F. M. M., & Begum, M. K. (2015). Enhancement of Students' English Speaking in Bangladesh: Theory and Practices. *Manarat International University Studies*, 5(1), 127–136. <http://miurs.manarat.ac.bd/download/Issue-05/12.pdf>
- Saeed Al-Sobhi, B. M., & Preece, A. S. (2018). Teaching English Speaking Skills to the Arab Students in the Saudi School in Kuala Lumpur: Problems and Solutions. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 6(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.6n.1p.1>
- Tsang, A. (2017). Enhancing learners' awareness of oral presentation (delivery) skills in the context of self-regulated learning. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 146978741773121. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787417731214>
- Yanagi, M., & Baker, A. A. (2016). Challenges Experienced by Japanese Students With Oral Communication Skills in Australian Universities. *TESOL Journal*, 7(3), 621–644. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.229>
- Zukurnain, N., & Kaur, S. (2014). Oral English Communication Difficulties and Coping Strategies of Diploma of Hotel Management Students at UiTM. *The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 20(3), 93–112.