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## **CREATIVE AND EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO ENCOURAGE LEARNERS SPEAKING SKILL IN LARGE CLASSROOMS**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper purposes at improving of students' speaking skill in the large classes. One of the biggest issues dealing with schools and teachers today is the management of large classes. It is said that frustrating, noisy and stressful classroom environment cannot easily be overcome. In order to create effective teaching and learning environment, a class size should be small and a teacher wisely solves to crowded classrooms. Using appropriate and effective teaching methods, teachers not only persuade students' motivation and interest but also know how to develop learners' speaking skill. In accordance with the creative and effective ways and strategies discussed in this paper, students get many benefits in the development of speaking skills. This study reveals that creative strategies such as guessing topic, passing a parcel through students, sharing topics, expressing different view supported by monolingual method in large classrooms, expressed in this paper are useful and effective ways for students to improve their speaking skill as well as for teachers these give benefits when managing large classroom. In brief, these strategies support teachers as effective ways to upgrade the level of students' speaking skill and attract students participate in speaking lessons in accordance with students' response based on questionnaire.*

## **Keywords**

Creative, Effective, Learners, Speaking, Encourage, Large Classrooms

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## **1. Introduction**

English language is assumed as the most spoken language in the world as well as in a large number of countries, it is assigned as the official language. English language plays an important role in every sector such as business, education, health, technology, social and politics. In other words, information related to these fields is presented by English and most of the content expressed on the internet is in English.

In Myanmar, taught as compulsory subject in every school and university, English is studied as a foreign language, but in most of universities in Myanmar, all prescribed subjects are written in English language. Especially, in technological universities, not only major subjects related to engineering fields but also supported subject such as English, mathematic, physics are written in English language. Therefore, students have to know English language as second language in their classrooms although it is not mother language. In this situation, teachers face challenges and difficulties when teaching speaking skill in large classrooms even though students have different background knowledge. In other words, the problems such as shyness, criticism, fear of mistakes are commonly discovered in teaching speaking skill even students attend undergraduate and postgraduate levels of a university course. Teachers' tasks are how to overcome these difficulties and to give effective teaching and learning. Creative and effective strategies such as guessing topic, passing a parcel through students, sharing topic and expressing different views are mainly presented in this paper to encourage learners at university of technology (Yatanarpon Cyber City), Myanmar, in the development of speaking skill. When using these strategies, monolingual method is chiefly applied by teachers without using mother language. Using these strategies is suitable for students of university of technology (YCC) because they have much prior knowledge about English language.

Nowadays, we must generally understand that the main language of this planet is English language. As students, not only knowing English language but also being fluent always keep up with the latest information of courses they want to participate and apply. Learning support students determine their hidden talents and deal with the anxiety and impediment. To extract students' ideas and improve critical thinking skill, teachers practise students to brainstorm in the speaking tests (Effendi, 2015). Speaking English allows engineering students to really broaden

their world, from not only job opportunities but also acquiring education to the ability concerned with people from every country. This paper chiefly discussed about how to improve the speaking skill of students in large classes from University of Technology (YCC) using creative strategies supported monolingual approach only.

In general, every teacher in schools and university commonly solves the problems of how to control the large classes when teaching speaking skill. Giving instructions and good ways to accomplish the large classes are discussed as well. It cannot be denied that learners' improvement is contributed to the professional development of teachers. In order to effectively teach and go up students' motivation and interest from large classes in speaking skill, good and effective strategies and factors are expressed in this paper.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Using Monolingual Method in Teaching and Learning Speaking**

It is undoubtedly that students' communicative skills are important to develop and speaking plays an essential part of English language teaching and learning. Owing to interacting to others, students have to try to be competence the important factors related to speaking such as intonation, accent and pronunciation, idea, fluency and speaking grammatically without using slang. Generally, spoken English can be divided into private conversation (face-to-face and telephone conversation) and public speaking (lectures and news broadcasts). Speaking can be defined as the process of information formed by speaker and got by listener and then as the development of communication between them (Wahyuni, 2013). In some cases, learners have to handle speaking conditions such as informative speaking, persuasive speaking and so on. Instructive speaking is meaningful, precise and lucidity and persuasive speaking means utterers try to alter listeners' views, feelings, outlooks, ethics and performances (Coopman & Lull, 2014). Whatever type of speaking teachers teach to learners, monolingual method is effective teaching method.

Speaking is also a communicative skill considered as a vital skill for not only learners but also students because of being international language. It is needed to be important considerations that an impressive speaker should have clear purpose, able to persuade audience or listeners even in large classes, attractive body language and gesture, enable to build self-confidence and give responses to questions on the spot, talking relevancy and coherence to topic, speaking

energetically and interestingly in the content he/she presents and good pronunciation (Cole, Ellis, & Mason 2007).

On the other hand, problems of teaching speaking skill need to be reviewed and how to overcome these worries is partly considered. Though teaching speaking in small size classes is effective for both teachers and learners, in large classes it is certainly less effective because noisy condition causes less concentration on lessons and it is harder to assess fluency of every student. Besides, teaching aids and materials are not enough for large classes to use. To prevail over these obstacles, the abilities to adjust needs and class control strategies are also professional development of teachers. Further, understanding physical and mental conditions of students is bethought as important issues. In other words, how to lessen shyness, fear of mistake, lack of idea or knowledge to speak, not having appropriate language to speak, all of which are faced by students, shows significant factors for the teachers of large classes (Kabir, 2014). Speaking a lot and giving clear instructions by teachers initially make learners comfortable in mental feeling and then allow them speak more. Due to games and activities based on group work and role-play, physical conditions can be alternated to create more attractive and interesting surroundings. It is also needed to choose appropriate topics concerned with background knowledge students have already had because of cultural diversity and level of language skill in students. Sometimes, interactive ways between teachers and students are essential to create idea in unfamiliar topics.

## **2.2 Important Considerations when Using Monolingual Method**

In this paper, so as to enhance students' speaking skill, monolingual method is used, also known as direct method. Some principles and procedures need to be considered when using the monolingual method in teaching speaking skill. In addition to classroom instructions were performed absolutely in the target language, only everyday vocabulary and sentences required to be skilled. Oral communication skills were also established wisely between teachers and students in order to shape question- and – answer sessions. It is possible to instill grammar inductively and it is important to highlight correct pronunciation (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

There are some considerations of using monolingual method in large classrooms because depending on the cultural diversity, class sizes, teaching styles and prescribed subjects are variety. It can be assumed that a country which does not speak English language has many difficulties than English speaking countries. Moreover, every school and university in Myanmar, most teachers are not native speakers in the language classes and all of the prescribed subjects are written in English language except Myanmar subject. So as to deal with these issues, a

language teacher has fluency, good pronunciation and language skill like a native speaker. Not having enough language proficiency and being professional development, a teacher cannot achieve his/her teaching and learning goal and create effective classroom atmospheres. As a result, a teacher plays an important role in using direct method in teaching speaking skill at large classroom. But, it cannot be attributed that teacher-centered method is used in the class. It is truly accepted that students-centered is more effective than teacher-centered when teaching speaking skill. In addition, strategies supported by direct method are good reasons and effective ways of developing speaking skill of large classes.

At the beginning of using target language only in large classes, it cannot be denied that both teachers and students encounter a big challenge and feel uncomfortable. But, teacher makes efforts and do practice a lot to achieve unpleasant situation and carry out relaxed atmosphere by using good strategies. Time management, materials, lesson plan, and suitable topic, games and activities, all of which are supported by target language without using mother language as creative strategies, are essential ways to achieve teaching and learning goal (Lloyd-Strovas, 2015).

Since English is taught as compulsory subject in every school and university, using monolingual method is a big challenge for not only teachers but also students who are not native speakers in Myanmar. To overcome this issue, teachers are able to speak and fluent in the foreign language like native speakers. It cannot be denied that teacher's abilities such as clear instructions, pronunciation, using question and answer drills and creating interaction between teachers and students play essential roles to achieve teaching and learning goal while teaching speaking skill to students of large classes using monolingual method.

In this paper, monolingual method is used to improve and be fluent students' speaking skill and mother language is strictly limited in the class and translation is also not permitted. As a result, students have to connect directly with the language without processing the translation into the students' native language due to this method. It is required that teachers carry out correction, allowing students speak much, using lesson plan instead of book, keeping the pace of the students, speaking normally and naturally and being patient (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). In brief, these factors need to be followed by the teachers when teaching English speaking skill as a foreign language to the students in the large classes.

## **2.3 Large Classes' Issues Encountered and Appropriate Strategies**

### **2.3.1 Problems**

Most teachers feel uncomfortable to manage and teach large classes. Depending on various situations and culture of countries, class size will vary and overcrowded classes threaten teachers to create effective teaching and learning atmosphere. In building interaction between teachers and students, small number of students is appropriate to succeed their ambition (Bahanshal, 2013).

It is undoubtedly accepted that teachers cannot pay attention equally to all of students in large classes and they must not deal with how to complete written work such as correction of essay writing because of large number of written sheets. And teachers encounter difficulties because large classes are harder to control than small classes when the problems occur among students. Recognising all students is also assumed one of the hardest tasks. It is impossible to avoid the noise level in the large classes and problematic to assess effectiveness. Teaching aids such as books, computers and so on are not enough for students in the large classes and interaction is rarely to be occurred between teachers and students (Phuoc Ky L, 2002).

### **2.3.2 How to Manage Large Classes**

Classroom management means all things that a teacher has to do in a class and in other words, a teacher not only manages student's space, time, and materials but also takes to encourage learners emotionally as well as attain academic surrounding carefully and intentionally (Korpershoek, Harms, de Boer, van Kuijk, & Doolaard, 2014). In other words, a good teacher has to train his/her students' social dealing skill beyond academic task and language skill. Teachers use classroom management strategies as tools for developing interaction and relationship between teachers and students so as to be aware of guidelines to adjust actions students do and create inviting, relaxing and appealing for student learning. Reaching high superiority classroom supervision is defined as shaping and fulfilling good instructions to optimize student's access to learning, encouraging students' interest in not only academic task but also participation in classroom activities, promoting students' social skills and self-regulation and applying appropriate interventions to deal with behavior problems, all of which have been developed by teachers. It cannot be denied that learners' motivation is a tool to improve their speaking skill and teachers need to have comprehensive abilities how to motivate their learners in the large classes (Effendi, 2015).

Owing to overcoming the problems of large classes, appropriate strategies and activities are necessarily considered to perform. In challenges of large classes, group work and pair work are good reasons for how to promote motivation of large classes' students and giving extra tasks such as assignments should be included in the assessment of the abilities of students. For reducing noise level, basics rules for class management are required to set up (Lloyd-Strovas, 2015). It is also a good idea that teachers train students to have positive attitudes to unpleasant and difficult tasks and to carry out. Teachers use interactive techniques as much as possible to keep in touch with course content to be more beneficial. Designing lecture is needed to be relevant so as to be consistency of students' lives. Due to the collaboration, clever students support weaker students while doing class activities and tasks. In order to reduce the burden of large number of assignments, students do assignments in group. It is noticeable that building mutual understanding not only between teachers and students but also peer to peer is important.

### **2.3.3 Giving Effective Instructions to Large Classes**

It is necessarily accepted that successful teaching and learning environment have widely depended on giving instructions effectively. When students do not clearly hear or apprehend what their teachers instruct, a lesson or activity is not successful. It cannot be denied that instruction-giving plays an essential role on how well students manage to perform their activities and tasks and how effectively teachers succeed in the classrooms (Sowell, 2017).

In this paper, some practical tips related to instructions are required to follow. Using brief instruction instead of long-winded instruction is the most important part of both teaching and learning process. In other words, it can be undeniable facts that instructions should be short, easy to recognize and precise. So as to persuade the attention of students, teachers use clapping hands or knocking desk as alternative ways while facing noisy circumstances. Before starting students' work, commands should be given. Not only spoken instructions but also body language is included and the teachers have already arranged everything in advance. In order to create effective teaching, it is needed to check understanding of students by raising questions concerned with instructions.

### **3. Creative Strategies to Speak more Effectively for Learners in Large Classes**

In large classes, it is hard to control and teach speaking effectively to each of students. Besides, it is difficult to persuade students' motivation and interest in second language teaching and learning process. So as to overcome these problems and to become sustainable development goal, innovative and effective strategies are needed to consider. In this paper, some creative and effective strategies are applied by supporting monolingual method when teaching speaking in the large classroom in order to be fluent in speaking skill. Encompassed by combining strategies, students are adapted to classroom environment influenced speaking activities by teachers. In large classrooms, a considerable reason is that learners' competency and skill are differences and students also have background knowledge differently in language (Anmpalagan & Smith, 2012). It is difficult to cater for students with such different levels and needs. Students' individual response is difficult to hear. By changing sitting plan of students in classroom, peer to peer interaction can develop and it is hoped that students will share their knowledge each other, all of which are effective ways to adjust students' level (Rhalmi, 2016).

So as to improve students' proficiency in speaking skill, speed-talking, impromptu speech, PowerPoint presentation, fostering participation during presentation, group work, pair work, role play and games are suggested to encourage learners speaking skill (Speaking Activities for Large ESL Classes, 2013). It is inevitable for both teachers and students that the process of activities supporting to raise high level of students' speaking skill has been done by English language. Clear instructions from the teachers are very important to manage students in crowded classes throughout the speaking process as well.

In our country, using monolingual method in teaching English is challenging and interesting way as English is not first language. Strategies such as (1) guessing topic, (2) passing the parcel through the students, (3) sharing topics and raising questions and (4) expressing different views, all of which are supported by target language only as effective strategies are also expressed in this paper in order to encourage learners have motivation in large classes. To arouse students' interest in how to speak English effectively and fluently, teachers have to create teaching and learning environment with interesting ways supported by monolingual method as creative strategies.



### 3.1 Guessing Topic

The strategy improves the speaking skill of the students of large classes from the University of Technology (YCC) and also develop their motivation and interest. Instructions and interaction have been done in target language (English language).



(Images for human symbols, n.d.-a)

**Figure 1:** *The Process of Guessing Topic due to Charade* (Cook, 2013).

**Time allowed: 5 minutes for each team**

**Teaching aids: white board and marker pen**

**Teacher' role: Giving guidelines by supporting needs using target language only**

#### **Action**

- Break into the class into 7 to 8 teams in the total number of 60 students
- Ask each team to prepare one topic or thing (person or thing) due to charade (without knowing the topic by other teams)
- Be sure in order not to know each team's topic from other teams
- Students from each team take turns coming to the front of class to present supporting facts only concerned with topic or thing each team keeps charade instead of the name of topic
- Guessed the name of topic by students from other teams and then the winner is the team which guesses topic the fastest

### 3.2 Passing a Parcel through Students and Presenting Topic

This activity is based on playing game of Myanmar nationalities in order to be amused and happy when going to picnic and it is commonly seen among other countries. In other words, students in Myanmar usually play this game for participation all members of the group into the game. In this activity, IELTS speaking part 2 included in prescribed curriculum at University of Technology (Yatanarpon Cyber City), Myanmar, is taught using parcel game to motivate and develop students' speaking skill (Brook-Hart, Jakeman, & Jay, 2013).

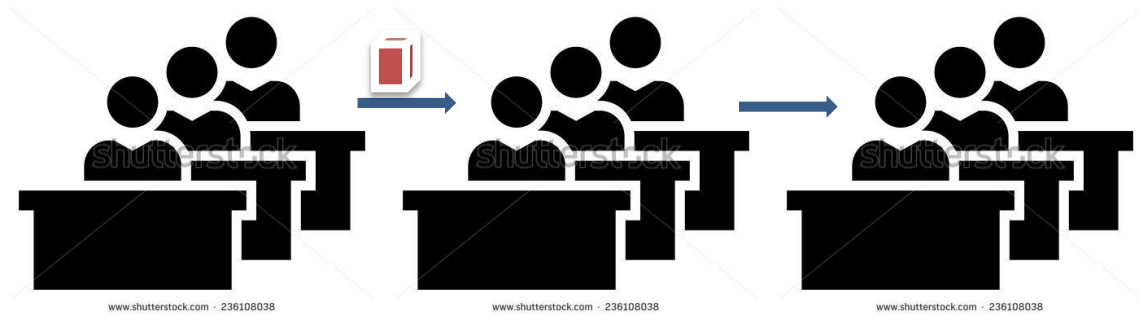
**Topic: Describe a person you are ideal the most**

*Who is he/she?*

*When and where do you meet with him/her?*

*What characters and personal qualities the person has you like*

*And explain why you do like his /her so much.*



**Figure 2:** *The Process of Parcel Game*

**Time allowed:** 5 minutes for each including both passing through parcel and presenting topic

**Teaching Aids:** 1 parcel

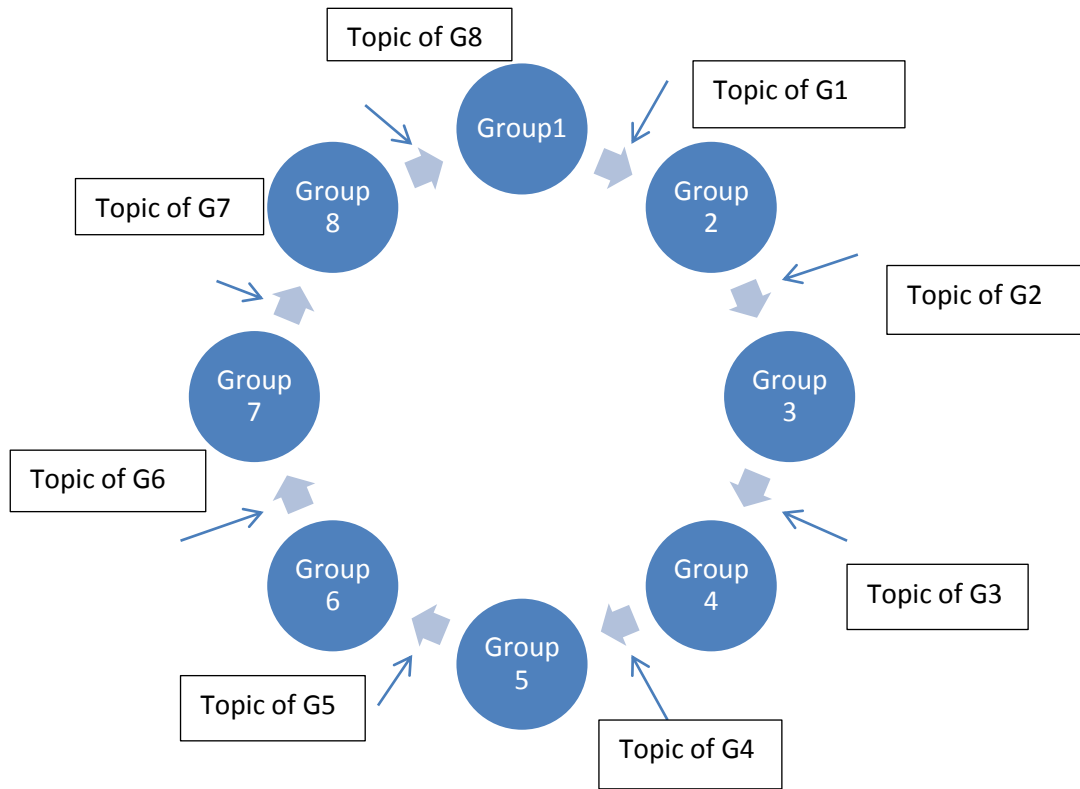
**Teacher's role:** Announcing the topic the students have to present and giving instructions using monolingual

**Action:**

- At the beginning, students have to pass the parcel through students from the front line and at the time, the teacher is standing in front of the class by facing white board. (the teacher stands by backing on to the class)
- Then, the teacher speak aloud 'STOP' and then all students have to stop
- Then, the student who holds the parcel will stand up and present the topic.
- After presenting, this game is started again from the next one sitting beside the student presented. At that time, the topic the student has already spoken has to say 'STOP' in front of the class by backing on to the class like the teacher.
- In a given limited time, this game is alternately processed in every student.

It is important that all interactions and conversations from both the teacher and students have been performed in target language. This activity develops students' motivation and allows them to speak more and more comfortably.

### 3.3 Sharing Topics and Raising Question



**Figure 3:** *The Process of Sharing Topics and Raising Questions*

**Time allowed:** 5 minutes for each team to prepare and present topic and another 2 minutes is for questions and answer sessions

**Teaching Aid:** a piece of papers

**Teacher's role:** giving instructions and grouping students

**Action:**

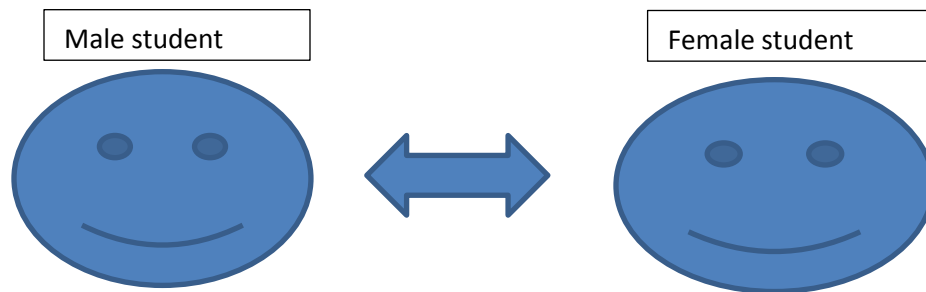
- breaking into the class into 7 to 8 teams in the total number of 60 students
- Teacher instructs students to prepare a topic of their own in every group of students and has to limit fields related to topics (for example, health, education , social and technology)
- Then, every group shares the topic of its own in sequences; for instance, from group one to group 2, group 2 to 3 and so on.
- Group 2 has to speak the topic of group 1 and group 3 presents of group2 and finally group 1 has to talk the topic of final group.

- It can be noticed that every team must not allow knowing its topic from other teams when preparing topic because of questions and answer sessions.
- Without knowing others', students from every group have to raise questions on the spot.

All interactions have been done in English language and both teachers and students have to use monolingual approach only. This creation is suitable for undergraduate students from engineering students from University of Technology (YCC) and learners improve critical thinking skill and want to speak more and more according to effective and creative strategies.

### 3.4 Expressing Different Views

**Sample Topic: Wisdom in the Mind is better than Money in the Hand**



**Figure 4:** *The Process of Expressing Different Views*

**Time Allowed:** a couple of students have to take about 5 minutes

**Teaching Aids:** White board, chairs and a piece of paper

**Teacher's role:** Announcing topic, giving instructions and marks

**Action:**

- Firstly, a classroom is divided into two teams according to male and female.
- Then, teacher chooses the one who participates voluntarily or chosen randomly from each team.
- Two students chosen have cast lots the different view of topic written in a piece paper.
- Both students express their views in front of the class. There are questions and answers sessions from each team and it takes about 5minutes.

Both teacher and all students give opinion to one presenter who is better from 2 of presented students.

This pair work activity and all interactions and communications have been done by target language. If a team uses mother language unexpectedly, it will lose marks. This is effective strategy to encourage learners speak more fluently.

#### **4. Finding**

Centered on questionnaires from teachers and students and classroom clarifications, language teachers not only occasionally use activities such as group work, pair work, discussion, role play, dialogue and so on depended on the situation and the class' hours but also use monolingual method in teaching process. Teachers significantly apply group work which is the most preferred type for students. As creative strategies to motive learners speaking in large classes, guessing topic, sharing topic, passing the parcel and expressing different views are supported to develop students' speaking. Most language teachers accept and use creative strategies using monolingual method to get sustainable goal. It can be found that using effective strategies in teaching speaking are good ways to solve the problems of large classes.

Due to the questionnaires based on the total number of 120 students, they respond in teaching method and class activities and 93% of students are interested in monolingual method used in speaking and only 7% like traditional method even though they face a big challenge. According to creative strategies used by teachers, most students are interested in these strategies, the most popular ways are guessing topic and passing the parcel through students with 93%. Students are interested in sharing topics and expressing different views with 86% and 90% respectively. The most preferable type of speaking is group work with 93% and then pair work is 86% (for example, dialogue, for and against speaking contest) and individual work is 90% (for example, impromptu speech). It is needed to be aware of teaching styles because 50% of students prefer using both teacher-centered and student-centered methods while 40% like students-centered and only 10% like teacher-centered in total number of 140 students. Most of students do speaking practice weekly with their partners. They accept that spoken communication is necessary for their seminar presentation and future career. Most of students complain that speaking activities in the classroom is not enough because they want to do more and more speaking task.

**Table 1:** *Students' interest in strategies and activities used by teachers in the classroom*

In accordance with the total number of 140 students

	Teaching strategies		Creative strategies				Speaking Type		
	Traditional way	Monolingual method	Guessing topic	Sharing topic	Passing the parcel /	Expressing different views	Group	Pair	Individual
Students' interest	7%	93%	93%	86%	93%	90%	93%	86%	90%

## 5. Conclusion

To sum up, even learning English as a foreign language is challenging and time consuming task with difficulties, so as to create good opportunities in human life, it can be accepted that English language is valuable and priceless. Also using monolingual method in teaching speaking skill enhances fluency, communicative skill and develops students' motivation as well. Using effective ways, strategies and activities, teachers can deal with the problems of large classes influenced with stressful and unpleasant situations. And instruction-giving is needed to be aware of managing large classrooms proficiently as good teachers. When teachers know that it is necessary not only to have classroom management feats by using creative strategies but also to achieve teaching and learning goal, they can lead sustainable development of professional teachers. Finally, to be proficient teacher and professional development, a teacher has to achieve knowledge and skills by life-long learning and it is also accepted that learning is clearly an unending endeavour.

### 5.1 Limitation

In order to use strategies improve students' motivation and interest, it is needed to get much time because in our technological university, different subjects related to engineering are prescribed beyond English subject in every class of first year to final and class hours are fixed

for every subject. Some weakness students may have a few difficulties when experiencing monolingual method because mother language is limited in the classroom. If students have high level of prior knowledge on English language skill, successful teaching and learning goals will quickly be achieved. Teaching speaking skill using monolingual method is effective even there is the limitation of class hours. Therefore, teachers need to consider varieties of students' levels in the large classrooms and handle these issues well. Using creative strategies a lot, teachers maintain the sustainable development goal of teaching and learning process.

## **5.2 Further Extension**

Using monolingual method, another creative and innovative strategy combined country's culture and situation will be developed so as to fulfill the necessities of students in their language learning. Beyond speaking skill, the strategies expressed in this paper can be applied on another skill like writing. In accordance with these techniques and strategies used in this paper, it is true that not only students have many benefits in the improvement of their learning but also teachers have their professional development of their teaching and learning process. By applying creative strategies effectively in the future, teachers will attain sustainable development goal of teaching and learning processes, classroom control and professional improvement.

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