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**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES
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**INVESTIGATING FEMALE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES TOWARDS
LEARNING SPEAKING SKILLS, THEIR LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION
AND THE CHALLENGES THEIR FACE: GRADE NINE FEMALE
STUDENTS AT AGARO SECONDARY SCHOOL IN FOCUS**

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Investigating Female Students' Perspectives towards Learning Speaking Skills, their Level of Participation and the Challenges they face: Grade Nine Female Students at Agaro Secondary School in focus

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Declaration, Confirmation and Approval

Title: Investigating Female Students' Perspectives towards Learning Speaking Skills, their Level of Participation and the Challenges They Face: Grade Nine Female Students at Agaro Secondary School in Focus

Declaration

I, declare this thesis is my original work, not presented for any degree in any University. All sources of used in this thesis were dully acknowledged.

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Confirmation and Approval

This thesis is prepared under my supervision and fulfills all requirements of a thesis standard of the program. I hereby approve the submission of the thesis for examination.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the female students' perspectives, their level of participation in EFL speaking class and challenges they face. The study was conducted on a sample of 105 female students selected through simple random sampling technique. Descriptive research design was applied in the study. To collect the required data for the study, questionnaire, in-depth interview and classroom observation were used as an instrument. The data gathered using these instruments were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The findings of the study indicated that Agaro secondary school female students have a good perspective towards English language classrooms. Moreover, female students have a low level of participation in speaking skill in EFL class which very few numbers students participate frequently in English language classrooms in speaking lesson. Besides, they face personal level, teacher level, and family level problems that hinder them very well in English language class. Conclusively, grade nine female students of Agaro secondary school have good perspectives towards and low level of participation speaking skill EFL classroom. Thus, pertinent bodies specifically teachers and the school community should design female student's active participation methods. The school should also create a welcoming and networked school environment that accelerates female school language skill resilience.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

EFL: English as Foreign Language

EFLT: English Foreign language Teaching

TEFL: Teaching English as A Foreign Language

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Among the four key language skills i.e. reading, listening, speaking and writing, speaking is deemed to be the most important skill in learning a foreign or second language. Baker and Westrup (2003) state that the ability to speak skillfully provides the speaker with distinct advantages such as greater chance for better education, finding good jobs, and getting promotion. Likewise Crystal (2003) states that speaking is a pivotal skills to be mastered by English as a foreign language (EFL) learners due its prominent position as a medium of international communication while Nunan (1995) posits that learning the speaking skill is the most important aspect of learning a second or a foreign language and success is measured based on their ability to perform a conversation in the language. Nevertheless, most English as a foreign language (EFL) especially Arab EFL learners find speaking in English to be difficult despite learning the language throughout the first grade until the ninth grade. There are several factors which contribute to students' difficulty in acquiring speaking skill in an EFL environment. In the first place, acquiring speaking skill itself is a complex process. Kusnierek (2015) contends that it requires the speaker to acquire other important components i.e. pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension as well as using words and phrases fluently without much thinking when producing sentences in the real communication. Apart from that it also depends upon activation of both linguistic knowledge along with the general knowledge in order to produce the message. Another factor which contributes to speaking difficulty is acquiring speaking skill depends upon appropriate teaching approach. In many of the Arab countries where English is a foreign language, the traditional teaching method particularly the grammar translation method in teaching English prevails (Al Hamdany, 2018; Ali, Hameed&Keong, 2015; Elttayef and Hussein, 2017; Raba'bah, 2003). This teaching method deemphasizes speaking and listening skills and focuses mainly on teaching reading and writing besides grammar and vocabulary (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Ferris (1998) examined the EFL female students' perceptions of classroom participation own their class and their struggles to meet the challenges of classroom participation tasks and skills in academic settings. Female Students expressed their inhibition in classroom participation due to a general lack of confidence in their participation (Ferris, 1998). Academic listening and speaking

skills represent a complex and problematic task for students in the EFL classroom. For EFL students, English is not a comfortable language even though they have lived in the culture and have attended school in the U.S. These EFL students still feel that small group discussion and graded group projects in the classroom generate much discomfort and many challenges in their general education program as well (Ferris & Tagg, 1996). The beginning of the 20^{century} is characterized by modern education, curricula development, and contemporary Education policies in Ethiopia. In English as a foreign language context, teachers always encourage their students to speak in the classroom, and their participation is often evaluated according to the amount and quality of their talk, even though opportunities are not always available for everyone to participate orally. In most EFL classrooms, students are put in teacher-fronted activities where they are only able to contribute the minimum of speech, and participation in such settings is more difficult to elicit. Putting students into such classes means that they are less likely to speak without being prompted to participate during ongoing activities. Also, teachers often encourage their students to participate and feel that they have had a successful lesson when participation merely involves any student speaking. Students in such classrooms sometimes need to participate up altogether as a group. Some studies have indicated that student talk can be considered a crucial factor in most language teaching methods even though they vary from one approach to another. For example, Celce-Murcia (2001) reviewed nine approaches to the teaching of language and found that most, except for the grammar-translation and reading methods, required students to talk. More precisely, in the communicative approach of language teaching, the most popular method for language teaching since the end of the 20th century, student oral contribution has been regarded as essential for classroom participation.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Within few decades, students' classroom participation gains great importance and found the topic of research at different levels (Lizarraga, 2014). In terms of its importance, participatory types of learning process encourage mutual exchange of information; stimulate interest as well as recognition of respect among the teachers and students. This participation is dynamic from country to country, students to students, and context to context in terms of levels and forms of participation (Abdullah, Bakar&Mahbob, 2012). Various bodies of literature explained participation in different ways. For instance, (Ibid) student's participation as active like asking

questions, gives opinions, and discusses the related topic and passive participation like listening to the lectures and taking notes.

Female students' participation in foreign language classrooms is widely considered a very important aspect of the learning process. To take part in this process, students are invited to participate actively in their classrooms. Despite teachers often encouraging students to participate, opportunities for students to talk are not always available and students may employ other ways of classroom participation. These researches have the variable that is gender, perspective, and challenges of female students in EFL classrooms occurred.

Female students in EFL classroom participation perspective have a vital role in determining the methods and techniques that should be undertaken in a foreign language classroom. If teachers are aware of which activities their learners might enjoy, which are most effective, and which would provide learners with skills that they could use for academic and communicative purposes, they can plan and implement appropriate practices in the classroom. However, the more teachers know about what is perceived by the students, the better chances are of improving the quality of language teaching-learning and use. On the other hand, teacher's views, attitudes, and beliefs have a strong influence on the teaching-learning activities of a foreign language classroom. Female student's perspective in EFL classroom when they learn foreign language interprets tasks and other classroom events from their perspectives. EFL teachers should be encouraged to explore and examine the perspective of the learners in their classes.

1.3. Research Questions

The following basic research questions guide the current study:

1. What are female students' perspectives towards learning speaking skills?
2. What is the level of female learners' participation in learning speaking skills?
3. What are the challenges that female students encounter when they participate in speaking classroom?
4. What are the strategies that grade nine female students use to alleviate the challenges they face in participating in English classroom

1.4. Objectives of the Study

The study has the following general and specific objective.

1.4.1. General objective

The general objective of the study was to assess female students' perspectives towards and level of participation in learning speaking skills and the challenges they encounter when participating in English classroom.

1.4.2. Specific objectives

The specific objectives of this study were:

- To find out grade nine female students' perspectives towards learning speaking skills
- To inspect the level of grade nine female students' participation in learning speaking skills
- To identify the challenges grade nine female students, encounter when participating in learning speaking skills
- To find out the strategies that grade nine female students take to alleviate the challenges they face in participating in English classroom

1.5. Significance of the Study

The findings of this study tried to shed light on female students' perspective and their Level of participation in learning speaking skills in EFL classroom and challenges they face. So, the results are vital for EFL teachers, students, curriculum designers, and other researchers interested to conduct further studies in the area. Specifically, the significance of the study is put as follows:

First of all, the findings of the study are hoped to initiate Agaro secondary school EFL teachers by bringing the issue of female students' perspective and their level of participation in learning speaking skills in EFL classroom and challenges they factor their attention. In addition, it helps them to revitalize their awareness on the matter and to take practical actions to assist students to be aware of their level of participation in learning speaking skills in EFL classroom and challenges they face, and to develop their level of participation in learning speaking skills in EFL classroom by overcoming the challenges they face. Generally, the result of the study is expected

to help EFL teachers at the school to increase students' level of participation in learning speaking skills in EFL classroom by designing relevant instructional materials.

Secondly, the researcher hopes that the result of this study benefit EFL students at the school since they would be taught by informed teachers who can alert them in to activities and practices pertinent to boost learners' level of participation in learning speaking skills in EFL classroom. This may help to produce students who can eventually contribute their part to efforts made by the school so as to improve their learning particularly speaking skill. Thus, the results of the study are expected to inform the students about their level of participation in learning speaking skills in EFL classroom and recommend ways to improve their level of participation in learning speaking skills in EFL classroom.

Furthermore, the study may help to inform English Foreign language Teaching (EFLT), syllabus designers and materials writers about the current status of learners' level of participation in learning speaking skills in EFL classroom, and challenges they face if need be so as to create syllabuses and teaching materials that helps to develop students level of participation in learning speaking skills in EFL classroom. Finally, the findings of the study are expected to serve as a base and reference for other researchers interested to conduct further investigations on various aspects on the area.

1.6.Limitations of the Study

Like any other study, this study acknowledges the following limitations, which future studies could deal with, if need be. Firstly, the fact that it was limited to only grade nine female students at Agaro secondary school. Thus, inclusion of additional secondary and increasing population size in the study might helped to get more relevant and broader information. As a result, conclusions deduced or generalized from findings of such a narrow context and recommendation provided might not serve definitely the case of all high schools throughout the Jimma Zone. Thus, the study does not offer any conclusive findings about female students' perspective and their level of participation in EFL speaking classroom. But this was due to the tightening of time and meet the study period.

1.7. Scope of the Study

This study was geographically delimited to Agaro secondary school found in Oromia Region Jimma Zone Agaro Woreda. The population for the study were only grade nine female students at the school, and the sample size will be delimited to 105 samples attending their education in the academic year 2021 to make the study manageable enough. This means the study did not include other grade levels, their male counterpart and English teachers. Thematically the current study was delimited to only grade nine female students and their level of participation in learning speaking skills in EFL classroom and challenges they face. Furthermore, the study did not cover the other issues related with learners speaking skills such as students use of strategies in speaking skills, gender differences, environmental issues pertaining to speaking skills in order to make it manageable enough with the study period.

1.8. Definitions of Key Terms

This section identifies the key terms and concepts recurrent throughout the thesis.

Speaking skill: -the ability to communicate effectively. It allows the speaker to express their thoughts orally. It consists of five sub-skills: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and accuracy

Perspective: -view of female students for participation of in EFL class in speaking skill

Level of participation: - it is the measurements of female student's participation way it may be high, middle and low

Learning: -the acquisition of knowledge or skill through experience.

Speaking challenge: -is anything that prevents students from speaking the language accurately and fluently.

1.9. Organization of the Study

This thesis is organized into five chapters. The first chapter deals with the background, statement of the problem, basic research questions, objectives, significance, scope, delimitation, limitation,

definitions of key terms, and organization of the study. The second chapter focuses on relevant literature reviewing both local and in abroad studies. Chapter three deals with the research method and design while Chapter four is where findings and discussions of the study are made with supporting literature. The last chapter presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO:

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2. Definition of Speaking

It is an interactive process between a speaker and a listener. Furthermore, Tarigan (2008) states that speaking is the ability to articulate or produce sounds, words to express, convey, or deliver thoughts, ideas, and feelings. While Bailey and Nunan (2005) say that speaking consists of producing a verbal utterance to convey meaning. It means that speaking is an interactive process which comprises of two or more people in order to deliver, receive and process information in the oral form. Speaking is a productive skill and a fundamental part or vital component in language learning so it needs practicing as often as possible. Richards (2003) states that English learners often evaluated for their success in language learning, as well as the effectiveness of the English course, to further improve their speaking proficiency. So, to know the students' proficiency in English is by looking at the five vital components of speaking skill, namely: pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and comprehension. The first aspect of speaking is pronunciation. According to Boyer (2002), pronunciation is a necessary part of speaking (oral communication) that involves making the correct sounds of a particular language and how the sound is put together in the flow of speech. Pronunciation is an act of producing sound because the way we produce the word, especially in the English language is very decisive. Furthermore, pronunciation is an important tool in the speaking aspect because it determines whether or not the listener understands what is spoken. If students make mistakes in pronunciation, it will directly change the meaning or the listener would get misunderstanding. Therefore, knowing how to produce the English sound is a very important part of the speaking skill. The second basic skill this paper deals with is speaking, undoubtedly important in a second language acquisition process:

Speaking is one of the most difficult skills language learners have to face. In spite of this, it has traditionally been forced into the background while we, teachers of English, have spent all our classroom time trying to teach our students how to write, to read and sometimes even to listen in a L2 because grammar has a long-written tradition (Bueno, Madrid and McLaren, 2006: 321).

Speaking is generally thought to be the most important of the four skills. Indeed, one frustration commonly voiced by learners is that they have spent years studying English, but still, they cannot speak it.

For most people, the ability to speak a language is synonymous with knowing that language. Nevertheless, “speaking in a second or foreign language has often been viewed as the most demanding of the four skills” (Bailey and Savage 1994: 7). What specifically makes speaking in a second or foreign language difficult? Brown (1994) labels speaking as the most challenging skill for students because of the set of features that characterize oral discourse:

- Contractions, vowel reductions and elision;
- The use of slang and idioms;
- Stress, rhythm and intonation;
- The need to interact with at least one other speaker.

The most difficult aspect of spoken English is that it is always accomplished via interaction with at least one other speaker and this is one reason why many of us were shocked and disappointed when we used our second or foreign language for the first time in real interaction: We had not been prepared for spontaneous communication and could not cope with all of its simultaneous demands.

Speaking is an “activity requiring the integration of many subsystems...all these factors combine to make speaking a second or foreign language a formidable task for language learners...yet for many people, speaking is seen as the central skill” (Bailey and Savage 1994: 6-7).

There are numerous daily life situations where people need speaking, such as talking to someone face to face, communicating through the phone, answering questions, asking for directions, in shops, meetings or chatting with their friends, to name a few. People spend great deal of their time interacting with more people and, each of these situations requires a different register according to the formality of the moment. We speak for many reasons- to be sociable, because we want something, because we want other people to do something, to do something for someone else, to respond to someone else, to express our feelings or opinion about something, to

exchange information, to refer to an action or event in the past, present, or future, the possibility of something happening, and so on (Lindsay and Knight, 2006: 58)

2.1 Importance of speaking skill in English language class

The English language has become an international language. Among nations it serves as a lingua franca. It is spoken, learnt and understood even in those countries where it is not a native's language. English is playing a major role in many sectors including medicine, engineering, education, advanced studies, business, technology, banking, computing, tourism etc. All our software development today, the communication facilities available to us through internet, our access to a variety of websites, are all being carried out in English. Most of the research works are conducted and compiled in English. Anything written and recorded in this language is read and listened to, in wider circles. As a result, English is being taught and learned around the world as a second language today.

Language is a tool for communication. We communicate with others, to express our ideas, and to know others' ideas as well. Communication takes place, where there is speech. Without speech we cannot communicate with one another. The importance of speaking skills, hence is enormous for the learners of any language. Without speech, a language is reduced to a mere script. The use of language is an activity which takes place within the confines of our community. We use language in a variety of situations. People at their work places, i.e., researchers working either in a medical laboratory or in a language laboratory, are supposed to speak correctly and effectively in-order to communicate well with one another. Any gap in communication results in misunderstandings and problems. Speaking as one of the language skills becomes important topics to discuss in language teaching. The discussion topics can be related to the instructional techniques, the instructional materials, the instructional media, the language teachers, the language learners, and even the speaking components. The instructional techniques hold an important role to motivate and activate learners, the instructional materials play the role to contextualize the language usage and to meet language learners' needs, instructional media bring the teaching into real life situation, the teachers facilitate and ease the learning process, the learners manifest and produce meaningful and appropriate utterances as an indicator of the instructional success, and the speaking components relates to which components of the speaking to be the emphasis in a

speaking class activities. In addition, success in studying a language is often measured by learners' ability to speak in the language being learned. More importantly, Harmer (2007) argues that language learners use all language they know when they speak. Therefore, research is always needed and recommended to improve the teaching and learning techniques to improve the speaking skills that enable learners to communicate.

The ability to use the language as a means of communication often judges one's successfulness in speaking class in language learning. This success is detected when a language learner can use the language to express his ideas, feeling, and thought in the form of monologue or dialogue or the success can be simply seen when language learners are able to express their purposes or when language learners are able to make a conversation with others. Nunan (1995) argues that speaking is an important aspect of language learning whether it is as a second or a foreign language and the success is measured by the ability of language learners to carry out conversation in the language being learnt. This is in line with Richard's (2008) viewpoint that speaking is an important skill in language learning that enable language learners to communicate not only in expressing view point but also in giving responses. It is also agreed that speaking as a productive skill is related to the ability of language learners to process information during the conversation (Harmer, 1991; Burns and Joyce, 1997; Brown, 2001). It implies that speaking deals with the ability to process messages so that utterances produced are appropriate with the context of the conversation and hence the produced utterances meet the purpose of the conversation.

Improving the speaking skill of students in English as a foreign language (EFL) or English as a second language (ESL) becomes an issue. Quite a few EFL teachers expect their students to be able to speak accurately after the teaching learning process. On the other hand, most learners find it difficult to express grammatically correct sentences due to the significant differences in the grammar of the native language of the students and that of the EFL and consequently they prefer to put emphasis in fluency rather than on accuracy during the speaking activities. Cultural difference is also considered to contribute to the difficulties of EFL learners to use English in their daily conversation (Richards and Rodgers, 1986; Ho, 2009) and in appropriate social interaction (Schumin, 2001; Efrizal, 2012). Despite the faced problems in the teaching and learning of speaking, Heaton (1988) proposed that in the teaching of speaking learners must

master the three components of speaking; fluency, accuracy, and comprehensibility or appropriacy. It means that there must be efforts to choose effective techniques in teaching speaking and willingness to create and design interesting instructional materials that facilitate the achievement of the three speaking components.

Techniques in teaching speaking holds important role to improve the speaking skill. The teaching of speaking must open up wide opportunities for learners to practice. Harmer (1991) suggests that the importance of presentation, practice, and communication/production during the teaching of speaking in order to meet the real purpose of the teaching cannot be neglected. Widiati and Cahyono (2006) highlight the importance of techniques in selecting classroom activities in a speaking class. More importantly, Jones (2007) suggests that language teachers as well as the instructional materials guide students, manage students activities, and direct learning during the language teaching and learning process. Therefore, the role of the EFL or ESL teachers are not only limited to the choice of effective techniques but also on creativity and innovation to design and develop instructional materials. It is inevitable that English has become a global language in the world today since language could

link the whole world together. English language is essential and required in every field. Darasawang (2007) stated that the objective of learning a foreign language is for communication, education and business.

In Thailand, it is necessary for Thai people to communicate in English since Thailand now has become one of the members of Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN. Thus, Thai people should be competent in English language (Srisang, 2014). Accordingly, the Ministry of Education (2002) put great emphasis on English language by specifying that English must be the first foreign language which all Thai students learn at school. Regarding four skills, speaking is claimed to be the most important skill (Ur, 1996). However, Thai people still struggle with speaking English since they have fewer opportunities to expose themselves to the language in daily life. Although there are a range of methods that have been employed to teach learners to improve English speaking ability, it leads to insufficient results (Wanich, 2014).

Teng and Sinwongsuwat (2015) pointed out that there might be some reasons or factors affecting the learners' speaking ability. For some language learners, they struggled and find it difficult to speak English, while some groups of learners could speak English proficiently and fluently.

Consequently, the specific purpose of the present study was to investigate factors which enhance learners' speaking ability and to find out the factor which is the most influential factor to be fluent in English speaking.

2.2 The concept of participation

Participation can be looked at from various angles. For instance, Fritschner (2000) indicates that participation is defined in different ways by instructors and students. While instructors define (Dallimore et al., 2004). This implies that classroom participation might enable students to improve not only their speaking skills but also their social skills. Students can benefit a lot from participating actively in classroom discussions, and it seems that the more students actively participate in the learning process the more they learn. In addition, active classroom participation plays an important role in improving the process of education as well as students' personal development (Tatar, 2005). Participation enables students to achieve their aims by active interaction rather than merely being passive listeners.

A study on Chinese EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students found that students were least likely to participate in activities in class that required them to respond to teachers' questioning. They were much more likely to participate if it involved working in a pair with a peer (Liu & Jackson, 2009). Perhaps this is a result of Chinese culture but reflects I believe the importance of a personal relationship between teacher and students. Having a supportive relationship with the teacher influences the students' sense of belonging thereby affecting student effort, achievement, self-efficacy, and even long-term goals (Walker & Greene, 2009); (Anderman, 2003)

Several studies have been made on the topic of participation in the EFL classroom and contributed with views and suggestions on this matter. One of them is Törnqvist (2008) who studied Swedish 9th-grade students' and teachers' attitudes of English participation. The teachers and many of the pupils considered participation to be an important part of the teaching and learning of English, mainly because being able to express themselves orally in English today is of great importance. It also enables students to familiarize themselves with the English language. Törnqvists (2008) results showed that factors encouraging oral participation were the classroom environment, self-esteem, engagement in interesting tasks, breaking down students into smaller groups, and inspiring students who were motivated to learn and teachers who were motivated to

improve their teaching skills. Sköld (2008) investigated 'pupils' attitudes towards spoken English and speaking in front of their friends, and how these attitudes appear to be related to their participation and communicative behavior in the classroom.

2.3 Female student's participation in learning

Odaga and Heneveld (1995:7) consider female learning as recognized, as one of the critical pathways to promote social and economic development. Evidence from sub-Saharan Africa indicates that although there has been improvement in female access to education remains limited in several countries across the region. It is evident that once enrolled, females are more likely to drop out than boys that their academic achievement is poorer than that of boys.

In recent years, African governments, non-governmental organizations, and donors have been working together to develop programs that address the problems of improving girls' educational participation. Recent literature provides a summary of the state of knowledge of the factors constraints girls Schooling in sub-Saharan Africa. It presents an outline of how this accumulated knowledge can be used in practical ways to facilitate the design of programs to accelerate female participation in education in the region (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995).

Concerning this, World Bank (1988:1) depicts that one of the pressing educational concerns includes poor student participation, and repetition levels. Low academic achievement and low teacher morale and attendance. Perhaps the most daunting challenge is that of promoting female education. This must be a central concern in efforts to improve learning achievement school effectiveness, teachers' motivation, education management, and issues to resource mobilization and recollection of expenditure, such initiatives provide an important opportunity for creating an enabling environment where girls and other disadvantaged groups can participate fully. World Bank (1988:2) states that the cross-cultural study of female educational participation outcomes has increased tremendously since the 1970s. Analyses have indicated particularly that there is a wide gender gap in enrollments in South African, the Middle East and North Africa, and sub-Saharan Africa. The same authors discussed extensively have identified the central problems of female education as access to school, attainment in years of schooling, academic achievement, and accomplishment after school.

All these problems are interrelated and influenced by in and out of school factors increasing in enrollment but continuing poor educational outcomes for females have been documented and the multiple supply and demand reasons for persistent gender differences in educational outcomes have been well educated.

2.4 Learner perspective of in learning speaking skill in EFL

The study dictated that students' perspective towards English language skills acquisition depends on expected outcome and regard full about the subject (Rasch,2016; p.12).However, according to Khojasteh, Shokrpou r and Kafipour (2015), there are still doubts about what EFL students think about class participation and students' perception toward class participation. This study also confirmed students have no adequate inspiration to maintain their class participation. As a study dictated, student's perspectives towards English language participation were found hazy for students who believe mother tongue is easier than EFL and they regularly use mother tongue out of the classroom and even within the classroom (Riadil, 2020).

A recent study regarding student's perspectives of EFL participation indicated due to the strong power distance relationship between student and teacher and fear of failure restricted their class participation and they had a weak view towards EFL subject (Wonder, 2021). On the other, hand a study conducted on storytelling methods in EFL, confirmed participants displayed greater interest in second language learning when these two storytelling methods were introduced. It changed the learning attitudes of the students as they found the learning to be more fun, enjoyable and attractive which enabled them to pay more attention in the classroom (Ahmad & Yamat, 2020).

The study dictated that students' perspective towards English language skills acquisition depends on expected outcome and regard full about the subject (Rasch,2016; p.12).However, according to Khojasteh, Shokrpou r and Kafipour (2015), there are still doubts about what EFL students think about class participation and students' perception toward class participation. This study also confirmed students have no adequate inspiration to maintain their class participation. As a study dictated, student's perspectives towards English language participation were found hazy for students who believe mother tongue is easier than EFL and they regularly use mother tongue out of the classroom and even within the classroom (Riadil, 2020).

A recent study regarding student's perspectives of EFL participation indicated due to the strong power distance relationship between student and teacher and fear of failure restricted their class participation and they had a weak view towards EFL subject (Wonder, 2021). On the other, hand a study conducted on storytelling methods in EFL, confirmed participants displayed greater interest in second language learning when these two storytelling methods were introduced. It changed the learning attitudes of the students as they found the learning to be more fun, enjoyable and attractive which enabled them to pay more attention in the classroom (Ahmad & Yamat, 2020).

Speaking skill is a multifaceted construct. In other words, it is so intertwined with daily interactions that it is difficult to define. In addition, various fields of study— linguistics, psychology, anthropology, and sociology—have informed speaking. (Gumperz, 1999, p. 98). It therefore becomes harder to compile a concise yet comprehensive definition of speaking. The best we can do is to define speaking by its feature, its functions and its conditions. Viewing from its feature, speaking could be defined as a social, multi-sensory speech event, whose topic is unpredictable. Speaking is social, in the sense that it establishes rapport and mutual agreement, maintains and modifies social identity, and involves interpersonal skills (Thornbury and Slade, 2006, p. 17). This social element is expressed through wishes, feelings, attitudes, opinions and judgments, which can clash with the formal nature of the classroom when teaching speaking. According to Gumperz (1999), speaking is cooperatively constructed which is based on contributions, assumptions, expectations, and interpretations of the participants' utterances (p. 101). Since it is cooperative, it becomes a negotiated, self-regulated process (Nunan, 1999, p. 226; Sayer, 2005, p. 17) that is segmentally created through short, frequent turns consisting of phrases and clauses (Thornbury and Slade, 2006, p. 13). This cooperative discourse is motivated by interactive rules and routines (Dornyei and Thurrell, 1994, p. 42) where these structures guide how silence, volume, intonation, conventional language, information and norms of interaction are used (Applegate, 1975) to organize speaking. This organization is culture-bound as conversational routines are implemented differently in different countries (Richards, 1980, p. 419). Dornyei and Thurrell (1994) highlight the features of conversational routines as being openings and closings, turn-taking mechanisms and adjacency pairs such as greetings and apologies. Speaking is also a multi-sensory activity because it involves paralinguistic features

such as eye-contact, facial expressions, body language, tempo, pauses, voice quality changes, and pitch variation (Thornbury, 2005, p. 9) which affect conversational flow.

In addition, speaking is topically unpredictable and therefore native speakers tend to have a “linguistic repertoire” of regularly used phrases (Gumperz, as cited in Yorio, 1980, p. 434) that help create various speaking. In relation to the teaching of speaking, these rules, routines, and linguistic features would be valuable to highlight in a speaking class. Based on its function, speaking is a way to verbally communicate for mostly interpersonal and somewhat transactional purposes (Nunan, 1999, p. 228). Interactional language engages people for social reasons as illustrated previously. Transactional language is for service encounters like ordering drink or booking a ticket. However, these purposes are usually intertwined (Thornbury and Slade, 2006, p. 20) and so the distinction between interactional and transactional language seems to be used for language learning awareness.

Viewing from the condition when it takes place, speaking usually happens when people are face-to-face (Van Lier, 1989, p. 492), which makes it highly interactional and social. However, Thornbury and Slade (2006, p. 23) point out that ‘computer-mediated communication’ shares many conversational characteristics where face-to-face may not be the only way to have a conversation. Speaking happens in a small group of people with a minimum of two. It happens within shared contexts such as in situational, institutional, social and cultural environments (Thornbury and Slade, 2006, p. 15). Speaking takes place in real time and demands spontaneous decision-making and improvisation leading to a very dynamic discourse (VanLier, 1989, p. 493; Nunan, 1999, p. 226). In summary, speaking is a specific spoken discourse that is primarily social and engaged in for social purposes and in social contexts. It entails three areas of knowledge (Burnkart, 1998). First, the mechanical elements of language (pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary), which allows the speaker to use the right words in the correct sequence and appropriate pronunciation. Second, the speaking functions (transaction and interaction), which enables the speaker to know when the clarity of the message is needed (as in carrying out the transaction or in exchanging of information) and when a deep understanding is not necessary (as in the development of relations). Third, the sociocultural norms (such as turn-taking, rate of speech, length of pauses between speakers, relative roles of participants) which

enable an individual to realize the conversational situation, whom he is talking to, and what the purpose of speaking is.

By understanding these elements, an individual will know when he takes a turn to speak and when to listen, how quickly he should speak, and how long he should pause. In relation to language teaching, Applegate (1975) stresses that “communication can only be effective when the student is sensitive to the social and cultural aspects of language use and how these differ between his first and second language” (p. 271). Speaking classes must be guided by the elements of conversation as previously mentioned and the means to generate genuine conversation. In other words, to succeed speaking classes, the uses of correct approach, interesting activities, proper equipments, and high motivation are necessary.

2.4 Challenges of female students in EFL learning speaking class room

Various researchers have developed taxonomies of factors influencing second/foreign language learners’ attitude which in turn affects their language proficiency, including personality factors, educational factors, social factors, and others like age and sex (Ehrman, 1996, p. 192; McDonough & Shaw, 1993, pp. 7–8; Spolsky, 1989, pp. 25–29; Van Ellis et al., 1984, pp. 115–124). Besides, Conteh (2002, pp. 192–193) supports the belief of some applied linguists that factors such as social context, learner personality (self-confidence, risk taking and anxiety), learning conditions, learning process and learning outcomes influence the attitude of students and the way language is learned.

2.4.1 Learners’ gender and language learning

In almost all class room in Ethiopia, there are female and male students. Zafar and Meenakshi (2012) stated that one of the factors as influencing individual learner differences in language learning is sex. Language and gender have a big contribution to the learning process because males and females have a different ability which affects different achievement, especially in learning a foreign language. Dealing with female ability in speaking English, some experts say that females are better than males students (Smith & Wilhelm, 2002). Similarly a research conducted by Ismiati (2013) pointed that female students were found to be better in English speaking skill compared to the male.

However, study conducted by Erdiana, N., Bahri Ys, S., & Akhmal, C. N. (2019) found that male students were more active and confident when they responded to questions in the teaching-learning process, participated actively in tasks, made lots of guesses, and called out answers when they took the speaking subject. In line with this study, Graddol and Swann's (1989) research on classroom interaction showed that boys contribute twice more than the girls to the classroom talk both in terms of number of turns taken and the number of words uttered.

2.4.2 Student related factors

A female student learning speaking skill in English is challenged by their related factors such as background of the female students, poor background speaking experience and their beliefs about language learning. In Ethiopia, most of population is rural resident as language acquisition starts from living area and interaction or practice between individuals.

According to John Atikns (1995), English is a more difficult language for rural children to learn than for those children living in urban areas. This is shortage of books and other reading materials in English, availability of fewer models of good English and lack of practice opportunities with peers and other community affect the development of students speaking skill. Due to this, they cannot express their ideas and opinions appropriately.

Female student failure to participate during oral activities could be the result of their poor background speaking practice. The result of study conducted by Keong et al., (2015) showed that the lack of English speaking practice, the tendency of mixing the language, and the absence of speaking activity are the main reasons leading to students' speaking difficulties. The interaction patterns in class play a very important role in the students' speaking performance.

That is it would seem that many students learn English through traditional methods, in which they usually listen to the teacher who often covers the majority of classroom talks. Furthermore, it could appear that less focus is given to speaking skill as compared to the weight given to mastery of language knowledge. Thus, some female students might performance less in their oral production, perhaps, because they may not get sufficient opportunity to practice extended oral interaction, or perhaps, because text books may not give more genuine speaking activities with adequate time or perhaps, because teachers' teaching techniques or strategies of dealing with oral

activities may not generate female students active participation. Consequently, the female students' oral proficiency is limited (Bygate, 1987).

Alasmari (2015) investigated the barriers that hinder the oral proficiency of Saudi preparatory year students and English language teachers at English language center, Taif University. The study sampled 142 students from Taif University. Results showed that attitudes of students towards English language, frequent use of students' mother tongue not only outside the campus but also inside the classroom with their peers and teachers, their inability to command proper pronunciation, appropriate grammatical structures, necessary vocabulary items, their hesitance to use the target language in front of their class fellows because of their fear of making mistakes etc. were major oral barriers.

2.4.3 Self-confidence

Unless female students develop the confidence to use the target language to communicate their meaning or ideas, they could not feel secured whenever they are to speak in front of the others in a class. Therefore, if female students give sufficient opportunity to apply and exercise their knowledge of the language their various classroom oral interactions they would gradually gain and build in the confidence to speak out freely in English.

According to Shumin (1997:9-10) some of the reasons why some students fail to speak English fluently and confidently are: extreme anxiety occurs when EFL learners become tongue tied or lost for word in an expected situations, which often leads to discouragement or a general sense of failure... some students are concerned with how they may be judged by others. They are very cautious about making errors... fear of making mistakes could be the reasons for their inability to speak without any hesitation.

2.4.4 Anxiety

There appears to be a consistent relationship among personality, anxiety, the learning situation and language proficiency. Ehrman (1996, p. 137–8) indicates that a variety of feelings accompany learning, and range from positive to less pleasant feelings or attitudes. Negative feelings or attitudes include frustration, anger, anxiety, lack of self-confidence, and these affective factors may influence the learning event as well as how much language a learner can

learn and achieve in a given time. According to Spolsky (1989, p. 114), anxiety in foreign language classes is often related to listening and speaking, with difficulty in speaking in class.

The most significant barrier to learn the speaking skill is lack of confidence. Female students are more likely than male students to report considerable anxiety at participating orally. In other words female students are more likely to experience a negative affective response to oral communication in small group setting. In comparison, female experienced negative emotions frequently while male experienced them occasionally. Males and females differed in the way that they perceived and faced situations, and in how they regulated the emotions generated by these situations. Méndez López, M. G., & Bautista Tun, M. (2017).

2.4.5 Educational context

Apart from informal situations where the learner may have the opportunity to learn and speak the target language in the community, school offers formal learning of the target language to the learner. Conteh (2002, p. 193) indicates that the factors influencing learners' attitudes and the learning situation are "general atmosphere of the learning, the classroom dynamics, opportunities for student-student and student-teacher interaction, and students' perception of the teacher's commitment to their learning". Educational contexts include the learning situation that is how language is learned, the English language teacher who considers how variables like physical, social and cultural differences that influence the learning-teaching process in to an account, and the teaching-learning materials.

2.4.6 Learning situation.

The methods by which students are taught have some effect on their learning particularly on female students learning speaking skill. The traditional approaches to language teaching were primarily depending on the structure of the language. It didn't consider the functions of language for communication purpose. The goals of learners in such instruction are often to pass an examination rather than to use the language for daily communication.

Atkins et al (1995) stated that the traditional approach implies teacher dominated class were "say this but don't say that" kind of instruction dominates. One of the responsibilities for the teacher is therefore believed to be correct students' errors and provide explanations of correct grammar rules and word meanings. The tasks of the students are seen to be to receive knowledge

transmitted by the teacher, memorize and reproduce. It is inevitable that in such situation many students will feel-reluctant to participate because of fear of making mistakes and being laughed at by peers.”

The trend in our country Ethiopia exclusively grammar based approach to teaching does not guarantee the female students to develop high levels of accuracy and linguistic knowledge. In fact it is, often very difficult to determine what such learners know about the target language, as the classroom emphasis on accuracy usually results in students who are inhibited and will not take chances in using their knowledge for communication.

2.4.7 Teacher related factors.

Favorable feelings and experiences with the teacher, classmates and materials can forge positive attitudes towards learning a second language (Day & Ford, 1998, p. 25). A learner who has better interaction with his teacher may develop a positive attitude towards the target language than those who have less interaction.

According to Measor and Sykes (1992) Teachers interacts with boys more often than with girls by a margin of 10 to 30 percent. The possible reason for the difference is boys are speaking up more frequently in discussion, and then the teacher may be forced to pay attention to them.

Graddol and Swann’s (1989) research on classroom interaction showed that boys contribute twice more than the girls to the classroom talk both in terms of number of turns taken and the number of words uttered. It seems that boys are good at taking advantages of the sources available, such as achieving more attention from the teacher by calling out answers, making noise and other undisciplined behaviors, and making use of the silence or cooperation of the girls. Teacher’s conscious intervention on the gender balance of classroom participation accounts speaking skill.

Larsen and Long (1991, p. 179) state that teachers’ attitudes towards the learners are important variables that can affect the attitudes of learners as well as the quality and quantity of the learning which takes place and the linguistic outcomes for the learner. The other important thing that goes on with teachers in the learning-teaching situation is the attitudes of learners’ towards the classroom situation because learners who feel at ease in the classroom, and who like the teacher, may accept the teacher as a “source of intake”. Furthermore, positive attitudes towards

the classroom situation and the teacher may result in self-confidence and integrative motivation, thereby enhancing language acquisition (Krashen, 1988, p. 23).

2.4.8 English as a foreign language teaching material.

The last educational challenge of the learners and the learning and teaching English as a foreign language is to be considered here is the stock of resources which the teacher is able to exploit. According to Wilkins (1974, p. 47), resources are not an adjunct, but an integral part of the learning situation and therefore limited resources impede the language achievement. The presence or absence of resources like textbooks, workbooks, writing paper, pens/pencils, chalk, blackboard, wall-pictures, tapes, tape recorder, television, radio, reading material and a library, all influence the attitudes of learners and the learning situation (Wilkins, 1974). Tomlinson (1998, p. 18) states that materials should take learners' different affective attitudes into an account, and suggests that positive feelings towards the target language, teachers, and the learning materials would enhance the learning situation. Alongside this recognition of the importance of affective factors and the use of authentic texts in learning, Guariento and Morley (2001, p. 347) argue that there has been a growing awareness that simplicity of tasks to maintain or increase learners' motivation does not sacrifice authenticity. Similarly, the affective strategy that needs to be taken into an account is the use of materials that tap into or stimulate learners' interest, in order to increase motivation and positive attitude in the learning of English language. By embedding learners' interest and willingness in materials, learners practice to activities that will naturally elicit their curiosity and desire for understanding (Wlodkowski, 1993, p. 158). Motivated learners are more cooperative and psychologically open to learning which may enhance information processing. According to Wilkins (1974, p. 84), developing materials in a second or foreign language with learners' needs may trigger learners' intrinsic interest in the communicative ability so that in their desire for successful achievement.

2.4.9 Learners' peer groups

Learner peer group has a remarkable influence on his or her attitude towards learning a foreign or second language. Concerning their role, Morgan (1966, p. 601) reports, "whatever the reason operating in any given case, the outcome is that an individual's peer may shape views as well as behavior more than his/her parents do". Furthermore, Brown (1994) says the following in pointing out the role of the learner's peer group:

Attitudes are like aspects of the development of cognition and affect in human Beings, develop early in the childhood and are the result of parents' and Peers' attitudes, contact with people who are different in any number of ways, and interacting affective factors in the human experience. These attitudes Form a part of one's perception of self, of others, and of the culture in which one is living. (p. 168)

Onwards, their childhood most of high school students have developed intimacy with their parents and peer groups. Their previous cumulative experience helps them develop their attitude either positively or negatively towards their parents and peer groups. They may have a lot of experience in role taking and role playing with their peer groups, and they develop common interest. Therefore, they may have similar interest, feeling or attitude, in common with certain individual difference. Membership and acceptance in particular groups is often contingent upon the attitudes one expresses peer groups such as class, unions, sororities, fraternities, and churches differentially reinforce the expression of certain attitudes relevant to the group (Morgan, 1986, p. 390).

2.4.10 Learners' age and language learning.

The learners' age is one of the characteristics which determine the way in which an individual approaches second language learning. But the opportunities for learning (both inside and outside the classrooms) the motivation to learn, and an individual differences in aptitude for language learning are also important determining factors in both rate of learning and eventual success in learning the target language (Lightbown and Spada, 1993). Age has received considerable attention from sociolinguistics. According to Chambers and Trudgill (1980), as cited in Ellis (1994, p. 201), in England the younger generation 10–19 years) used nonstandard variants while middle-aged speakers (30–60 years) preferred the standard variants. But, older speakers (70+years) demonstrated the use of non-standard variants, although not to the same extent as the younger generation. Chambers and Trudgill seek to explain this pattern by suggesting that younger speakers are subject to social pressures from their peer group. But the middle-aged speakers have less cohesive and social networks and are more influenced by social values. In retired old people, social pressure lessen and social network become narrow (Ellis, 1994).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter focuses on the research methodology of the study. The chapter first describes the research design (section 3.1) and then it discusses the study population along with the samples and the sampling techniques (section 3.2). Following this, it provides explanations concerning the data gathering instruments (section 3.3). Next comes discussions on validity and reliability issues of the tools used (section 3.4). Then, it presents the procedure of data collection (section 3.5), followed by description of the methods of data analysis (section 3.6). Finally, it provides information regarding ethical considerations followed during data collection, (section 3.7).

1.1. Research Design

Research design is the way to arrange the study and collect the data based on research problems (Kothari, 2004). To this end, descriptive research design involving both qualitative and quantitative techniques was used in the study. This descriptive design was chosen because it could enable the researcher to gain information concerning the current status of female students' perspectives, their level of participation in speaking classroom and challenges they face. So, it helps the concerned bodies to design relevant and authentic activities that enable to develop female students' level of participation in their EFL classroom. Furthermore, since descriptive study was concerned with the development of generalizations, extending its conclusions beyond the samples observed, the researcher assumed the method to be appropriate for the analysis of the issue under investigation. Moreover, the inclusion of both qualitative and quantitative techniques helps the researcher to draw valid conclusions for advance planning of the methods to be adopted for collecting the relevant data and techniques were used during analysis.

3.2. Study Population and Sampling Technique

3.2.1. Study Population

According to Crosswell (2012) population is a group of individuals who have some common characteristics that the researcher can identify and study. Thus, the current study population were female students who were learning in grade nine at Agaro secondary school in the academic year. This grade level was chosen for two reasons. The first reason was that the staff members

were familiar to the researcher, as a result of which, it was assumed to be suitable to make frequent classroom observations and to get the required collaboration for the study. The second reason is that it is a transition period of the students from primary cycle to secondary school where they need special support to help them familiarize themselves with the next educational environment and grade level.

In addition, the researcher believed that conducting study at this level would help to lay a profound foundation for the learners by detecting learners' problem early and tackle them accordingly, which in turn enable to bring intended improvement on the learners in general and females in particular. The third reason is that the researcher didn't come across a study conducted on female students' perspectives and their level of participation in EFL speaking class and challenges they face at the selected school; therefore, the researcher felt that the study would fill a gap.

In Agaro high school, there were 15 sections of grade nine students (500 students) in which 300 were males and 200 were female. For this study, from the total population of 200 female students in 15 sections in the schools, the researcher selected 7 female students from each section that is the total of 105 were selected as sample of the study to have a representative sample.

3.2.2. Sampling Technique

The sampling techniques used in the present study was simple random sampling particularly lottery method to gather the necessary data from the respondents using questionnaire, interview and focused group discussion. Random sampling technique was employed to give equal chances of selection for the whole population.

3.3. Data Gathering Instrument

3.3. Data Gathering Instrument

To answer the research questions both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected using three data collecting instruments. Thus, questionnaire, in depth interview, and classroom observation will be employed for the study to collect the necessary data. For quantitative aspect closed end

ed questionnaires will be designed whereas for qualitative part in depth interview and classroom observation will be used to address the research question mentioned in introduction.

3.3.1. Questionnaires

Questionnaires were used as data collection instrument to collect relevant data from the sample female students' who are attaining their education at grade nine Agaro secondary school. The questionnaires were selected not only because it was the most common data gathering tool, but also it helped to collect a great deal of information within the time limit and helps to reach large group of research subjects (Kothari, 2004). The questionnaires will be designed to gather information female students about their level of participation in EFL class and challenge of female students in EFL class . To gather the data from the students a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree was used to assess female students' level of participation.

3.3.2. In-depth interview

The second data gathering instrument was interview. Accordingly, structured in-depth interview was used in the study to generate the data needed from female students on challenges of participation they faced while attaining English class. The structured in-depth interview allows the researcher to investigate the different opinions of female students on the challenges they face in their EFL class and their perspective enrich the depth of data collected. In addition, the data gathered using interview help to triangulate the data obtained through questionnaire from female students in the school.

3.3.3. Classroom observation

As to Kothari (2004), Observation is the collection of information by way of investigator's own observation, without interviewing the respondents. The information obtained relates to what is currently happening and is not complicated by either the past behavior or future intentions or attitudes of respondents. This method is no doubt an expensive method of qualitative data collection and helps to eliminate subjective bias. Thus, classroom observation was used in this study to gather about female students' level participation and challenges they face in the progress of learning in EFL class.

3.4. Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

According to Carmines and Zeller (1979) define the validity of an assessment or tool indicates the extent to which it is an adequate measure of what is intended to measure whereas, Reliability shows a measure of consistency in measuring the same phenomena and gives the same response under similar circumstances (Ary, et al.2010). In another word, validity and reliability are the important parts for the researcher to cogitation in selecting the instruments.

To ascertain the validity of the instruments' expert opinions were sought from advisors, lecturers , and peers on the face, content, and format of questionnaires. Based on the comments that were obtained from the aforementioned bodies, the necessary improvement was made on irrelevant, unclear, lengthy items and layout of the questionnaires and test before administering to the actual participants of the study. Regarding the reliability of the instruments, a pilot test was conducted to 10% of the study participants at the school before actual data collection to secure the reliability of all the instruments. Hence, doing so helped to check whether or not the items included in the instrument would enable the researcher to gather relevant information.

The pilot test results were also taken as firsthand information about how to evaluate and give feedback on the relevance of the contents, difficulty level of the items, length and clarity of items . Furthermore, the reliability of the tools was also checked in the piloting phase of the study using Cronbach's Alpha. Thus, the results indicated 0.812 Alpha values. These results showed the instruments used were reliable since their value was above 0.70 which were acceptable.

3.4 Procedures of Data Collection

The process of data collection via the two instruments described above was carried out as follows. Firstly, a support letter obtained from Jimma University was submitted to the administrations of Agaro secondary school, and the purpose of the study was explained. Then, permission was obtained from the school to collect data from the respondents. Next, the purpose of the study was explained to the study participants prior to the administration of the instruments. Following this, the questionnaires and the test were piloted to make necessary improvement and make ready for administration of study samples. Then, the questionnaires and test were

administered within a week interval for the participants of the study. It was done so to avoid duplication of responses, clarify questions and maximize return rate. Finally, the data collected through questionnaire, in depth interview and classroom observation were arranged, analyzed, and interpreted using appropriate procedure.

3.6. Data analysis Methods

Merriam (1998, p.178) sets the principles of data analysis as following: *“Data analysis is the process of making sense of the data. Making sense of the data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read -it is the process of making meaning.”*

To analyze the data that was obtained through different instruments, both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods was used in the study. The quantitative data that was collected from EFL female students analyzed using simple descriptive statistic (i.e., frequency, and percentage) using SPSS version 21. In addition, the data that will be collected from female students through interview and classroom observation by the researcher was analyzed qualitatively using narrative paragraphs.

3.7. Ethical Issues

Conducting social science research includes collecting data from a variety of individuals and following ethical issues is considered one of its main conditions need to be fulfilled (Wellington, 2000). Ethical practice is a moral stance that involves researching to achieve not just high professional standards of technical procedures, but also respect and protection for the people actively consenting to be studied (Payne & Payne, 2004). These scholars added that ethical issues can relate to the researcher's integrity in using resources, collecting data, and reporting findings. Therefore, a research undertaking must fulfill these requirements and meet ethical standards stipulated by respective institutions.

Firstly, to provide proof for the legitimacy of the study, before starting the data collection process a confirmation letter was obtained from Jimma University that declares the legality of the researcher's work. By this fact, upon arrival to the study area before data collection, the

researcher made first-hand contact with the administration of the study area, and create awareness about the intent of the study. They were clearly informed as the purpose of the study was purely academic. After further discussions held with these officials, the research project was granted permission.

Subsequently, sample students were clearly informed that the data gathered through questionnaire would be used only to generating data for the study, and were informed that their participation in the study was based on their consent. Besides, the researcher informed that the results obtained from respondents during data presentation, analysis, and interpretation would not be personalized or used for any kind of assessment other than the intended purpose. Accordingly, data was collected properly from the sample participants and all the materials used for the study were properly cited and duly acknowledged.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

As has repeatedly been stated so far in the study, the purpose of this study was to investigate female students' perspectives and level of participation in speaking classroom and to assess the challenges they encountered when they were attempted to participate. In this chapter, the results of the study were presented using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation. The interpretation of the findings was presented in the discussion part. The sequences of the presentation were based on the data collection instruments, so the data collected using questionnaire were presented first. Then, the necessary data that were gathered using interview items were explained, and finally the data gained using the classroom observation were presented using thematic analysis.

4.1 Data Gathered Using Questionnaire

In order to investigate female students' perspectives, level of participation and challenges of participating in speaking skills, a survey was employed using questionnaire which included only close ended items. Quantitative data analysis method was used to present and analyze these close ended items. The questionnaire has three parts so that the data collected in each part were presented by taking the variables such as perspectives, level of participation and challenges as sub-themes. First, female students' perspectives (views) towards the participation they and other female students have in speaking class were presented. Each item of the questionnaire provided information about how sample students viewed active classroom participation especially in speaking classes. Secondly, the close ended items of the questionnaire were presented and analyzed. Finally, the challenges that could be hindering factors to female students' classroom participation were presented.

4.1.1 Female Students' Perspectives

The first part of the questionnaire included twelve items to assess female students' perspectives towards classroom participation in the speaking class. How female students view their classroom participation was presented and the data gathered from them were analyzed briefly. The following table shows the data gathered from the respondents.

Table 1: Sample Female Respondents' Perspectives towards their Participation

No	Items	Scales	N	%	Mean	St.D
1	Participation in the classroom can be indicated in taking responsibility to learning.	Strongly Disagree	5	4.7%	3.38	.848
		Disagree	10	9.3%		
		Agree	30	28.0%		
		Strongly Agree	60	56.1%		
2	Participation in the classroom means simply orally answering the questions asked.	Strongly Disagree	9	8.4%	2.92	1.007
		Disagree	30	28.0%		
		Agree	26	24.3%		
		Strongly Agree	40	37.4%		
3	Participating in English classroom has advantages to improve macro and micro language skills.	Strongly Disagree	7	6.5%	2.84	.962
		Disagree	37	34.6%		
		Agree	27	25.2%		
		Strongly Agree	34	31.8%		
4	Students' speaking skill did not improve because they have not participated in English classroom.	Strongly Disagree	13	12.1%	2.87	1.020
		Disagree	23	21.5%		
		Agree	34	31.8%		
		Strongly Agree	35	32.7%		
5	Students' speaking skills can be improved when they are using the opportunities they get to speak.	Strongly Disagree	11	10.3%	3.03	1.051
		Disagree	23	21.5%		
		Agree	23	21.5%		
		Strongly Agree	48	44.9%		
6	Students' speaking skills can be enhanced by having active classroom participation.	Strongly Disagree	6	5.6%	3.30	.878
		Disagree	11	10.3%		
		Agree	33	30.8%		
		Strongly Agree	55	51.4%		
7	Active participation in group discussion is helpful to improve students' speaking skills.	Strongly Disagree	6	5.6%	3.16	.982
		Disagree	20	18.7%		
		Agree	30	28.0%		
		Strongly Agree	49	45.8%		

8	Efficient use of class time for active participation is necessary to be effective speakers in the target language.	Strongly Disagree	2	1.9%	3.04	.932
		Disagree	28	26.2%		
		Agree	39	36.4%		
		Strongly Agree	36	33.6%		
9	In the classroom female students are not given equal chances to participate in the speaking lesson.	Strongly Disagree	11	10.3%	2.76	.976
		Disagree	32	29.9%		
		Agree	33	30.8%		
		Strongly Agree	29	27.1%		
10	Female students have low participation in the classroom because they are shy to do so.	Strongly Disagree	18	16.8%	2.70	1.200
		Disagree	41	38.3%		
		Agree	46	43.0%		
		Strongly Agree	---	---		
11	Female students are not willing to participate in speaking class because of their nature urges them to be silent.	Strongly Disagree	11	10.3%	2.96	1.037
		Disagree	25	23.4%		
		Agree	26	24.3%		
		Strongly Agree	43	40.2%		
12	Teachers' support helps female students' active participation in the classroom.	Strongly Disagree	10	9.3%	3.10	1.043
		Disagree	22	20.6%		
		Agree	21	19.6%		
		Strongly Agree	52	48.6%		

The first item of the above table was stated as: “*Participation in the classroom can be indicated in taking responsibility to learning.*” As has clearly been seen from the data, 4.7% and 9.5% of the sample female students replied that they strongly disagree and disagree with the given item. The sum total of these percentages was 14.2%. Nevertheless, the percentages of respondents who strongly agree and agree with the first item were 56.1% and 28% respectively. The percentages of respondents who agree was more than the percentages of the respondents who disagree with the items. The mean value (3.38) with the standard deviation .848 substantiates the finding that was stated that more female students had the view that participation could be indicated in taking responsibility to learn speaking skills.

In the second item, sample female students' were requested to indicate their view to the item stated as: "*Participation in the classroom means simply orally answering the questions asked.*" 3.4% of the strongly disagree with this item and 28% of them disagree. However, the percentages of respondents who strongly agree and agree were 37.4% and 24% respectively. The sum total of the percentage which was 61.4% showed that majority of female students view orally answer and ask questions was as the meaning of participation. 2.92 and 1.007 were the mean value and the standard deviation results that support the finding. This is to say that many female students consider participation as any form of oral reflection in the classroom.

The third item was stated as: "Participating in English classroom has advantages to improve macro and micro language skills." The percentages of female students who strongly disagree and disagree with this view are respectively 6.5% and 34.6%, whereas the percentages of the sample students who show their strong agreement and agreement are 31.8% and 25.6% respectively. This data display that majority of the respondents have viewed that participating in speaking classroom improves macro and micro language skills. The mean value (2.86) with the standard deviation (.962) also substantiates the finding that participation improves all language skills.

The percentages of the respondents 31,8% and 32.7% respectively agree and strongly agree with the item stated as: "*Students' speaking skill did not improve because they have not participated in English classroom.*" However, 12.1% and 21.5% of them strongly disagree and disagree with this item. This result portrays that majority of the female students agree that speaking skills could not be improved if they did not participate in the classroom. The mean value (2.87) with the standard deviation (1.020) assures the findings imply that in order to improve speaking skills learners should have active participation.

The fifth item requests sample female students whether their speaking skill is improved when they are using the opportunities they get to speak in the classroom. While 10.3% of them strongly disagree, 44.9% of the respondents strongly agree with the items. Though 21.5% of the sample students disagree with the items, equal percentage of respondent (i.e., 21.5%) agree with the given item. 3.03 and 1.059 which are the values of the mean and the standard deviation portray that majority of sample female students view using opportunity in the classroom helps students to improve their speaking skills.

Sample Female students were requested to show their view towards the seventh item which was stated as: “Active participation in group discussion is helpful to improve students' speaking skills.” Majority of the respondents (i.e., 45.5%) strongly agree with the statement and 26% agree with this item. Contrary to this, 5.6% and 18.7% respectively strongly disagree and disagree with the seventh item. This finding is substantiated with the mean value (3.16) with the standard deviation (.982). This is to say that most of the sample female students have viewed that active participation in group discussion improves their speaking skills.

Sample female students were requested to indicate their view towards the eighth item that was stated as: “*Efficient use of class time for active participation is necessary to be effective speakers in the target language.*” The percentages the respondents who strongly disagree and disagree with this statement are 1.9% and 26.2% respectively. Nonetheless, the percentages of sample female students who strongly agree and agree with this statement are respectively 33.6% and 36.4%. The mean value with the standard deviation is also 3.04 and .982. This finding displays that majority of the sample students have viewed that using the class time efficiently plays great role in improving the speaking skills.

Item 9 was stated as: “*In the classroom female students are not given equal chances to participate in the speaking lesson.*” The percentages of samples that strongly disagree and disagree with this item are 10.3% and 29.9% respectively. However, 30.8% and 27.1% of them respectively agree and strongly agree with the item. In addition, the mean value (2.78) with the standard deviation (1.200) shows that most of the sample female respondents have viewed that low participation in the classroom can be the result from their not getting equal chance to participate in speaking class.

As has been seen from item 10, no sample students have shown their strong agreement with the item stated as: “*Female students have low participation in the classroom because they are shy to do so.*” Although the percentages of sample students who strongly disagree and disagree are 16.8% and 38.3% respectively, 43% of them indicate their agreement. This data show that more female students have not viewed that their shyness is the result of their low participation in the speaking class. The mean with the standard deviation values which are 2.70 and 1.200 respectively showed that their shyness could not be the result of their having low participation in the speaking classroom.

The cause of female students' unwillingness to participate in speaking class is due to their nature of being calm and silent was the main theme of item 11. 40.3% of the respondents strongly agree that they are unwilling to participate in speaking class because female naturally are calm and silent. This idea was not acceptable for 10.3% and 23.4% of respondents, whereas 24.3% of the respondents agree that their being calm and silent make them not willing to participate in the classroom. The mean value (2.87) with the standard deviation (1.037) also indicate that many of the female students have the perspective towards female natural being have impact on their classroom participation.

Item 12 is about female students' perspective towards the contribution of teachers' support for female students' classroom participation in speaking class. The percentages of the sample female students who strongly disagree and disagree are respectively 9.3% and 20.6%. Contrary to this, the percentages of the respondents who indicated their strong agreement and agreement are 48.6% and 19.6% respectively. This result is substantiated by the result of the mean value (3.10) with the standard deviation (1.043). This data imply that majority of the students identify that their English teachers' support plays significant role.

In general, from the findings of the collected data on female students' perspectives towards their participation in speaking class, it was observed that in most of the items sample female students have viewed their participation positively. This result can be clearly seen from the grand mean value that is 3.01. This means that majority of female students view active classroom participation can improve their speaking skills. Having favorable view is not enough in order to enhance the required speaking skills. Therefore, female students' participation and the level of the participation they have should be assessed using questionnaire items.

4.1.2 Female Students' Participation in Speaking Class

The second part of the closed ended item of the questionnaire included statements that ask sample female students to show their participation and level of participation in the speaking class. Eight items were included in this second part of the questionnaire. The following table shows the results of the data collected using the items in the second part:

Table 2: Sample Female Respondents' Participation in speaking class

No	Your participation in speaking class via	Scales	N	%	Mean	St.D
1	Answering the question asked by your teacher.	Low	29	27.1%	2.14	.823
		Moderate	32	29.9%		
		High	44	41.1%		
2	Asking questions when you do not understand the lesson	Low	38	35.5%	1.89	.776
		Moderate	41	38.3%		
		High	26	24.3%		
3	Doing activities given in the classroom.	Low	56	52.3%	1.71	.840
		Moderate	23	21.5%		
		High	26	24.3%		
4	Discussing issues with your partner in English.	Low	62	57.9%	1.60	.792
		Moderate	23	21.5%		
		High	20	18.7%		
5	Taking representative role in group discussion.	Low	52	48.6%	1.82	.886
		Moderate	20	18.7%		
		High	33	30.8%		
6	Presenting the group discussion in the whole class.	Low	43	40.2%	1.70	.652
		Moderate	51	47.7%		
		High	11	10.3%		
7	Using any opportunity to improve your speaking skills	Low	36	33.6%	2.01	.838
		Moderate	32	29.9%		
		High	37	34.6%		
8	Responding orally to the feedback you get from your teacher	Low	41	38.3%	1.82	.757
		Moderate	42	39.3%		
		High	22	20.6%		

The first item of the second close ended items of the questionnaire is intended to see their participation in answering the question asked by your teacher. 41.1% of the sample female students replied that they have high participation in answering when questions asked in the

speaking class. Additionally, 29.9% of them replied that they have moderate participation in such occasion, whereas 27.1% of the respondents indicate that they have low participation in answering questions. The mean value (2.14) with the standard deviation (.825) shows that sample female respondents have above moderate participation in answering the questions asked in the speaking class.

In the item 2, sample female students were requested to show their participation in asking questions when they did not understand the points that were raised in the speaking class. Though 35.5% of them replied that they have low participation in asking questions, 38.3% of them stated that they have moderate participation in asking questions. Additionally, 24.3% of them replied that they have high participation in such scenario. The mean value (1.89) with the standard deviation (.778) shows that majority of sample students have moderate level of participation in speaking class during asking questions.

Sample students' participation in doing activities given in the classroom was the point rose in the third item. The percentages of sample respondents who have moderate and high level of participation in doing such activities are 21.5% and 24.5% respectively. This result is less than the percentage of respondents who have low participation level (i.e., 51.1%). The mean value (1.71) with the standard deviation (.840) displays that majority of the sample students have below moderate level of participation in doing activities in the speaking class.

In item 4, students were requested to indicate their level of participation in discussing issues with your partner in English. 57.9% of the sample female respondents indicated that they have low participation in doing activities in the classroom with their partners. The percentages of sample students who replied that they have moderate and high level of participation in this situation are 21.5% and 18.7% respectively. This results show that majority of female learners have low level of participation in doing activities with their partners. This finding is also substantiated with the result of the mean value (1.60) with the standard deviation (.792).

Item 5 requests whether female students take the representative role in group discussion or not. 48.6% of the sample female students replied that they have low level of or participation in taking the role of being representative of the group. Though 30.8% of them indicate that they have high role, 18.7% of them state they have moderate level of participation in taking the role of being

representative of the group discussion. This finding is also substantiated by the mean and standard deviation values that are 1.82 and .886 respectively.

Whether sample female students have high or low level of participation level in presenting the group discussion in the whole class was the main theme of item 6. Though 10.2% of the respondents said that they have high level of participation in such scenario, 40.2% of them replied that they have low level of participation. However, 47.7% of them state they have moderate level of participation in presenting the group discussion to the whole class. The mean value (1.70) with the standard deviation (.652) shows that majority of the respondents have below moderate level of participation in presenting the group discussion to the whole class.

Item 7 requests the sample female students whether they participate in speaking class in using any opportunity opened in the classroom to improve their speaking skills. 37.6% of them replied that they have low participation in using the opportunity they get in the classroom, whereas 34.6% of them said that they have high participation level. Additionally, the respondents who indicate that they have moderate level of participation in such situation is 29.9%. This result shows that more female participants have above moderate level of participation in involving in any opportunity to improve their speaking skills. This finding is supported by the results indicate in the mean value (2.01) with the standard deviation (.838).

In item 8, the sample female students were asked to show the level of participation in responding orally to the feedback they got from their teacher. Although 20.6% of them replied that they have high level of participation, 38.9% of them state they have low participation level in such situation. Contrary to this, 39.2% of them replied that they have moderate level of participation in responding orally to the feedback given by their teachers. This result displays that majority of the respondents have moderate level of participation. This level is also substantiated by the mean value (1.87) with the standard deviation (.757).

In short, the findings in line with sample female students' level of participation in speaking class show that most of the female students have moderate level of participation. The descriptive statistics that are frequencies, percentages, mean values and standard deviation show this finding. This findings imply that majority of the female students have below moderate level of participation in speaking classroom.

Furthermore, these sample female students were asked how they evaluate the level of all Female Students' participation in speaking class. The following table displays the result of their responses:

Table 3: Female students' Participation in speaking class

Level of all Female Students' participation in speaking class				
Scales	N	%	Mean	Standard Dev.
Very Low	27	25.2	2.12	.855
Low	46	43.0		
High	24	22.4		
Very High	8	7.5		

As can be seen in the above table, the percentages of sample female students who replied that all female students have low and very low level of participation are 43% and 25.2% respectively. However, the samples who replied that female students have high and very high level of participation in speaking class are respectively 22.4% and 7.5%. It is found out that the sum of the percentages of respondents who said female have low and very low participation (i.e., 68.2%) is greater than that of the ones who say that the percentage of respondents who say females have high and very high level of participation (29.9%). This finding is also substantiated with the mean value (2.12) with the standard deviation (.885).

The result clearly shows that the participants' response portrays that majority of female students have below average level of participation in speaking classes. Sample respondents were requested to rate the causes of low level of female participation in speaking classes. Therefore, based on the above item of the questionnaire, sample students were asked to rate 'Yes', 'Not sure' or 'No' scales for the possible causes of the female students' having low or very low level of participation. The values to these rating scales are 1 = No; 2 = Not sure and 3 = Yes. The respondents' responses to these scale were presented in descriptive statistics forms such as frequencies (N), percentages (%), mean and standard deviation (St. D). The following table shows the findings collected from the respondents:

Table 4: Causes of low participation level

No	Causes of low level of Participation	Scales	N	%	Mean	Std. D.
1	Anxiety (fear)	No	5	4.7%	2.86	.469
		Not Sure	5	4.7%		
		Yes	95	88.8%		
2	Shyness	No	5	4.7%	2.89	.445
		Not Sure	2	1.9%		
		Yes	98	91.6%		
3	Low level of willingness (motivation)	No	6	5.6%	2.86	.489
		Not Sure	3	2.8%		
		Yes	96	89.7%		
4	Lack of knowledge of the subject matter	No	18	16.8%	2.61	.766
		Not Sure	5	4.7%		
		Yes	82	76.6%		
5	The attitude they have from the society about female	No	8	7.5%	2.79	.567
		Not Sure	6	5.6%		
		Yes	91	85.0%		

The above table shows that the possible causes of female students low participation level in speaking class. According to the data gained on item 1, 88.8% of the respondents replied that anxiety is one of the main causes in female students' showing low level of participation in speaking class. Though 4.7% of them stated that anxiety can never be the cause of low participation, 4.7% of the respondents are not sure about considering anxiety as one of the factors. The mean value (2.86) with the standard deviation (.469) substantiates the result that anxiety is one of the causative factors of low participation in speaking class.

Sample female students were asked to indicate whether shyness is one of the factors that contributes a lot for low level of participation. Though 4.7% of the respondents replied that their shyness is the cause for their having low participation in speaking class, 91.6% of them indicate

that females' nature of being shy is one of the contributing factors that cause low level of participation in speaking class. The mean value which is above the average level (i.e., 2.89 with the standard deviation .445) substantiates the finding indicated in percentage. Therefore majority of the female students consider that their shyness is one of the contributing factors for low level of participation.

In item 3, the sample female students were asked whether 'low level of willingness' can be one of the causative factors for female students' low level of participation, 2.8% of the respondents are not sure about this item, and 5.6% of them state that low level of willingness is the cause to female students low level of participation in speaking classroom. However, 89.7% of the respondents believe that their low level of participation in speaking class is resulted from their low level of willingness to participate the skill. The mean value (2.86) with the standard deviation (.489) also displays that majority of the sample students indicate that one of the low level of classroom participation can be the result of low level of willingness.

Sample students were also requested whether lack of knowledge of the subject matter can result in low level of participation in speaking class. 16.8% of the respondents indicate that lack of knowledge of the subject matter can never be the cause for low level of classroom participation, whereas 76.6% of the sample students express that lack of knowledge of the subject matter and issue rose in the lesson can cause low level of participation. The result shows that majority of the respondents believe that low participation can be resulted from lack of knowledge to the issue raised in the discussion. This finding is supported by the mean value (2.61) with the standard deviation (.766).

Finally, sample female students were requested whether the attitude they have to the speaking lesson can cause the low level of participation. 7.5% of the sample female students state that their attitude to the speaking lesson cannot result in low level of participation, whereas 85.5% of the sample respondents replied that the attitude they have towards speaking lesson can cause low level of classroom participation. This result is also seen from the mean and standard deviation values which are 2.79 and .567 respectively. This result shows that majority of the samples believe that attitude might contribute to the low level of participation.

4.1.3 Challenges Female Students Face to Participate in Speaking Lesson

Assessing what challenges that female students face when participating in the classroom was one of the objectives of the study. Using close ended items of the questionnaire, the researcher attempted to survey the challenges female student face in participating in speaking class. The following table displays the data collected on the challenges:

Table 5 Challenges Respondents face in Participating in speaking classroom

<i>No</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Scale</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>St. D</i>
1	In our nature we females are created to be cool and silent in various aspects of life.	Strongly Disagree	---	---	3.40	.659
		Disagree	10	9.3%		
		Agree	43	40.2%		
		Strongly Agree	52	48.6%		
2	Culturally, females are accepted as the respected ones if they are calm and not to talk much.	Strongly Disagree	7	6.5%	3.31	.913
		Disagree	11	10.3%		
		Agree	29	27.1%		
		Strongly Agree	58	54.2%		
3	Female students have low willingness to participate in the classroom.	Strongly Disagree	6	5.6%	3.41	.840
		Disagree	6	5.6%		
		Agree	32	29.9%		
		Strongly Agree	61	57.0%		
4	Female students are afraid of talking in front of many people.	Strongly Disagree	4	3.7%	3.32	.803
		Disagree	10	9.3%		
		Agree	39	36.4%		
		Strongly Agree	52	48.6%		
5	Pressure from male students makes females not participate in speaking classroom.	Strongly Disagree	3	2.8%	3.46	.707
		Disagree	4	3.7%		
		Agree	40	37.4%		
		Strongly Agree	58	54.2%		
6	Male students' taking the role of speaking hinders female students to have low participation.	Strongly Disagree	5	4.7%	3.18	.818
		Disagree	12	11.2%		
		Agree	47	43.9%		
		Strongly Agree	41	38.3%		
7	Teachers' giving chance of participation to male students makes female students' have low participation in speaking classes.	Strongly Disagree	7	6.5%	3.30	.643
		Disagree	5	4.7%		
		Agree	43	40.2%		
		Strongly Agree	50	46.7%		

8	Teachers do not urge female students to take role in group discussion.	Strongly Disagree	10	9.3%	3.13	.971
		Disagree	13	12.1%		
		Agree	35	32.7%		
		Strongly Agree	47	43.9%		
9	Female students do not participate when the topic of the speaking lesson is difficult to be understood.	Strongly Disagree	9	8.4%	3.19	.942
		Disagree	11	10.3%		
		Agree	36	33.6%		
		Strongly Agree	49	45.8%		
10	Female students do not participate when the issue raised in the speaking session is unfamiliar to them	Strongly Disagree	12	11.2%	3.03	1.014
		Disagree	16	15.0%		
		Agree	34	31.8%		
		Strongly Agree	43	40.2%		

As can be seen in item 1 of the above table, no one strongly disagrees with the statement that is stated as: *“In our nature we females are created to be cool and silent in various aspects of life.”* Though 9.3% of the respondents disagree with the idea that females naturally silent and cool, however, the percentages of the respondents who agree and strongly agree are 40.2% and 48.6% respectively. The mean and standard deviation results which are 3.40 and .659 respectively also show majority of the sample respondents the naturally being silent and calm.

The second item is about females are expected to be calm and not talk much to get respect in the society. 54% of the sample female students strongly agree with this item, whereas only 6.5% of them strongly disagree with this statement. Additionally, the percentage of the sample students who agree with the idea of females’ being calm to get respect is 54.2%, while 27.1% of they disagree with the statement. This data show that majority of the students agree that they become calm and silent in order to get respect from the society. This finding is substantiated by the mean and standard deviation values which are 3.31 and .913.

“Female students have low willingness to participate in the classroom” is the third item. The percentages of respondents who strongly disagree and disagree are similar; that is 5.6%. Nevertheless, the percentages of respondents who agree with this item is 29.9%. Additionally, 57% of the respondents strongly agree with the statement. Most of the respondents agree that low willingness is one of the challenges. 3.41 and .849 are the mean and standard deviation values

that directly support the idea that is indicate low willingness can cause low participation in the classroom.

Item 4 requests sample students whether female students are afraid of talking in front of others in the classroom. Majority of the sample students (i.e., 48.6%) strongly agree with the idea that female students' fear makes them to have low level of participants, whereas 3.7% of the strongly disagree with this statement. The percentages of sample respondents who disagree with item 4 is 9.3%, while 36.4% of them agree with the feeling of fear results in low participation. The data showed that majority of the sample female respondents consider that their anxiety can be one of the challenges that they encountered. The mean and standard deviation results are respectively 3.32 and .803. This result substantiates the finding gained from the frequency and percentage.

Item 5 is stated as: "Pressure from male students makes females not participate in speaking classroom." The percentages of sample female students who strongly disagree and disagree with the statement are 2.8% and 3.7% respectively. However, the majority of the sample students agree and strongly agree with this item. The percentages are respectively 37.4% and 54.2%. This result is also substantiated by the mean value (3.46) with the standard deviation (.707).

Item 6 is about "*Male students' taking the role of speaking hinders female students to have low participation.*" 4.7% of the respondents strongly disagree with this item, and 11.2% of them also disagree with this item. However, the percentages of sample respondents who strongly agree and agree are 38.3 % and 43.9% respectively. Majority of the students agree that role given to male students can also be the challenge they face. The mean value (3.18) with the standard deviation (.818) supports the findings that male students' taking most of the role in discussions in the classroom is one of the challenges female students face in speaking class.

The seventh item is about teacher's giving chance for participation. 46.7% of the sample students strongly agree with the item stated as: "*Teachers' giving chance of participation to male students makes female students' have low participation in speaking classes.*" In addition, 40.2% of the respondents indicate their agreement with the statement. Nevertheless, the percentages of the sample respondents who strongly disagree and disagree with the seventh item was 6.5% and 4.7% respectively. The mean value (3.30) with the standard deviation (.643) also displays that

teachers; giving chance of participation to male students is one of the challenges they face when they attempt to participate in the classroom.

“Teachers do not urge female students to take role in group discussion” is the eighth item. 9.3% of the respondents strongly disagree with this item, and 12.1% of them also disagree with the statement. Contrary to this, the percentages of sample respondents who agree and strongly disagree with this item are 32.7% and 43.9% respectively. The mean value (3.13) with the standard deviation (.971) also shows that majority of the students consider that not getting encouragement from the teachers is one of the challenges that hinder female students’ classroom participation in speaking class.

Item 9 is stated as: *“Female students do not participate when the topic of the speaking lesson is difficult to be understood.”* The percentages of sample female student who strongly disagree and disagree with the statement are respectively 8.4% and 10.3%. On the other hand, the sample female students who strongly agree and agree with the ninth statement are 45.8% and 33.6% respectively. This means that majority of the students agree that female students’ participation becomes low when the topic is new to them. This data are also substantiated by the values of the mean (3.19) with the standard deviation (.942).

As can be seen from the tenth item of the questionnaire, though 11.2% of the respondents strongly disagree new and unfamiliar issues are the challenges they encounter, 40.2% of them strongly agree with this item. In addition, 31.8% of the respondents agree that involvement in the new and unfamiliar issues is the challenges they face, but 15% of them do not consider this as challenge. The mean value (3.03) with the standard deviation (1.014) display that majority of the samples agree that new and unfamiliar issues are the challenges that create hindrance to their participation in the speaking class.

In general, it was found out that low level of willingness, anxiety and shyness are the challenges that rose form personal factors. In addition, the challenges can also be created from teachers and the environment they learn speaking. Unfamiliar and new issues raised in the speaking class can also be challenges they face in learning and participating in speaking class.

1.4.Challenges grade nine female students encounter when participating in EFL classroom

Data obtained from the participants of the study indicated female students faced various problems ranging from their personal to institutional to promote their English language skills. As the interview result indicated, students' experience at elementary school, a home culture that student's absence of exposure to English language skills, and teacher's method of teaching were the main themes that participants reported.

Data obtained from observation also indicated female students were/are participate when the teacher pushes them to participate. As the interview result indicated, students were/are forced participation found because of different factors. Interviewees reported that female student's low volunteer participation was attributed to a shame followed by guilt of participation if the answer the provided is not correct, teacher's weak perception and inspiration to give a chance for female students as equal as male students were problems encountering female students.

On the other hand, English language participation is affected by student's self-efficacy and perfectionism anxiety. Few interviewees reported that:

English language subject is difficult and when I speak, write or ordered to do some activities; if I make an error, I feel that the teacher may not treat me emphatically when I respond the wrong answer it will be bad for my morale for students may reproach me.

1.5.Measures that grade nine female students take to alleviate the challenges

As the study indicated, female students at ASS used various coping mechanisms and problem management strategies. As student's responses from open-ended questionnaires and interviews indicated, many students apply passive coping measures in which they remain silent particularly in oral participation when the teacher is in the classroom. However, few students reported that they tried to speak, write, and master vocabularies in a form of peer-based study and evaluation. Very few of them read additional EFL-related books and materials. As the interview result also indicated, students develop a sense of contest in promoting EFL skills; particularly, writing and vocabulary skills.

One of the interviewees from student participant reported that:

I think our academic life background is one of the determinants and a potential source of challenge to EFL skills. When we were in elementary school, since we took English subject as a single subject and we learned other subjects in Afan Oromo, soon we join high school we could not have the confidence to participate as frequently as we want. To,

change this fear, even though few students have an intergroup or between peers sense of competition, student's sense of contest among them to promote English language speaking skills alone cannot count significant change in student's skill. As obviously known, when we turn back to home, our parents and social environment we dwell in making communication in day to day life activities in the local language or home-based languages which is different from the English language.

4.2 Analysis of Data Gathered from Interview

Student's class participation particularly in language learning is most important in the acquisition of various language skills.

What are female students' perspectives towards their participation in learning speaking skills in EFL class?

The present study pointed out grade nine female students' perspective towards EFL class participation that students had inadequate inspiration and they perceive English language is difficult to master. Similarly, study conducted by Riadil (2020) showed student's perspectives towards English language participation found it hazy for students to believe mother tongue is easier than EFL and they regularly use mother tongue out of the classroom and even within the classroom. Even though female students' have a relatively promising perception regarding EFL class participation at an ideal level, as a result of fear of criticism and negative feedback from the teacher; and worry about personal self-efficacy in mastering language skills, students had a hazy view towards EFL class participation. Similarly, Wonder, (2021) also suggested worrying about making mistakes worry about being criticized, feeling shy and lack of topical knowledge which has the notion of learners self-efficacy were typical problems that students face in EFL class participation.

What is the level of female learners' participation in learning the language speaking skills?

Karafi and Oguz, (2019) confirmed that students' participation in EFL class was at slightly appropriate level in terms of behavioral engagement. This study detailed that students' have the appropriate level of emotional and cognitive engagement and a slightly appropriate level of behavioral engagement (Karafi and Oguz, 2019). The present study also indicated very few

grade nine female students made low level frequent participation whereas large number of grade nine female students was not frequently participate particularly in terms of behavioral manifestation of classroom participation.

As the study from the observation also indicated, large number of female students shows their participation only through listening to the subject teacher and even when subject teacher ask questions the preferred to remain silent.

What are the challenges that female students encounter when they participate in English classrooms in speaking skill?

On the other hand, regarding problems female students face, similar to the present study that confirmed students are facing problems like lack of English language skills, poor self-efficacy, shay, anxiety, teachers mode of treatment when students participate, a study conducted by Patau(2018)also indicated that highest factor affecting students' participation in speaking English is lack of basic language skills (grammar and vocabulary) and feedback during activities (lecturer to students).

What are the measures that are taken by female students to minimize the impacts of the challenges they face when participating in learning language speaking skills?

The present study suggested that female students try to overcome challenges they faced in EFL classrooms when participate in speaking skill mostly applying passive coping strategies like holding their feelings silent rather than externalizing, asking others, or speaking out about their difficulties. Moreover, the present study revealed, students, read try to solve problems they encountered through reading different books and taking a time to write up easy essays that students them self-evaluate and give feedback to each other. On the other hand, very few female students are creative and flexible in their response to new demands and classroom atmosphere. In relation to students measure to overcome problems they faced in EFL class participate in speaking skill, even though there is significant body of literatures, Leki(1995) and Dhakal(2018) very few number of students perceive tasks easy and engage in tasks like writing and evaluating one's own and other work to promote language skills.

Summary of The result

In general, from the findings of the collected data on female students' perspectives towards their participation in speaking class, it was observed that in most of the items sample female students have viewed their participation positively. This result can be clearly seen from the grand mean value that is 3.01. This means that majority of female students view active classroom participation can improve their speaking skills.

Majority of the female students had below moderate level of participation in speaking classroom. Majority of the samples believe that attitude might contribute to the low level of participation. Low level of willingness, anxiety and shyness are the challenges that rose form personal factors. In addition, the challenges can also be created from teachers and the environment they learn speaking. Unfamiliar and new issues raised in the speaking class can also be challenges they face in learning and participating in speaking class.

Discussion

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CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter discloses the finding of the present study comparing with other previous studies. In addition, the study provided a conclusion that helps to understand the inferences of the researcher based on the data collected using various instruments of data collection. Finally, this section divulges recommendations to pertinent bodies.

5.2. Conclusions

The present study was guided by four basic research questions that focused on female students' perspectives towards participation, the extent of student participation, challenges they faced, and measures they take to manage the problem. The study concluded that female student's perspective towards participation is positive and promising at the perception level; yet, the practical experience of student's perspective indicates weak. Grade nine female students of Agaro secondary school have ideal resilience to promote their language skills but, they think that the English language is difficult and needs special and additional support to outshine in English language skills.

Moreover, students' level of participation in general (mean) indicated $M=2.7826$; $SD.46921$ that divulges a weak level of participation. Thus, very few female students showed less frequency of active participation.

The study also indicated female students of Agaro secondary school were facing various problems related to students themselves, the teacher's emphatic mode of providing feedback, and the English language-oriented home-based culture. Of these, students' fear of nitpicking, parental support to speak English at home, and teacher's initiative feedback and perception of giving chance as equal as male students were few challenges.

1.3. Recommendations

Student classroom participation is a notion that seeks the emotional, psychological and physical engagement of students in learning and it needs intervention participation, positive perception, and contribution of various school systems and communities. Thus, the present study forwarded the following recommendations by taking into account the problem identified through the investigation.

- ☞ English language subject teachers should incite English Language communication within and outside the classroom.
- ☞ Agaro secondary school should also create a welcoming and interactive English language promoting programs that enhances female student's participation and language self-efficacy.
- ☞ Agaro secondary school should facilitate parent- the school-professionals hub that accelerates female student's language skill resilience.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

Jimma University

College of Social Sciences and Humanities

Department of English Language and Literature

Questionnaire to be filled in by Students

Dear Students,

The questionnaire is designed in order to gather data on the research entitled: “EFL Female Students’ Perspective towards and level of participation in speaking classroom and challenges the face.” You are kindly requested to give your responses for each items of the questionnaire. Your genuine corporation in responding the questions contributes a lot for the accomplishment of the study. Any information that will be gathered from you is kept confidential. Besides, do not write any form of identification including your names because the questionnaire is used for the purpose of research. The experience that you share in line with the items will not have any harm on you, but very important for the success of this study.

Thank you in advance for your genuine cooperation.

General Instruction:

When you answer the question:

- Please give due emphasis to the given instructions.
- Give your answers according to the instructions, please. If the questions require a tick mark, put a tick mark, and if they need explanation, put your answers in the space provided.

Part 1: Female Students' Perspective towards Participation in Speaking Class

Put a (✓) tick mark to show your agreement against the views stated in the table. Show the level of your agreement using the rating scale: 1 = strongly Disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

No	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	Participation in the classroom can be indicated in taking responsibility to learning.					
2	Participation in the classroom means simply orally answering the questions asked.					
3	Participating in English classroom has advantages to improve macro and micro language skills.					
4	Students' speaking skill did not improve because I have not participated in English classroom.					
5	Students' speaking skills can be improved when they are involved in the classroom participation.					
6	Students' speaking skills can be enhanced by having active classroom participation.					
7	Active participation in group discussion is helpful to improve students speaking skills.					
8	Efficient use of class time for active participation is necessary to be effective speakers in the target language.					
9	In the classroom female students are not given equal chances to participate in the speaking lesson.					
10	Female students have low participation in the classroom because they are shy to do so.					
11	Female students are not willing to participate in speaking class because of their nature urges them to be silent.					
12	Teachers should urge female learners to have active participation in the class?					

Part 2: Level of female Students' participation in Speaking Class

2.1 Put a tick mark to show the level of your participation in speaking classroom.

No	Your participation in	The level is		
		Low	Moderate	High
1	Answering the question asked by your teacher.			
2	Asking questions when you do not understand the lesson			
3	Doing activities given in the classroom.			
4	Discussing issues with your partner in English.			
5	Taking representative role in group discussion.			
6	Presenting the group discussion in the whole class.			
7	Using any opportunity to improve your speaking skills			
8	Responding orally to the feedback you get from your teacher			

2.2 In general, how do you indicate the level of classroom participation of all female students in speaking class? It is

Very low
 Low
 High
 Very High

2.3 If your response for number 1 is “Low” and “Very Low”, what do you think the reasons are?

According to your view, are the following points the possible causes of “Very Low” or “Low” level female participation? Put a tick mark in the boxes against each item.

No	Items	No	Not sure	Yes
1	Anxiety (fear)			
2	Shyness			
3	Low level of willingness (motivation)			
4	Lack of knowledge of the subject matter			
5	The attitude they have from the society about female			

Part 3: Challenges of Female Students' Participation in Speaking Classes

Put a tick mark to show agreement with the statements that state the challenges of female students' participation in speaking class: (1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree).

No	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	In our nature we females are created to be cool and silent in various aspects of life.					
2	Culturally, females are accepted as the respected ones if they are calm and not to talk much.					
3	Female students have low willingness to participate in the classroom.					
4	Female students are afraid of talking in front of many people.					
5	Pressure from male students makes females not participate in speaking classroom.					
6	Male students' taking the role of speaking hinders female students to have low participation.					
7	Teachers' giving chance of participation to male students makes the female students' have low participation in the speaking classes.					
8	Teachers do not urge female students to take role in group discussion.					
9	Female students do not participate when the topic of the speaking lesson is difficult to be understood.					
10	Female students do not participate when the issue raised in the speaking session is unfamiliar to them.					

Appendix B

Interview question for female students

Part III: Dear students this interview is designed to identify female student's perspectives, level of participation, challenges and coping strategies followed by female students in their English classroom. So, please kindly, forward your opinion regarding the aforementioned points.

I thank you in advance for your willingness to participate in the interview.

- 1. How do you see your participation in EFL class? Do you think you are participating equally with male students in the same class?*
- 2. Are there any challenges you face in the classroom regarding participation when you learn English subjects?*
- 3. If your response to question number "2" is yes, please would you tell me what problems you face?*
- 4. What measures do you take to overcome these problems and how good the measures you took/taking make you effective in mastering EFL skills?*

Appendix C
Observation checklist

Code _____

Date _____

Topic: _____

Period _____

S.N	Activities to be observed	Alternative s		Remarks
		Yes	No	
1.	Ask a question to get more information			
2.	Give attention to the teacher			
3.	Attempted to do their work thoroughly			
4.	Seem to know what is going on in the class			
5.	They are not withdrawn and are communicative			
6.	Raise their hands to give volunteer information			
7.	Get discouraged and stop trying when a faced obstacle			
8.	Easily frustrated			
9.	Participate actively in the discussion			
10.	Participate only when the teacher pushes them to participate			

General strength and weakness observed:

Strengths: _____

Weaknesses: _____

