Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies

Volume 42, Issue 4, Page 124-143, 2023; Article no.AJESS.98774
ISSN: 2581-6268

Factors Affecting Spoken Competency in English of Rural and Urban Students in Bhutanese Middle Secondary Schools

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/AJESS/2023/v42i4929

Open Peer Review History:
This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/98774

Original Research Article

Received: 12/02/2023
Accepted: 15/04/2023
Published: 24/04/2023

ABSTRACT

The study aimed to examine the factors affecting the spoken competency of rural and urban students in Bhutanese Middle Secondary schools. The study employed a convergent mixed method design with the data collection tools of classroom observations, student survey questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews with teachers and students. Five English teachers (3 Males, 2 Females) and 243 students (114 Males, 129 Females) from both rural and urban areas participated in the study. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive (mean and standard deviation) analysis by means of a statistical package for social science (SPSS) and the qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The results indicated that the spoken competency of rural and urban students is affected by factors both inside and outside of the school. Language teachers, other subject teachers, non-teaching staff such as librarians, peer influence, teaching strategy, and student attitude are the factors. Furthermore, findings showed that there is no English-speaking environment and no strict policies in both rural and urban schools. If there are strict rules and policies with proper follow-up; there will be an improvement in English-spoken competency. The mean difference from quantitative findings displayed that rural students are not encouraged to speak English as much as urban students. The findings also confirm that both rural and urban

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students do not have adequate opportunities to speak English. Therefore, the findings recommend that despite the difference in family background, parents, as well as teachers, could motivate the students to speak English even outside the school. The finding also recommends that the school could develop substantial policies such as guidelines or language policies at school that will genuinely help students to develop their spoken competency. Moreover, the respective school teacherscreate a conducive environment so as to expose the students to the target language as the teacher is exemplary to create an English-speaking environment.

Keywords: Rural; urban; spoken competency; similarities; differences.

ABBREVIATIONS

BCSEA	:	*Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment*
BLSS	:	*Bhutan Living Standards Survey*
DEO	:	*Dzongkhag Education Officer*
FGD	:	*Focus Group Discussion*
FGD1S1	:	*Focus Group Discussion 1 Student 1*
FGD2S1	:	*Focus Group Discussion 2 Student 1*
FGDS1	:	*Focus Group Discussion Student 1*
MoE	:	*Ministry of Education*
NNC	:	*New Normal Curriculum*
NSB	:	*National Statistics Bureau*
PHCB	:	*Population and Housing Census of Bhutan*
REC	:	*Royal Education Council*
RT1	:	*Rural Teacher 1*
RT2	:	*Rural Teacher 2*
SPSS	:	*Statistical Package for Social Science Software Program*
UT1	:	*Urban Teacher 1*
UT2	:	*Urban Teacher 2*
UT3	:	*Urban Teacher 3*

1. INTRODUCTION

Among the four basic language competency, one of the competencies is the speaking competency. Speaking is defined as the learner's ability to express himself/herself orally, coherently, fluently and appropriately in a given meaningful context [1]. Speaking is the most important skill to acquire while learning a language [17]. In order to be a competent speaker, a person must be able to compose a message and provide ideas and information suitable to the topic, purpose, and audience [30]. According to Oxford Advance Dictionary by Hornby, competence is (of person) having ability, power, authority, skill, and knowledge. Speaking competency is the ability of organizing and synchronizing both the knowledge of the language and the skills of the language in real-life use or other word, in real communication. According to English Curriculum Framework, secondary school students must have spoken competency for expressing opinions and ideas, interacting and collaborating, and developing social and cultural understanding. Thus, in this study, spoken competency is the capability of the students in secondary schools to speak in English and the ability to transmit ideas and information orally in a variety of situations with the proper structure which is clear enough so that people can understand what is said.

Since Bhutan is changing in every aspects, English has become crucial and one should be able to speak English properly to survive with the time [36] states that in the Bhutanese setting, despite the fact that English is the medium of teaching, oral fluency and communication skills are given minimal weight. They have mentioned that the teachers should not ignore the perverse culture that prevails in today's schools, where English is only spoken in class and never outside of it. Therefore, in the globalized world spoken competency is considered important to communicate effectively and efficiently. Spoken competency should be viewed as a vital skill required in everyday life as well as a tool for achieving achievements and not just for passing the examination. However, in Bhutanese setting English speaking culture is seen in official

meetings, and trend to some high class people or else English is spoken only in the classroom. [7] paper, Building Students' Oral Fluency Perspectives on the Use of Spoken English in Bhutanese Classrooms, asserts that teachers use the target language with students in the classroom, and not many use it with them beyond the classroom [21] states that the parents today encourage their children to speak and learn the English language instead of their heritage language and even the babies are taught other words and languages, not mother tongue. The above discussion concludes that despite some encouragements from the parents and other several transformation like curriculum change, and the evolution of technology in schools, students' spoken competencies remain poor. Hence, indicating that the English speaking needs to be improved to make the Bhutanese students competent enough to conquer this present era.

In schools of Bhutan, English is a concern which affects students' self-esteem and their learning. Former Education Minister Norbu Wangchuk, pointed out in the kuensel news report titled, "Teachers to receive English language training" that, despite English as the medium of instruction in the schools, students are graduating without the desired proficiency in the English language [61]. Moreover, [18] remarks that the expectations from teachers and parents for the students to excel in English are high, but students are found lagging behind in the subject. He also stated that English teachers in Bhutan consider English as a more challenging and difficult subject. The rural cultural setting affects the proficiency level of English among the students in rural schools [39] [31] also stated that students in the rural areas performed poorly in English compared to their urban counterparts. Similarly, this happens in Bhutanese schools where the majority of teachers considers inferior on the spoken competency of the rural students. The research on Poor English language proficiency hinders generic skills development: A qualitative study of the perspectives of first-year medical students by McLean et al. showed that students acknowledged that poor English language skills had hindered the development of their communication skills (2012). It is also found that because of their low English proficiency, it forefronts low proficiency in speaking English.English being the second language, students face difficulties speaking in English confirming thatlow English proficiency equates low spoken competency.

Despite the fact that it is the twenty-first century, and as a teacher for more than five years, I have also noticed that the many students face difficulties in speaking English in the classes I have taught so far.A case study of English-medium education in Bhutan by [38] stated that in Bhutan, there are perceived differences in English proficiency levels between urban and rural students, with urban students understood to have higher levels of English proficiency overall and in rural areas English is less prevalent to the students with no opportunities to practice English outside of school which indicated that the implementation of Bhutan's policy of English-medium education should further research and inquiry about the urban-rural differences on the practise of English language. [31] mentions that many educators, researchers, legislators and the general public believe that students from rural schools mostly receive an education that is inferior compared to the students that live in the urban areas. He mentions that this is not because teachers of rural schools are untrained and urban are trained. Rather it is that rural teachers believe that students of rural schools are incapable or do not have competency by nature, which is an unacceptable of the teachers. This is further supported by [37] declaration that as compared to the learners from urban areas, learners from rural areas face more difficulties during the process of language acquisition. The majority of parents in urban areas are educated unlike rural areas where there are only few educated parents. As a result, the domestic setting aids students from urban areas in swiftly learning the language.

It has also become crucial to study the factors that contribute to the enhancements of the spoken competency particularly in rural and urban students and measure whether the factors have same impacts on the rural and urban students. This is one of the major concerns in Bhutan, although the schools organise appropriate activities such as literary feasts, debates, and speeches, as well as speaking exercises, to help students improve their communication skills. Bhutanese students exhibited poor competences in their speaking during the interviews when they conducted the research on communicative competences of secondary school students of Bhutan [9]. Further, the study School Education in Bhutan: Policy, Current Status and Challenges by Gyeltshen and Zangmo (2020) [28] indicates that a growing gap exists between the learning achievements

between rural and urban children that students in urban areas are performing better than students in rural areas. Therefore, this study will attempt to explore the differences in the spoken competences in English of rural and urban students.

1.1 Aims and Objectives

The aim of this study was to identify the factors affecting spoken competency in English of rural and urban students of secondary schools in Bhutan. This research also:

- Identified the factors that affects the spoken competency in English of rural and urban students in Bhutanese secondary schools
- collected the opinions of teachers on spoken competency of the rural and urban students
- Identified the different strategies adopted by the rural and urban teachers to develop spoken competency in students.
- Examined the factors that impact student's spoken competency within the school as well as outside the school.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What are the factors that affects the spoken competency in English of rural and urban students in Bhutanese secondary schools?
2. What are the opinions of teachers on spoken competency of the rural and urban students?
3. What are the different strategies adopted by the teachers to develop spoken competency in students?
4. What are the factors that impact student's spoken competency within the school as well as outside the school?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Approach

In order to fulfil the aims and objectives of this research, the mixed methods were carried out to get both qualitative and measureable findings of the research. Mixed methods research is an approach to inquiry involving collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data, and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks [16]. The research fulfilled aims of finding out the different factors affecting their spoken competency in students of rural and urban schools in Bhutan through both quantitative and qualitative method.

2.2 Research Design

The researcher used the convergent parallel mixed methods because the ways to integrate the quantitative and qualitative data, the convergent parallel mixed methods design helps the researcher to converge or merge quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem [14]. The data collected from the students' questionnaire and the data collected from interview question of teachers was merged to find out the valid findings. Moreover, in this design, the investigator typically collects both forms of data at roughly the same time and then integrates the information in the interpretation of the overall results. Contradictions or incongruent findings are explained or further probed in this design [16]. Therefore, this design was convenient for collecting data from rural and urban area and then analysing the data differences which was further investigated.

2.3 Sampling Plan

The researcher employed purposive sampling method to choose the sample as the author intentionally wanted to select the individuals and sites to understand the central phenomenon based on the convenience of the author [14]. In the process of selection of the research participants, criteria such as level of schools, gender representation and rural-urban locations was considered.

2.3.1 Sampling population/participants for the study

Non-probability (purposive) sampling was used for qualitative method. Non-probability sampling is a sampling procedure that will not bid a basis for any opinion of probability that everyone will have equal opportunity to be a part of the sample [24]. The study used purposive sampling technique for the teacher participants as this study selected the teacher teaching English in grade seven and eight in secondary schools both in rural and urban schools. Total of 5 English teachers (3 urban and 2 rural) and 20 students (8 urban and 12 rural) were interviewed. The participants for focus group interview was selected from grade seven and eight. The

participants were selected randomly from the identified class level that was from grade seven and eight. The total of 223 students participated in survey out of which 60 students were from rural and 163 were from urban.

2.3.2 Study area

The intend of the study is to find out the spoken competency of rural and urban secondary schools of Bhutan so data was collected from the students and teachers (English) of one urban secondary schools under Punakha and one rural secondary school under Sarpang dzongkhag. The selection was done rural and urban school respectively to identify whether there is a difference in the spoken competency of rural and urban students. Punakha dzongkhag is situated in western Bhutan, bordered by Gasa to the north, Thimphu to the west and Wangduephodrang to the east and south. The dzongkhag has 100% access to electricity and mobile coverage and has Community Centres established in all the gewogs where people can avail banking services and credit facilities. Khuruthang Middle Secondary School is located near Khuruthang a town in the Punakha District of Bhutan. It was founded in 1996, and by 2015 it had become the largest school in Punakha district, with 1109 students. Sarpang dzongkhag is located in the central part of southern Bhutan. Sarpang is one of the developing socio-economic zones in Bhutan. Jangchubling Middles secondary school is located at Chuddzomgewog under sarpang dzongkhag which is 65 kilometers from Dzongkhag Head Quarter. There are less than 400 students at Jangchubling MSS. Some students had to walk to school for about 15km, as villages are scattered [46]. The study areas are selected with an aim of collecting data from different schools to find out reliable and authentic results. It is likely that the difference in spoken competency of students and teachers will differ based on the society they live in and the level of exposure they get.

2.4 Data Collection Tools

The data was collected through Semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and classroom observation.

2.4.1 Semi-structured Interview

The interview is used as the principal means of gathering information, having a direct bearing on the research objectives and also used in conjunction with other methods of research undertaking [12]. Views of the teachers were collected through semi-structured interviews. Five teachers from the two secondary schools under the selected district were interviewed. Semi-structured qualitative interviews for individuals and groups gather data on the more intangible aspects of the school's policies. A set of open-ended questions were used to interview both the teacher participants and student participants. The study aimed for a semi-structured interview with the participants, which helped to collect the participants' opinions. The interview was audio recorded which was transcribed for further analysis.

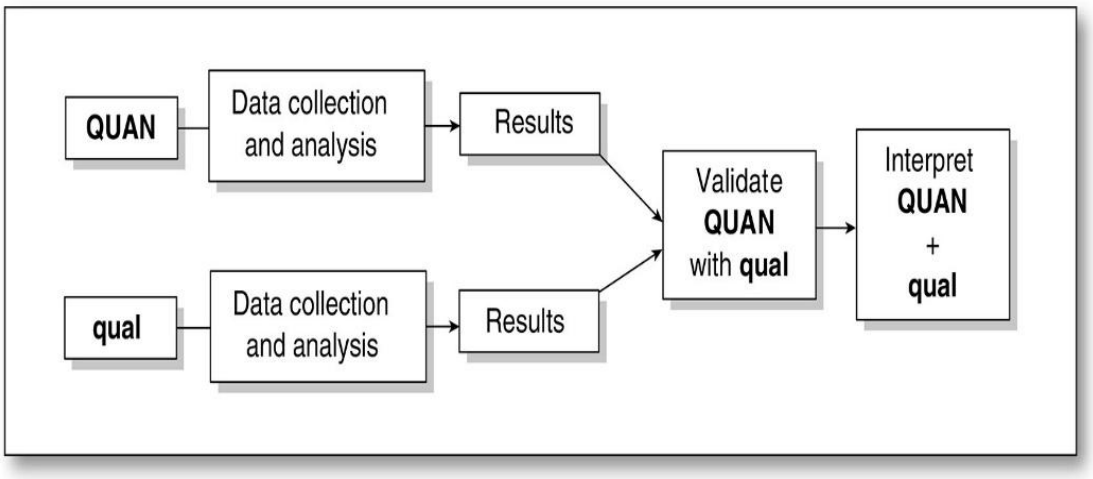

Fig. 1. Convergent mixed methods design
Note: Adapted from W. Alex Edmonds & Thomas D. Kennedy (2017)

2.4.2 Questionnaires

Questionnaire surveys, use commercially available instruments, each of which measures different aspects of school's culture. Based on the literature review and to meet the objectives of the research, a closed format questions questionnaire was designed to collect data from participants. Likert scale was set to identify the factors that enhance spoken competency of students and challenges of spoken competency as questionnaires provide quantitative and qualitative methods of data gathering. Moreover, using Likert scale was helpful to generate accurate data on the varieties of strategies practiced in rural and urban schools to help students improve their speaking skills.

2.4.3 Class observation

The classroom observations were done when one of the English teacher participants was teaching English. The researcher observed four classes each in rural and urban adopting non-participant observation. In non-participant observation, the researcher studies their subjects from the sidelines - they don't participate or integrate themselves into the lives of the group they are studying. Non-participant observation can be either structured or unstructured. Structured non-participant observation involves some sort of observation schedule. Before they begin their observation, researchers make a list of behaviours that they expect to see. They then use this list to tick off what they see [41]. Every activities of the students and the teachers such as the process and the frequency of students speaking during the lesson was noted. The researcher also observed how students interact with teacher and their friends during the lesson. The lesson was recorded for proper validation with consent from the participants. The researcher followed an observational protocol for recording information while observing. The observation protocol includes descriptive notes (portraits of the participants, a reconstruction of dialogue, a description of the physical setting, accounts of particular events, or activities) from reflective notes (the researcher's personal thoughts, such as "speculation, feelings, problems, ideas, hunches, impressions, and prejudices) [11]. The field notes were triangulated with the questionnaire and interview data collected.

2.5 Focus Group Interview

The data collection for interviews were collected through focus group discussion. A focus group is a qualitative data collection approach. According to Denscombe [19], "a focus group is a small group of people, usually between six and nine people, who are brought together by a trained moderator (the researcher) to study attitudes and perceptions, feelings and opinions about a topic" (2007, p.115).

2.6 Data Analysis

After data collection the qualitative and quantitative data was collected in the study as it is a mixed method. The data collected from the qualitative and quantitative method was separately analysed. The data collected through qualitative methods such as interviews and class observation was analysed thematically. Thematic analysis is a common method of presenting data from the qualitative method. The thematic analysis is useful in examining the perspectives of different research participants, highlighting similarities and differences, and generating unanticipated insights [47]. Qualitative data analysis is a process that requires sequential steps to be followed, from the specific to the general, and involving multiple levels of analysis [16]. Therefore, the researcher followed the necessary process to analyse the data.

The quantitative data collected using questionnaire was analysed statically using descriptive analysis considering the mean and standard deviation. Besides, as this research inculcate the convergent design, data analysis in a convergent design consists of three phases. First, researcher analysed the qualitative database by coding the data and collapsing the codes into broad themes. Second, analysed the quantitative database in terms of statistical results. Third comes the mixed methods data analysis. This is the analysis that consists of integrating the two databases [16]. Moreover, researcher followed the research tip presenting data analysis plans as a series of steps which includes descriptive analysis. For confidentiality and anonymity of the participating students and teachers, different acronyms were labelled. For the teacher participants from urban, UT1, UT2, UT3 and for rural teacher participants, RT1, RT2. For the student participants from urban, FGDS1, FGDS2…and for the rural participants, FGD1S1, FGD1S1, FGD2S1, FGD2S2…

2.7 Validation Procedure

It is very important for a researcher to "check the validity of both the quantitative data and the accuracy of qualitative findings."[13] The following procedures were carried out for the validation for this study.

2.7.1 Method triangulation

The content of this study ensured validity and reliability through method triangulation. Method triangulation is using multiple methods of using data collection and analysis [20]. Triangulation of the findings from the various data collection methods will highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the different methods and will give the triangulation team more insight than any one method is likely to provide [58]. The class observations and teacher's interviews was triangulated with the survey response of the student's data to ensure maximum validity. The interview discussion of rural and urban teacher participants, rural teacher participant and rural student participants, rural and urban student participants, urban teacher participant and urban student participants were triangulated to get the intense analyses of the data.

2.7.2 Member checking

Lincoln and Guba (1985) [40] argue that, within the criteria of validity, rigor can be achieved by careful audit trails of evidence, member checking/respondent validation (confirmation by participants) when coding or categorizing results, peer debriefing, negative case analysis and referential material adequacy. The data collected from interview was confirmed through member checking. In the process of member checking, the researcher sent back the transcribed interview responses to the participant to confirm its validity.

2.7.3 Pilot testing

A pilot study is an important stage in a research effort because it allows researchers to detect potential issue areas and flaws in the research equipment and methodology before they are used in the full study. It can also assist members of the research team in becoming comfortable with the protocol's procedures and deciding between two competing study approaches, such as employing interviews instead of a self-administered questionnaire [29]. The reliability of questionnaire was pilot tested to the students from grade seven and eight of Minjong Central School. The survey questions were shared in Google docs to one of the teachers in Minjong Central School and asked to carry out the survey. The Cronbach Alpha showed the result of .917 using SPSS which is valid according to Creswell & Creswell [16].

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Demographic Information of the Participants Involved in the Study

The demographic information of the participants Involved in the Study has been depicted in Table 2.

Table 1. Interpretation table

Range	Level of interpretation
5.15-6.00	Strongly Agree
4.32-5.14	Agree
3.49-4.31	Somewhat Agree
2.66-3.48	Somewhat Disagree
1.83-2.65	Disagree
1.00-1.82	Strongly Disagree

3.2 The Factors Affecting Spoken Competency in Students within the School

Table 3 notes that friends, English teachers, and other subject teachers listed in the survey items are rated higher in rural areas than in urban areas. However, the other factors such as class size and resources rated higher by the urban participants compared to rural participants. The findings for each factors are discussed as follows:

3.2.1 The roles of the language teachers

The item, 'My English teachers always encourage me to speak in English' recorded higher from the rural students where rural students 'strongly agreed' with (M=5.52, SD=1.066) and urban students 'Agree' with (M=4.33, SD=1.732). Further, in FGD, the rural student participants responded that to improve the speaking skills, their English teachers make them converse in English and share fun experiences (FGD1S2, FGD2S6). FGD1S1 and FGD2S1 said that their teachers always encourage them to ask doubts and questions in English. Their teacher are also encouraged them to read more English stories books (FGD2S1 and FGD2S3) and listen to English songs (FGD2S1).

Similarly, FGDS8 from urban added, “Most of the teachers speak in Dzongkha but some of the subject teacher speak in English”. FGDS5 also stated that sometimes their teacher talk about the importance of speaking English. In teacher interview as well, RT2 from rural mentioned that she gives awareness on the importance of English to encourage them to speak English. Further, UT3 from urban said that she motivates her students to speak English through rewarding scheme. The similarities that teacher participants said are that they provide opportunities to participant in the class activities even if they are reluctant to speak (UT1, RT1, and RT2).

Likewise, one of the student participant asserted how their teacher motivates them to speak English using language tag strategy. FGD1S1 said, *“If we speak other than English in English class, we have to put the tag”.* It was apparent from the lesson observation that the teacher applies the strategy and the student strictly follows the rule. Another similarities mentioned from both the rural and urban student participant is other teachers talk about the importance of English being an international language and influences them to speak English (FGDS8). The teacher’s encouragement to speak English was perceived in rural class observation where students were always encouraged to speak in English through reminder whereas the urban classes did not have such practices. It was also observed that the urban teachers did not have much concern on what language the student speaks. The comparison of similarities and differences in rural and urban teachers’ role indicates that individual English teacher has diverse means of helping students develop their spoken competencysuch as they provide opportunities and encouragements.

Table 2. Demographic information of the participants

Instrument	Participants	Gender	N	Percent
Survey	Students	Male	104	46.64
		Female	119	53.36
		Total	223	100
Interview	Teacher	Male	3	60
		Female	2	40
		Total	5	100
	Student	Male	10	50
		Female	10	50
		Total	20	100
Classroom Observation	Urban- 4 class observation Rural-4 class observation			

Table 3. Student opinions on factors affecting students' speaking ability within the school

Items	Type of school	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level of interpretation
My friends always encourage me to speak English.	Rural	60	3.53	1.396	Somewhat Agree
	Urban	163	3.28	1.604	Somewhat Disagree
My English teachers always encourage me to speak in English.	Rural	60	5.52	1.066	Strongly Agree
	Urban	163	4.33	1.732	Agree
Other subject teachers encourage me to speak in English.	Rural	60	4.75	1.271	Agree
	Urban	163	3.94	1.623	Somewhat Agree
Large class size affects speaking in English.	Rural	60	2.58	1.293	Disagree
	Urban	163	3.20	1.384	Somewhat Disagree
Lack of use of technologies affects speaking English.	Rural	60	2.77	1.307	Somewhat Disagree
	Urban	163	3.33	1.474	Somewhat Disagree
Lack of use reading materials affects speaking in English.	Rural	60	3.92	1.344	Somewhat Agree
	Urban	163	3.29	1.855	Somewhat Disagree
My teacher always speaks English among themselves.	Rural	60	3.88	1.595	Somewhat Agree
	Urban	163	3.66	1.492	Somewhat Agree
Average	Rural	60	3.85	.661	Somewhat Agree
	Urban	163	3.58	1.02	Somewhat Agree

This research finding aligns with [53] who stated that one of the most important role of the teachers is to encourage the students speak without fear, making the classroom non-threatening conditions and Singye [55] also stated the most important role of the teachers in oral communication abilities is the use of academic language in the classroom and daily conversation in English to ensure effective oral communication in the classroom.

3.2.2 The other subject teachers and faculties

The survey item, 'Other subject teachers encourage me to speak in English' is 'Agree' by rural participants with (M=4.75, SD=1.271) and is 'Somewhat Agree' by urban students with (M=3.94, SD=1.623) indicating that the other subject teachers in rural influences more compared to urban other subject teachers. In FGD too, all the participants from urban and some of the students participants from rural (FGD1S2 and FGD2S6) said that the subject teachers help in building their vocabulary and pronunciations however not grammar. Additionally, from FGD both the participants from rural and urban mentioned that Librarian also guides them in pronunciation and as well as encourages to speak in English always (FGDS2, FGD1S2, FGD2S1, FGD2S6). However, one of the rural student participant mentioned that other subject teacher judges in literary activities and comment for the improvement of pronunciations (FGD2S4) distinct from urban. Further, the rural student participants mentioned that the principal also encourages to speak in English and share the importance of speaking English and to read books (FGD2S1, FGD1S5). Therefore, the findings indicate that despite of few subjects do not influence vigorously in speaking English most of the language teachers and other faculties in both rural and urban plays a vital roles to enhance spoken competency of the students.The findings align with Al-Nawrasy [3] and Parmis et al. [48] who stated that beyond enhancing students' motivation and attitudes, teachers play a key role on students' achievement in all skills, but most importantly in the productive skills, specifically speaking. Al-Khawaldeh et al [2], and Dorji [21] also stated that teachers providing enough opportunities to speak English helps in improve student's spoken competency.

3.2.3 The influence of the peers

The survey item, 'My friends always encourage me to speak English.' recorded higher from the rural students where rural students 'Somewhat Agree' with (M=3.53, SD=1.396) and urban students 'Somewhat Disagree' with (M=3.28, SD=1.604) indicating that the rural students are encouraged by their friends however the urban students are not encouraged in speaking English. The findings refute the results which states that rural students are influenced by their friends' narrow-mindedness and timidity, which is common among those with minimal experience [39]. This is because in this study some rural students remind their friends to speak English which ultimately proves that instead of negative influence rather the rural students encourages each other to speak English. Moreover, one of the student participants from rural (FGD2S6) mentioned that if her friends speaks to her in English, she also responses in English. If the friend speaks other language she speaks the same dialect.The result aligns with the findings of [55] on English Oral Communication Needs of Bhutanese Students: As Perceived by the Teachers and Students stated that peer stimulus to communication successfully. Bashir et. al [6] also found out that about half (45%) students are disagreed that speaking of English with fellow students indicating that more percentage of students interact with their peers. However, the lesson observations demonstrated that some the students in urban also reminded their friends to speak English. Therefore, from the findings, it resolves that their peers are also a factor enables them to speak in English. Wigati [62] also concluded that factor that can influence student attitudes in speaking English includes friends. Thus, urban students should make it a practice to encourage their classmates to speak English, much as peer influence is essential for improving spoken competency.

3.2.4 Lack of English speaking environment

The survey item, 'My teacher always speaks English among themselves' is levelled 'somewhat agree' in both rural and urban with (M= 3.88, SD=1.595) and (3.66, SD=1.492) respectively. In the interview, both the rural teacher participants mentioned that they do not have a habit of speaking English among themselves. They further expressed that due to the lack of English speaking environment among themselves hinders the enhancing of spoken competency in students (RT1 and RT2). The student participants (both rural and urban) expressed if teachers speak in English with them they respond in English and if they speak in different language they respond in that same language. Moreover, UT3 from urban also mentioned, "The spoken competency is low since

there is no culture of speaking English and despite the applicable curriculum, some students are not able to speak a proper English". This findings shows that lack of English speaking environment affects the spoken competency of the students.

This findings aligns with the findings of Ler, 2012[39], David, 2013 [17], Hossian, 2016 [31] and Al-Khawaldeh et al. [2] where they affirmed that lack of an English speaking environment hinders the students' spoken competency. The findings also aligns with Bidha and Thinley's (2010)[7] and Bashir et al. [6], which asserted similar findings that most schools and higher education institutions lack English speaking culture that would increase students' exposure to the language. In FGD, the urban student participant mentioned that they speak English only when their teacher speaks in English (FGDS2). This aligns with Kirkpatrick and Gyem [36] who stated that in the Bhutanese setting, despite the fact that English is the medium of teaching, teachers ignore the perverse culture that prevails in today's schools, where English is only spoken in class and never outside of it. Dorji [22] also stated in his study on Teaching Grammar: A Survey of Teacher's Beliefs and Attitudes in Bhutan that Bhutanese students may far less accessible to an English-speaking environment due to which they students need the help of teachers. Therefore, it concludes that to enhance speaking English skills in students, the teacher should create an English speaking environment which is absent in both rural and urban schools.

3.2.5 Student's attitude to English speaking

The Table 4 illustrates the rural and urban student's attitude towards English speaking with overall mean score of rural (M=3.93 and SD= 0.98) urban (M=3.92 and SD= 1.41) with both 'Somewhat Agreeing' which indicates that both rural and urban student's attitude is affirmative to speak English. However, the item 'I enjoy speaking English every day' is 'Somewhat Agree' with rural rating (M=3.92 and SD= 0.720) and urban rating (M=4.29 and SD= 1.346) which indicates that urban students enjoy more in speaking English than rural. In rural class observation, the students were very active and did the assigned activity however, they did not use proper structure to discuss or to respond to the teacher. For instance, "You don't know this much also, Where is table? You can write, don't talk Dzongkha" were spoken by the students. Correspondingly, in urban lesson observation, the students were very active and spoke fluent English whenever they responded to the teacher. For example, "we did well, I am not sure, I think it's like this, it hard to believe, it makes sense". The finding concludes that the attitude towards English speaking of rural and urban is positive though there is slight difference in their speaking.

Further, in rural and urban teacher interview mentioned that students' speak English preference to their comfort zone (UT2, RT2). RT2 explained that there is a preference in the use of language, "…the students are encouraged to speak more in Dzongkha rather than English. Moreover, UT2 said that students speak English preferring the comfort zone. "They are set of children whereby they love to speak English with each other whereas there are other groups who don't feel comfortable." The teacher participants from urban mentioned students are not genuine of speaking English (UT1 and UT3). UT3 said, "The students speaks English only under compulsion". UT1 also asserted that they do not consider important to enhance their skills rather they are restricted to speak only for the marks. It was also observed in all the class observation that though they do not speak English with their friends, with the teacher they always responded in English which indicates that they feel important to speak English only with the teacher. Consequently, the finding concludes that despite the students (both rural and urban) consider speaking English as inessential they are optimistic to speak English which also proves that both rural and urban individuals have a positive attitude and like speaking English regardless of the setting, which increases the probability that their spoken competency will improve. Martirosyan et al. (2015) [42] stated that a positive attitude toward learning in a second language will also enhance the student's spoken competency. however, the findings contradicts with the study of Ler (2012) [39] Cultutal factors affecting English proficiency in rural areas which asserted that rural students consider the use of English as unpatriotic and their negative attitude to English hinders learning English preferring instead to communicate in their native languages. Wigati (2019) [62] affirmed that difference conditions between rural and urban students influence their attitudes in learning English. Therefore, despite the rural and urban setting, if students are given the conducive environment they have positive attitudes towards learning English. So is necessary to provide conducive learning environment to the student.

Table 4. Student's attitude to English speaking competency

Items	Type of school	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level of Interpretation
I enjoy speaking English every day.	Rural	60	3.92	.720	Somewhat Agree
	Urban	163	4.29	1.346	Somewhat Agree
I can express my feelings clearly in English.	Rural	60	3.75	.914	Somewhat Agree
	Urban	163	3.77	1.273	Somewhat Agree
I am confident in speaking English in the class.	Rural	60	3.83	1.122	Somewhat Agree
	Urban	163	3.84	1.490	Somewhat Agree
I feel motivated to speak English with my friends.	Rural	60	4.28	1.075	Somewhat Agree
	Urban	163	3.81	1.468	Somewhat Agree
I prefer speaking than writing when expressing my ideas.	Rural	60	3.88	1.091	Somewhat Agree
	Urban	163	3.91	1.472	Somewhat Agree
Average	Rural	60	3.93	.98	Somewhat Agree
	Urban	163	3.92	1.41	Somewhat Agree

3.2.6 Lack of confidence

The item, 'I am confident in speaking English in the class' is ''Somewhat Agree' by both rural and urban participants with (M=3.83, SD=1.122) and (M=4.28, SD=3.84) indicating that the students partially agree that they are confident to speak English. Similarly, in rural FGD, some of the students said that they like to speak English however they lack confidence to speak English (FGD2S1, FGD2S4, and FGD2S6). FGD2S6 said, "I also like to speak English but I don't feel that much confident in speaking English". Additionally, FGD1S1 said that they mostly prefer speaking in Lhotsamkha (mother tongue of southern Bhutanese). Further, the rural student participants shared that they are not able to speak English most of the time as they are not confident enough to speak like Dzongkha as English is not common like Dzongkha in their school (FGD1S1, FGD1S2, FGD2S4, FGD2S6). Likewise, in FGD in rural and urban shared that they are scared of mockery (FGDS2) due to lack confidence in speaking English (FGDS3, FGD2S2, FGD2S4, FGD2S6). Moreover, RT2 also mentioned that students lack in confidence to speak English so they prefer speaking Dzongkha. Similarly, in urban FGD, student participants said that they are not so confident in speaking English, so they mix the languages to communicate (FGDS1). In both rural and urban observation, the students mostly spoke in their mother tongue and sometimes in Dzongkha during the group discussion. The finding indicates the students from both rural and urban lacks confidence to speak English.

This aligns with Martirosyan et al [42], Kumar and Malekar [37] and Parmis et al. [48] who stated similar findings that students who lack the confidence to speak in English are weak in expressing using English language. However, the findings contradicts Gobel etal. [26] who anticipated that the urban group are much more study-wise and confident as they have a greater belief in their own ability to take control of their successes in the language classroom. However, this study found that, similarly to rural, students in urban areas also lacked confidence to speak English. Therefore, in addition to encouraging students to speak English regularly, teachers should provide them with activities that provide them extra speaking time in English as well students should often practice English not just in English period.

3.2.7 Teaching strategies to enhance spoken competency

The Table 5 demonstrates the difference in overall mean score for the different strategies listed. The rural participants '*Strongly Agree*' with (M=5.27, SD=.745) and urban participants 'Somewhat Agree' with (M=4.20, SD=.966) which indicates that rural teachers bring more communicative teaching strategies compared to urban teachers. For instance, one of the differences is shown from the item, '*Teachers bring speaking activities like group discussions in the class*' where rural participants '*strongly Agree*' with rating (M=5.68, SD=.624) and urban participants '*Agree*' with the (M=4.95, SD=1.300). This was also evident from the class observation that most of the teachers used group discussion in their classes. In urban class observation, two classes had group discussion activity and in rural three classes had interactive group discussion. Further, the major difference in mean score is shown for the item, 'T*eachers bring speaking activities like debate in the class.*' where rural

participants '*strongly Agree*' with (M=5.68, SD=.676) and urban participants '*Somewhat Agree*' with (M=4.13, SD=1.325), Therefore, it is clear that the rural teacher's practices more speaking activities that provides opportunities to speak compared to urban.The findings endorses the findings made by Kumer and Maleker [37], who claimed that rural areas are isolated from outside influence, teachers must devise creative teaching methods.

3.2.8 Similarities in teaching strategy of rural and urban

The interview also gathered some similar strategies which affects the spoken competency of the students such as reading activities followed by book talk and book review (UT1, UT2, RT1, RT2, FGDS1, FGDS8, FGD1S2, FGD2S1). The book talk was apparent in urban lesson observation. Further, activities such as songs and motivational videos (FGDS1, FGDS5, FGDS7, FGD1S1, FGD1S5, FGD1S6) and role play, extempore speech (UT1, UT2, UT3, FGD1S4, FGD2S1, FGD2S5) were mentioned. FGDS1 said, *"English teacher used to bring her some songs and she will tell us to fill template of the song. In the process we get to learn new words sometimes."* Another interesting strategy mentioned by both rural and urban student participants was the spelling test (FGDS1, FGDS3, FGD2S4, FGD1S2, and FGD1S6). FGD1S2 supplemented that when they learn new words, they are able to use it when they speak. Moreover, the spelling test was witnessed in lesson observation where teacher let students to frame sentences of their own after the spelling test. Further, many of the student participants said that their teacher lets them do presentations, debate, group work and have a leisure conversation in English to improve their speaking skill (FGDS5, FGDS8, FGD1S2, FGD1S3, and FGD2S6). Moreover, the teacher lets the students to do presentation after the group discussion. However, it was observed that grammar in isolation was still prevalent in both rural and urban classes.

The findings demonstrated that teaching techniques also influence students' spoken proficiency levels, with student participants mentioning that they prefer it when teachers use communicative activities rather than the lecture method. Hemerka [30], Wigati [62] and Nigerian Educational consult [45] found out similar conclusions that teaching style matters and students prefer more communicative activities so that they have more opportunities to practise speaking and become both more competent and confident.

Table 5. Student's views on teaching strategies to enhance spoken competency

Items	Type of school	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Level of interpretation
Teacher always encourages me to response in full sentences.	Rural	60	5.32	1.000	Strongly Agree
	Urban	163	4.25	1.532	Somewhat Agree
Teachers use audios to help me improve my speaking skills.	Rural	60	5.03	1.207	Agree
	Urban	163	3.98	1.392	Somewhat Agree
Teachers use videos to help me improve my speaking skills.	Rural	60	5.12	1.223	Agree
	Urban	163	4.07	1.384	Somewhat Agree
Teachers teach through songs to help me improve my speaking skills.	Rural	60	4.75	1.230	Agree
	Urban	163	3.50	1.517	Somewhat Agree
Teachers bring speaking activities like debate in the class.	Rural	60	5.68	.676	Strongly Agree
	Urban	163	4.13	1.325	Somewhat Agree
Teachers bring speaking activities like extempore speech in the class.	Rural	60	5.23	1.064	Strongly Agree
	Urban	163	4.52	1.463	Agree
Teachers bring speaking activities like role play in the class.	Rural	60	5.42	.829	Strongly Agree
	Urban	163	4.24	1.400	Somewhat Agree
Teachers bring speaking activities like group discussions in the class.	Rural	60	5.68	.624	Strongly Agree
	Urban	163	4.95	1.300	Agree
Teachers assess on my speaking skill fairly using rubrics.	Rural	60	5.23	.981	Strongly Agree
	Urban	163	4.19	1.294	Somewhat Agree
Average	Rural	60	5.27	.745	Strongly Agree
	Urban	163	4.20	.966	Somewhat agree

3.2.9 Differences in teaching strategy of rural and urban

There are also some leading difference in some strategies such as one of the urban teacher participant mentioned about reflection and sharing (UT1) which was also perceived in lesson observation. UT1 from urban participant mentioned that he uses the strategy of 'Buddy'. UT1 said, "*I ask I make sure that the buddies encourage their friends to speak in the class and they keep a small record saying that okay this week you have taken part in this activity and you have spoken this many times.*" Further, all the urban teachers mentioned that they let students to do report, wall magazine and video log (UT1, UT2, UT3). Moreover, FGDS2 from urban participant mentioned that their teacher practices Transformative Pedagogy. FGDS2 said, *"Sometimes our teacher let us do in groups, pairs, face partner or shoulder partner and sometimes individual."* Another fascinating activity from lesson observation in the urban class was the Quiz competition story chain which gave students opportunity to speak English and students were actively engaged.

The different strategy mentioned by the rural teacher participants are literary activities (RT1, RT2). Most of the student participant also mentioned that their school organize literary activities which give them opportunity to participant and then improve themselves in the process of the preparation for the competition (FGD1S2, FGD1S3, FGD1S5, FGD2S3, and FGD2S6). FGD2S5 also mentioned, "*They bring activities like debate competition, storytelling competition and role play and sometimes they also inspire us, encourage us to speak English"*. Further, it was observed that the rural teacher uses exciting activities such as Worksheet and picture description where student gets opportunity to communicate with their friends. One of the rural teacher participant also mentioned about the strategy author's chair where students have fun in sharing their opinions (RT2). RT2 mentioned, "*Author's chair is where students get excited to share their emotions in due course helps them in developing the public speaking."* This concludes that one of the factors that greatly influences student's speaking skill in both rural and urban is the teacher's relevant use of teaching strategy.This findings is verified with the similar findings of Singye [55] who suggest that using a variety of instructional techniques that provide opportunities for speaking English is vital, regardless of the rural or urban context.

3.2.10 Curriculum and the policy

The survey item, 'Teachers assess on my speaking skill fairly using rubrics' is 'Strongly Agreed' by rural participants with (M=5.23, SD=4.19) and 'Somewhat Agree' by urban participants with (M=4.19, SD= 1.294) indicating that there is the difference between the way the rural and urban teacher asses the spoken competency of the students. In the interview, when students and teachers were asked about polices that they have in their school, the rural participants mentioned that they have Language policy where they have to speak only English and Dzongkha in the school compound (FGD1S1, RT1). However, FGD2S2 from rural asserted that they were not satisfied with such kind of policy. FGD1S1 further supported that there should be a proper follow up. FGD1S1 added, *"There should be a proper follow up like students should let to read books after school as a detention for not speaking English."* Additionally, RT1 pointed out that they are not able to enhance spoken competency of students since there is a lack of implementation of the rules.On other hand the urban student and teacher participants mentioned that they do not have any policy as a school but as a class they have policy of paying nu.10 whenever they speak other language other than English in the English period (FGDS1, UT3). Other than that if they do not speak English they are given cautionary to speak in English (FGDS8). UT3 also mentioned that despite the applicable curriculum, some students are not able to speak a proper English. UT3 said, '"I love this curriculum, really good curriculum in English but the problem is at the implementation part." The findings concluded that in both rural and urban there is no strict policies to enhance student's spoken competency.

This findings congruent from the research titled Washback Effects of the New English Assessment System on Secondary Schools in Bhutan where it states that language teaching and assessment are not meeting the academic, workplace and development needs of contemporary Bhutan [36]. Kumaer and malekar (2017)[37] also declared that many teachers don't have long vision about students' life. They focus only on examination. Dorji (2017)[21] pointed out that teachers and school should have relevant strategy that provide adequate time to the students to practice language when they are at the school. As a result, the study recommends that schools adopt policies that can be successfully employed to enhance students' speaking.

3.3 Factors Affecting Speaking Competency in Students Outside the School

3.3.1 Family background

The Table 6 illustrates the factors affecting speaking competency in students outside the school. The item, 'My parents always encourage me to speak English' is 'Somewhat Disagree' by both the students from rural and urban with (M=2.90, SD=1.599) and (M=3.33, SD=1.732) respectively. The mean difference shows that the rural students are not encouraged to speak English like the urban due to the family background as most of the rural student's parents are farmers. This is verified in the Table 7 given below showing the correlation of parents' occupation and the encouragement to speak in English:

The Table 7 illustrates that student whose parents occupation is farmer has the lowest mean with (M=2.83, SD=1.627) which verifies that the farmer's children are not encouraged like that of other parents. The teacher participants (UT2 and UT3) also mentioned that the English speaking skills depends on the family background. The findings prove that family background is factor that influences the students' spoken competency outside the school. The findings aligns with Ler [39] and Hossian [31] who stated that the family background influences the spoken competency. Rabgay [51] found that students with parents who had a higher education better in speaking than students whose parents had low or no education. Azhar et al. [4] explained that educated parents better communicate with their children regarding school work, activities and information being taught at school.

3.3.2 Lack of opportunities

The survey item, 'I have sufficient opportunities to speak English when I am not at school' is 'Somewhat Agree' by both the rural and urban participants with rural rating (M=4.00, SD=1.235) and urban rating (M=3.87, SD=1.402) indicating that the students of rural and urban do not get adequate opportunities to speak English outside the school. Moreover, in the FGD the participants from both rural and urban said that they speak English sometimes with their brother, sister and mother (FGDS1, FGDS7, FGDS8, FGD1S3, FGD2S1, FGD2S4, and FGD2S6). The teacher participant UT3 said,

> *"The only place our children get exposure to speak is school. At home, Bhutanese parents don't expect they will speak. In the society they don't speak with the friends they don't speak in the community. So school is the only place that also within the four walls where they will get an opportunity to expose with English."*

Therefore, the finding concludes that one of the factors that affect spoken competency is the lack of speaking opportunities outside the school.The results showed that neither rural nor urban students have enough opportunity to speak English outside of the classroom. Gobel [26], Martirosyan et al. [42] and Al-Khawaldeh et al. [2] also found out the similar findings that not enough opportunities to listen to spoken English affects the spoken competency of the students. The findings is consistent with [22] and Dendup [18] who sated that students must be exposed to the target language to speak faster through watching movies, reading books and watching television. As a result, it's crucial for both teachers and parents to create opportunities for the students to speak English.

3.4 Challenges in Speaking English

3.4.1 Mother tongue

It is evident from the Table 8 that for all the challenges listed in the table is rated high by the rural participants which indicates that the rural students confronts more difficulties in speaking English compared to urban students. For example, one of the challenges in speaking English in students is the influence of their mother tongue. The item 'I have a habit of using mother tongue when speaking to avoid misunderstanding' is rated higher in rural (M=5.00, SD=1.207) and urban (M=4.15, SD=1.322) illustrating 'Agree' and 'Somewhat Agree' respectively. Similarly, in the interview, the teacher participants also mentioned that they are not able to improve English competency in students is due to the influence of mother tongue (UT1, RT1, RT2). It was also eminent from the class observation that most of the students prefer speaking Dzongkha in urban and Dzongkha or Lhotsamkha in rural. The finding concludes that one of the challenges faced by the students while speaking English is the influence of mother tongue.

This challenge is in line with the findings of LaPrairie [38] and Dendup [18] who found out similar findings that when students are not able to express their ideas in English they tend to mix

it with their mother tongue frequent code-switching between English and Dzongkha/other local. Dorji [21] also stated that since teachers are the model of language user in the class, if the teachers use the first language so often, the students will be rather confused and pick up the habit of using their mother tongue that would limit opportunity for the students to practice target language in the class. Bashir et al. [6], Al-Khawaldeh et al. [2], Kumer and malerker [37] and Nigerian Educational consult [45] also concluded the similar findings that the interference of their mother tongue is a hinders the spoken competency.

Table 6. Student's views on factors affecting speaking competency in students outside the school

Items	Type of school	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Level of Interpretation
I can speak confidently outside the school.	Rural	60	3.78	1.043	Somewhat Agree
	Urban	163	3.64	1.567	Somewhat Agree
My parents always encourage me to speak English.	Rural	60	2.90	1.559	Somewhat Disagree
	Urban	163	3.33	1.732	Somewhat Disagree
Listening to English audios help me in speaking English.	Rural	60	5.22	1.121	Strongly Agree
	Urban	163	4.97	1.381	Agree
I have sufficient opportunities to speak English when I am not at school.	Rural	60	4.00	1.235	Somewhat Agree
	Urban	163	3.87	1.402	Somewhat Agree
Teachers always speak English with me outside the school.	Rural	60	3.88	.922	Somewhat Agree
	Urban	163	3.63	1.474	Somewhat Agree
Average	Rural	60	3.96	1.18	Somewhat Agree
	Urban	163	3.89	1.50	Somewhat Agree

Table 7. Relationship parent's occupation and influence on speaking English

Parents Occupation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Farmer	2.83	100	1.627
Civil Servant	3.91	65	1.674
Private Sector	3.15	58	1.622
Total	**3.29**	**223**	**1.641**

My parents always encourage me to speak English

Table 8. Student's views on challenges of spoken competency

Items	Type of school	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Level of interpretation
I worry about making mistakes when speaking English.	Rural	60	4.85	1.325	Agree
	Urban	163	3.93	1.633	Somewhat Agree
I find it difficult to speak in English in the class.	Rural	60	4.23	1.226	Somewhat Agree
	Urban	163	3.52	1.509	Somewhat Agree
I feel shy to speak English with other friends.	Rural	60	3.58	1.293	Somewhat Agree
	Urban	163	3.21	1.665	Somewhat Disagree
I don't feel comfortable speaking English outside the school.	Rural	60	3.75	1.445	Somewhat Agree
	Urban	163	3.34	1.585	Somewhat Disagree
Talking to my teacher using English makes me uncomfortable.	Rural	60	3.50	1.384	Somewhat Agree
	Urban	163	3.11	1.583	Somewhat Disagree
I feel the lack of confidence in speaking English hinders my other subject's score.	Rural	60	3.03	1.314	Somewhat Disagree
	Urban	163	3.33	1.295	Somewhat Disagree
I worry about other students' opinion when I speak English in the class.	Rural	60	3.78	1.136	Somewhat Agree
	Urban	163	3.45	1.384	Somewhat Disagree
I have a habit of using mother tongue when speaking to avoid misunderstanding.	Rural	60	5.00	1.207	Agree
	Urban	163	4.13	1.322	Somewhat Agree
Average	**Rural**		**3.97**	**.852**	**Somewhat Agree**
	Urban		**3.50**	**.956**	**Somewhat Agree**

3.4.2 Fear of public speaking

The item, 'I worry about making mistakes when speaking English' is rated 'Agree' in rural with (M=4.85, SD=1.325) and 'Somewhat Agree' in urban with (M=3.93, SD=1.633) indicating that rural students fear more about making mistakes while speaking English. Similarly, in the FGD the student participants also said that he is scared of mockery (FGDS2). Further, three participants (FGD2P2, FGD2P4 and FGD2S6) shared that they are sacred of mockery from friends while speaking so it obstructs their self-esteem and make their confidence level low. It was also observed in most of the class observations in both rural and urban that some of the students were reluctant to speak. The finding concludes that one of the challenges of spoken competency is the fear in studentsdue to the dread of mockery from their friends.

The similar findings were also stated in Choeda et al. [9] that Students remained shy since they get ridiculed by their friends and even some students in the class mock and make fun of their friends who attempt to speak. Likewise, Zhiping and Paramasivam [64] and Parmis et al. [48] reasons for students low spoken competency is due to anxiety in learning English are fear of being in public and shyness, fear of negative evaluation, and fear of speaking inaccurately. Hemerka [30] also concluded that the learners are usually very shy and hesitant when it comes to speaking, try to avoid such situations if possible, and do not cooperate with the teacher or with their peers. Similarly, Surakarta [53] stated that the students are no longer afraid of making mistakes when students are motivated to speak.

3.4.3 Pronunciation

Another common challenges emerged from the student interview was the pronunciation (FGDS1, FGD1S1, FGD2S1, FGD2S6) and comprehending the meanings of new words (FGDS4, FGD1S5, FGD2S4, FGD2S5). FGD2S5 explained, "Sometimes if I don't know the meanings, then it will be very difficult for me to pronounce the word and use the word while talking with friends or teachers." It was evident from the class observation 8, when teacher lets them to read, most of the students could read fluently however, some students were not able to pronounce some words properly. Therefore, it determines that both the rural and urban students face the similar challenges of pronunciation while speaking. The findings are Similar conclusion to Kumar &Malekar [37] and Dendup that students are unable to express in English because they do not know proper pronunciation. Surakarta [53] also stated that due to their pronunciation the students are not able to have a good command of speaking English so speaking were not satisfying. Further, Al-Nawrasy [3] stated that the teachers often feel under prepared to teach pronunciation and deters the achievement in speaking test.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Summary of the Findings

This chapter demonstrated that the spoken competency of rural and urban students is affected by factors both inside and outside of the school. Language teachers, other subject teachers, non-teaching staff such as librarians, peer influence, teaching strategy, and student attitude are the factors. Furthermore, findings show that there is no English speaking environment and no strict policies in both rural and urban schools. Furthermore, both rural and urban students agree that the use of technology and class size have no effect on their spoken competency. The mean difference from quantitative findings displayed that rural students are not encouraged to speak English as much as urban students because most rural students' parents are farmers. The findings discovered that both rural and urban students do not have adequate opportunities to speak English outside of school.

The findings disclosed that the influence of mother tongue, fear, and pronunciations in both rural and urban students are the challenges faced in improving students' spoken competency. Furthermore, the research findings show that spoken competency benefits both rural and urban students, as participants agreed that speaking English improves their communication skills and helps them improve their writing skills.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The factor that influences spoken competency within the school is their peers in which the rural students encourages each other to speak English which lacks in urban. Therefore, the findings suggest that it is vital for students to have communications with their peers so like in rural, the urban students also can encourage each other to improve their spoken competency.

The findings also revealed that in both rural and urban school, there is no English speaking environment and strict policies. Thus, it is recommended that the schools could substantial policies that will genuinely help students to develop their spoken competency. Moreover, the respective school can develop English speaking environment as teacher should be the exemplary to create an English speaking environment and motivate students speak English.

The findings also showed that the rural students are not encouraged to speak English like in urban due to the family background although quantitative findings showed that students are more positive and has higher chance of improvement in their speaking skills. The findings recommend that despite the difference in family background, parents as well as teachers could motivate the students to speak English even outside the school as the students in both rural and urban do not get adequate opportunities to speak English outside the school.

The finding concludes that one of the challenges faced by the students while speaking English is the influence of mother tongue. Therefore, despite the language teacher, other subject teachers and the system has diverse means of helping students develop spoken competency, the respective schools could further explore the best means to overcome the cited challenge because when students are at school, they engage or communicate the most. Therefore, it is crucial to make sure they receive sufficient speaking opportunities while they are at school.

The findings suggest that teachers could help students with phonetics using the IPA phonetic alphabet and inspire students to explore essential ideas online to overcome the pronunciation challenge of speaking in both rural and urban areas. Even the students are recommended to take extra efforts such as use relevant resources such as listen to examples of authentic speech, play listening games and activities from online. Teachers could also motivate and reinforce the students to speak English to surmount their fear.

6. LIMITATIONS

The results cannot be generalized since the data is collected from only two middle secondary schools. The future researchers can replicate this research in higher secondary schools.

The findings on spoken competency of the students cannot be certain as the researcher has not use in-depth language components such as the discourse markers and linguistic features on phonetic, lexis and syntax to assess students' precise competency. Therefore, the future research can be done to look at in-depth language components such as the discourse markers and linguistic features.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, Participants' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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