

Appendix 4

The Transcript of the Students' Focus Group Interviews

The following is one of the transcripts of the Focus Group interviews, given here in an edited form for obvious reasons. The moderator (Mod) is one of the researchers. The students' names [Adhi (male), Bama (female), Varsha (female), Yogesh (male), Kartik (male), Mani (male), Selva (male), Raji (female), Nitya (female), Laya (female)] are changed to ensure confidentiality.

- Mod: Good morning to each one of you. Thank you for your willingness to cooperate in this discussion. Thank you very much for having participated in the survey. Now, I would like to clarify a few points. Are you ready?
- Adhi: You're welcome, Sir
- Mod: Okay let's start. **Who participates more in the speaking activities conducted in the classroom -- boys or girls? Why?**
- Bama: "Girls participate more in the speaking activities conducted in the classroom because they are more confident than boys. . ."
- Adhi: "I would say boys as well as girls participate in the interviews. The point is those who are fluent in English participate while the others avoid participating. . ."
- Varsha: "It is always girls, because they speak the language more fluently than boys. Girls use the language even outside the classroom."
- Mani: ". . . Girls are studious and they participate in the activities and attend the classes sincerely when compared to boys."
- Selva: "There is no major difference between boys and girls. The proficient ones speak while the weaker ones like us remain silent in the class."
- Mod: **If you consider speaking the most important skill, then what is the reason for some of you not to participate actively in the speaking activities in the classroom?**
- Raji: "We are afraid of making mistakes in front of our teacher, friends and classmates while speaking."
- Yogesh: "Often our classmates use the opportunities to speak and so we are not able to speak. The points we want to say are already said by them and we have nothing more to say. So, we remain comfortably silent during the activities."
- Selva: ". . . Sometimes we wish to speak but words do not come out easily. So the teacher should wait patiently for us to answer."
- Mod: **What are the advantages of developing speaking skills? Do you think that speaking activities in the classroom prepare you for efficient interactions in real-life situations?**
- Nitya: "The greatest advantage of the speaking skills is that it is very useful for campus placements. We are always anxious about our job interviews at the end of the third year."
- Adhi: "The speaking activities conducted give us confidence to interact with people in English outside the classroom and in the society."
- Laya: "Speaking helps us to understand our subjects better. It prepares us to take part in presentations, group discussions and interviews for placements. . ."
- Mani: "We know the importance of English later on especially in the workplace, and so we try to practice it in the classroom but often we are discouraged by our classmates. They make fun of us and we stop practicing in the classroom."
- Mod: **Do you get enough time to practice speaking skills in the classroom? If not, would you request for more time for practice?**
- Varsha: "We do not get enough time to practice speaking skills in the classroom. We need more time for preparation and performance."
- Kartik: "There are too many students in the class. So we all do not get enough time to practice. So we request for more time."
- Bama: ". . . We get enough time to practice speaking skills but we can perform better if we are given more practice in speaking."
- Selva: "Time is not the only problem. We are shy to practice speaking in English. . ."
- Mod: **Do you have difficulties in participating in the speaking activities in the classroom? Name the difficulties you face.**
- Raji: "Yes we have difficulties in participating in the classroom. The proficient students dominate during the activities and so the teacher should allow us to speak."
- Yogesh: "The teacher cannot monitor all the students at the same time. When we participate we use our mother tongue if the teacher is away. . ."
- Kartik: "Most of the time we do not find the topics appealing. The topics chosen for the activities should create interest in us. . ."
- Nitya: "We cannot perform well when all the students are creating noise in the classroom. We remain happily silent when others participate in the activities."
- Selva: "We lack the confidence to face our own peers."
- Mani: "We find it very difficult to speak in English. Though we start using the language enthusiastically, we lose interest gradually."
- Mod: **Do you think group work can help you develop your speaking skills? How?**
- Laya: "Yes, group work can help us develop our speaking skills because we can take the help of our group mates to speak."
- Adhi: ". . . Our teacher should group us in such a way that we become comfortable in the group and get equal opportunities to speak."

Kartik: "Group work can help us more if the groups consist of students proficient in English and those weak in English. The weak ones can learn from the bright ones even when they remain silent and watch the bright ones speaking."

Mod: **Does your teacher encourage you to participate in group activities? In what ways?**

Yogesh: "Yes, our teacher encourages us to participate in group activities but the problem is the noise that arises in the classroom because of the activity."

Bama: "When our teacher motivates us sincerely and makes us speak in English, we usually participate actively."

Varsha: "Often our teacher expects us to perform better than we can. This actually increases our anxiety and reduces our performance level."

Mod: **Do you like the teacher correcting your mistakes? Do you think a positive feedback from the teacher in the classroom would improve your speaking skills?**

Mani: "The teacher should point out our mistakes but not in front of the whole class as it will hurt our pride."

Nitya: "If the teacher wants to correct our mistakes individually, it should be done outside the class."

Selva: "We commit a lot of mistakes, and so a positive feedback from the teacher will certainly help us to learn from our mistakes."

Adhi: ". . . If our mistakes are pointed out collectively, we will certainly feel confident as it does not hurt anyone personally."

Mod: **Are your peers helpful during classroom interactions? Do you seek help from them?**

Raji: ". . . Yes, our peers try to help us in different ways when we find the topics difficult. They simplify the topic and give us useful inputs."

Selva: "We find it easy to seek the help of our peers in the hostel rather than our classmates. Though our classmates are ready to help, we always hesitate to get help from them during the activities."

Mani: "There are a few classmates who avoid speaking to us and assisting us just because we are not proficient in English. . ."

Mod: **Do you attempt to speak in English outside the classroom? Are you successful in your attempts?**

Yogesh: "We don't have any opportunities to use English outside the classroom. Even when we try to do so, our friends discourage us saying that it is artificial."

Raji: "Most of us are first-generation learners and so we do not get chances to use English outside the classroom. At times we try to speak in English among our friends but the enthusiasm slowly comes down and we start speaking in our mother tongue."

Adhi: "The only place where we use English is the language classroom. Our subjects are mostly taught in our mother tongue. . ."

Mani: "Some of our classmates prefer to speak to us in our mother tongue as they know that it is difficult for us to speak in English."

Bama: ". . . We try to use English outside the classroom but the usage is minimal in comparison with our mother tongue."