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Article:	A Critical Analysis of the Dilemmas Encountered By Learners of English as a Foreign Language in Speaking Skill at Intermediate Level
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ABSTRACT

This study aims at highlighting the difficulties encountered by learners of English as a foreign language in speaking skill at intermediate level. The nature of this very research is qualitative. As an illustration, fifty students of both first and second year were chosen as participants at Govt. Degree College Peshawar as population for data collection. The data were collected by two tools namely; questionnaire and observation. The participants were given at first stage questionnaires and then followed by observation technique by giving them a topic in class about which they used to present a presentation where vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and enunciation all were closely observed. The result shows that the learners stop speaking because they suffer from various problems like as inhibition, mother tongue interference, attitude and lack of proper approach which play a decisive role adversely affecting the speaking ability to learn the speaking skill. In a nutshell, a number of recommendations have been suggested on the basis of results obtained from questionnaire and observation.

Key Words: Speaking proficiency, EFL/ESL learners, target language environment, fluency, accuracy

Introduction:

The use of language in interpersonal relationships is essential. According to some researchers, language is a kind of interhuman communication characterized by using illogical spoken symbols or written symbols that have a common meaning. Moreover, communication as a whole might be considered as language. According to Cook (1991), language is at the core of human existence because it allows us to communicate with others, allows us to be seen by others, and serves as a means of spreading culture, information, and scientific ideas.

The four core skills of hearing, reading, writing and speaking make up every language in the world. All of the aforementioned four skills have a mutually reinforcing relationship, meaning that each skill influences the others. Focused reading leads to excellent writing, and attentive listening results in appropriate speaking. Thus it follows that good readers also become good writers, and good listeners also make good speakers. Each skill has its own distinctiveness, significance, challenges, and complexities that go along with it. Harmer (1994) asserts that it is frequently true that one skill cannot be used without the other.

Speaking is typically seen as the most essential of the four language skills to learn since it is a necessary component of communication. A strong learning technique that serves as the basis for all linguistic development is spoken language.

Ur (1996) argues that “among the four core language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), speaking seems intuitively the most important one” (p.120). It is assumed that speaking a language encompasses all other forms of knowledge when someone is described as a speaker of that language. The core of learning second language is speaking skill. It is conceivably the most crucial competency for field-based business and government employees. According to Bygate (1987), it is speaking skill which requires more attention as literary ability in both first and second language. For many of their most basic transactions, our learners frequently need to speak with confidence. Speaking was, until recently, largely disregarded in schools and universities despite its importance. Speaking was also not tested due to the time required to conduct speaking tests and the difficulty in objectively evaluating it.

Being able to communicate in English is essential for participating in the larger workforce. The capacity to carry on a conversation in the language is used to assess speaking skills. Because of this fact, educators, parents, and policymakers believe that pupils should be able to speak clearly. For the reasons listed above, English language instruction has shifted in recent years to emphasize teaching the language itself rather than teaching about it.

Importance of Speaking Skill in FL Learning

According to Ur (2000), speaking is the most crucial language skill, because it is crucial for efficient communication while other three skills are listening, writing and reading. Similar to how Richards and Rodgers (2001) noted that in the schools more heed is paid to writing and reading; whereas, speaking competence is disregarded in the traditional techniques. Reading and writing, for instance, were the crucial abilities in the Grammar-Translation method, and speaking and listening are of less importance.

The integration of different linguistic skills demonstrates the value of speaking. The vocabulary, grammar, and writing skills of a student can all be enhanced by speaking to others. The students may only convey their feelings, thoughts, tell tales, make requests, have discussions, and demonstrate the numerous uses of language by speaking. Outside of the classroom, speaking is crucial. As a result, language speakers are more likely to get hired by a

variety of companies and organizations. These claims have been backed by emeritus Baker and Westrup (2003) who are of the view that those who speak English extremely well could have a higher probability of receiving a better education, securing a decent job, and advancing in their careers.

Speaking Demoting Factors for FL Learners

Academic as well as psychological factors influence the FL learners' speaking abilities. Mother tongue interference, also known as first language interference, can take the shape of incorrect pronunciation, grammar, and word use. Certain sounds in this type of interference are absent from both the target language and LI. The following causes us to either make a mistake or run out of words. Lack of a correct approach to language learning is the second aspect that causes difficulty for foreign language learners in terms of speaking ability. The proper method of language acquisition is not maintained as it should be. Our approach to language acquisition falls short of expectations. Instead of seeing education as a source of fun and happiness, we see it as a burden and a tedious task.

Inhibition, sometimes known as the fear of making mistakes, is another issue frequently mentioned by FL learners. The psychological issue that hinders and influences the speaking ability of FL learners is one that they have self-created. Many research have been done on the subject, and several hypotheses have been created to demonstrate this point: learners who are more attentive of the language (and errors) during the acquisition process are more prone to making errors. On the other side, they worry about mistakes and act accordingly. To put it simply, errors are facilitated by learners' concerns. It is a self-created issue that can only be resolved by the individual (Ur, 1991).

Speaking Promoting Factors for FL Learners

Knowing that speaking ability may be enhanced by continual, deliberate attention to some key linguistic aspects seems pretty logical (especially a foreign or even second language). Vocabulary, pronunciation, intonation, emphasis, and other crucial components are among them. These elements significantly influenced how fluently foreign language learners spoke. According to Tam (1997), providing learners with an abundance of possibilities as well as the chance to communicate in real-world situations will help foreign language learners develop more fluent language skill.

To encourage pupils to communicate smoothly with the least amount of hesitation, teachers should build activities in plain language. To capture the attention of more motivated participants, teachers should carefully select their topic and assignment. The main strategy teachers should employ is to encourage learners to keep by using target language and providing examples of how to do so. Moreover, group work is effective if used to boost student speaking and diminish inhibitions among students who are reluctant to speak in front of entire class (Ur, 1991).

Problem Statement

Typically, it has been seen that FL learners have a variety of psychological issues while they learn to speak. As a result, the learners have inescapable obstacles that negatively impact their speaking abilities. Several psychological and other elements that are associated to speaking ability have been examined in this research project, along with some practical advice on how to handle and get around them. The learners are properly led with the aid of this research so that they may overcome those challenges.

Research Objectives

- 1) What are the variables that impact a foreign language learner's ability to speak?
- 2) How to overcome those influences so that they may not hinder language learners' ability to communicate in target language.

Research Questions

- 1) To determine the factors that hinder the speaking abilities of FL learners.
- 2) To provide the learners with realistic and useful suggestions so that learners can overcome those speaking-affecting hurdles.

Significance of the study

This research article tries to identify the factors influencing speaking skill of the FL learners. Also, it will support the development of a positive mindset in the students in relation to the challenges they often face throughout the learning process (especially in learning speaking skill). In addition, the FL learners are given recommendations that enable them to effectively address the influencing elements and go over those speaking-related ones. This project's support for researchers who are or will be working on their speaking abilities might be considered another goal. Also, it will be helpful to scholars that conduct studies on the variables influencing learners' speaking abilities. While this work focuses with speaking skills, which language learners are more likely to develop, language learners in particular might benefit.

Delimitations

The study is delimited to the Government Degree College Peshawar. The study takes place in the same college and fifty students of second year is its population.

Literature Review

Language education is the term typically used to describe the process of the acquisition a second or a foreign language. The acquisition of a second or foreign language is becoming a need in this day and age. Without acquiring a foreign language, it has become necessary for us to stay up with the rest of the world's countries. Moreover, learning a foreign language is typically done by people for specific goals like travel, business, diplomacy, media communication, and so on. The only reason why we now need to study is because of "globalization," which has united everyone in the globe into one civilization or community (McDonough & Shaw, 2003)

According to Richards (1990), learning is a continuous process that lasts a lifetime. Every now and again, when learning, we make a number of blunders. Being human, we are highly likely to make mistakes, especially while learning something new. In dealing with something we have never encountered before throughout the learning process, we cannot entirely avoid challenges and blunders. There will always be a chance of failure where there is a notion of success, just as there will always be a chance of challenges and mistakes where there is a concept of learning. While some students view challenges as tough and allow them to control them, others see challenges as just a necessary part of the learning process.

According to Widdowson (1978), whether it's English for an Arabic speaker or French for an English speaker, learning a language which is not the mother tongue brings obstacles. There are four fundamental abilities in every language on the planet: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Each ability has unique characteristics as well as certain challenges associated with it. The nature of problems in learning and acquiring a talent differs from one

skill to the other, and it also individual dependent that how they approach different skills and which skill they find more challenging. That indicates that each person will experience learning challenges differently, especially when acquiring a certain language skill.

Many emotional elements have been connected to the acquisition of second languages, according to Krashen (1982), with motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety being the three main categories that have been thoroughly studied. These barriers are referred to as "affective filters" by Stephen Krashen. The Affective Filter Theory he presented said that second language learners experience stress, anxiety, and self-consciousness. People practice their second or foreign language poorly because they are afraid of making errors. Also, they have an innate bias towards different languages that prevents them from processing the foreign language in their thoughts.

In this regard, Underwood (1989) discusses the challenges that arise from the fact that foreign listeners may find it difficult to identify certain sounds in English from others that are similar to them or perhaps fail to hear any sounds at all because they are unfamiliar or uncommon. Later on, these discrepancies cause the learners to have significant pronunciation and speaking issues in FL. For instance, Japanese speakers typically have trouble incorporating the English sound /r/ into their own tongue. They attempt to substitute this sound with another /l/ sound because of this. This makes it challenging for non-native speakers who desire to master speaking skills in Florida, such as the distinction between the vowels /i:/ and /I/ (beat vs. bit), etc.

Research Methodology

The nature of this very research study is qualitative. There are only two research tools which contribute to this research study that include questionnaire and observation. As an illustration, fifty students of both first and second year were chosen as participants at Govt. Degree College as population for data collection. The data were collected by two tools namely; questionnaire and observation. The participants were at first stage given questionnaires and then followed by observation technique by giving them a topic in class about which they used to present a presentation where vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and enunciation all were closely observed. The researcher tries to find out the factors which affect the speaking skill of the FL learners. The researcher primarily focuses on issues that have often been the biggest barriers to learners' speaking abilities. Observation and a questionnaire are used to identify the main barriers. Together with identifying the elements that impact speech, the researcher also tries to demonstrate their negative consequences and offers some feasible and sensible solutions. As a result, the researcher makes every effort to be realistic in order to examine the gathered data as realistically as feasible.

Discussion and analysis

Data Collection through Questionnaire and Its Analysis

The researcher provided copies of the questionnaire to the students in the 12th grade in order to learn about the speaking ability issues they were having. Ten questions make up the questionnaire. The major goal of this procedure is to help the students comprehend the primary and frequently stated issue that the pupils are dealing with. The distribution of the questionnaire reveals the true nature of each and every sample student.

The results of the questionnaires are shown in the given tables.

Q1.	Speaking skill, as compared to other skills, is quite difficult in acquisition.			
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	2	3	25	20
	4%	6%	50%	40%

Here in the above table, the agreement of the respondents to the statement can be clearly seen. The respondents, beyond any doubt, find that speaking skill is quite tough as compared to other skills. The figure of agreement is 50% that is followed by 40% of the students strongly agree in line. Hence, half of the students are of the opinion that there is no doubt in finding of the speaking skill as a tough job.

Q2.	Learning a new language is an entertaining job rather than a boring job.			
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	3	10	19	18
	6%	20%	38%	36%

The students who agree with the statement that learning a new language is an entertaining job rather than a boring one are still on the peak. It makes up 38% of the whole followed by 36% second in the queue with strongly agree option. Only 6% of the students show strong disagreement to the above statement as they come across difficulties in learning a new language.

Q3.	We are more afraid of making mistakes while speaking a foreign language.			
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	2	5	15	28
	4%	10%	30%	56%

The table depicts that twenty eight out of total respondents making up 56% with strong agreement feel more fear of making mistakes at the time of speaking a foreign language. Moreover, only 4% strongly disagree with the above statement. The number of students who advocates the fact that they are more afraid of committing mistakes while speaking a foreign language is right enough. The same idea prevents individuals from acting bravely and seeing

errors favorably while speaking a foreign language. In a nutshell, mistakes increase experience and experience decreases mistakes.

Q4.	Most of the times, the foreign language learners don't have proper environment for learning it.			
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	2	3	16	29
	4%	6%	32%	58%

The above table displays that twenty-nine out of fifty pupils with 58% represents the majority with strong agreement. It vividly shows that usually the students do not have a proper environment for learning the foreign language. Since language is an inalienable component of the environment, it cannot be studied in isolation. On the other hand, only 4% of the respondents show strong disagreement with the environment that plays a pivotal role in acquisition of the language.

Q5.	Because of interference of mother tongue, we suffer at the time of learning a foreign language.			
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	0	8	19	23
	0%	16%	38%	46%

As shown in the above table, 38% of the students agree that mother tongue of a learner can greatly affect the acquisition in one way or the other. In fact, there is usually a negative impact of mother tongue in learning a new language. For instance, the Arabic speaker would articulate 'Bakistan' instead of 'Pakistan'. The Persian would utter 'thime' for 'time' because there is no /p/ sound in Arabic and no /t/ sound in Persian. As a result, it is conspicuous from the above discussion that most of the times the learners apply L1 phonological rules on L2 and thus it creates obstacles in acquisition of it like the native speakers.

Q6.	Oral practice is more important than only focusing on grammatical rules of the target language.			
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	0	1	10	39
	0%	2%	20%	78%

The majority number of students with 78% strongly agree that oral practice is more important than only focusing on the grammatical rules the target language. The linguistic knowledge of a language is known as competence while giving it a practical shape is known as performance. The learners sometimes only focus on the grammatical rules. Hence, they are deprived of the speaking skill.

Q7.	Language instructors are not experienced enough to make the foreign language easy for learners.			
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	3	10	18	19
	6%	20%	36%	38%

The majority with 38% of the respondents strongly agree with the above statement followed next in line just 3% showing strong disagreement with the above cited statement. The above table clearly depicts that language instructors are not well experienced in pedagogy to make the foreign language easy for the learners. As an illustration, it is a teacher who can make an easy lesson difficult and difficult one easy.

Q8.	We regard mistakes as source of embarrassment during learning a foreign language.			
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	1	3	22	24
	2%	6%	44%	48%

In the above table, 48% of the pupils are of the opinion that mistakes are regarded as a source of embarrassment during learning a foreign language. The performance of English speakers while speaking in public might occasionally suffer from excessive worry of making errors. Adults do take great care to avoid making mistakes when speaking. People frequently experience inhibition, which is a worry-based sensation that prevents people from expressing or acting on their desires. As an instance, while making errors is a normal part of learning a language, it can be discouraging for learners to speak in English when they would rather remain silent than face criticism in front of a big audience.

Q9.	We have less amount of vocabulary to communicate in a foreign language.			
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	1	4	23	22
	2%	8%	46%	44%

The table conspicuously displays that 46% being the highest among the four options agree that students have less amount of vocabulary to communicate in a foreign language. The building block unit of the language is vocabulary. Adult language speakers often conceive of their language in terms of their vocabulary. The number of words that exists in a particular language is known as lexicon. Notwithstanding, only 2% of the pupils show strong disagreement to the above cited statement.

Q10.	The foreign language learners lack proper guidelines to overcome the psychological barriers which affect their speaking skill.			
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	6	11	24	9
	12%	22%	48%	18%

The above table shows that 24 respondents out of total number making up a sum of 48% agree that EFL learners don't have proper guidelines to eradicate psychological barriers which affect their speaking performance. Students can overcome their psychological barriers if the instructors give their pupils enough time and help them overcome their timidity.

Result of the Questionnaire

Ten questions make up the aforementioned questionnaire. One questionnaire was provided to each student in the class. The students were required to choose one of the available options for each question to express their opinions regarding that subject. The questionnaire was of a closed-ended type. There are fifty chosen students in all. The researcher concludes that the majority of the learners have psychological issues after gathering all the viewpoints. Fear of making errors and viewing mistakes as a cause of disgrace were the two main psychological issues. The lack of a suitable atmosphere was also partially emphasized by the students. A host of additional issues are caused by an unsuitable environment. If the learning atmosphere were welcoming and appropriate, the students would never view mistakes as a source of humiliation. As making errors is the first step in FL learning, they wouldn't be afraid to do so when learning. It's important to note that while students are required to practice reading

and writing in class, they are not given even a small number of opportunities to speak French outside of class.

Observation

A researcher can use observation as a technique to collect data in a methodical manner. Since that it occurs in a genuine setting, it is a particularly authentic technique for data collection. In this way, the researcher might act as an eyewitness to the event. In such circumstances, the likelihood of students uttering falsehoods nearly completely ends since it is larger in the case of answering questions. The researcher looks to observation for support in order to quell the doubts about the veracity of the data. As comparison to a questionnaire, this data gathering tool allows the researcher in a particular topic to obtain more precise data. When that occurs, the researcher may identify the locations of the learners' eyewitnesses while watching the actual scene. The researcher identifies the flaws and contrasts the observational and questionnaire results. Deficiencies might take the shape of bad grammar, awkward body language, unconfident facial expressions, and reluctance.

Results of Observation

After gathering data with a questionnaire, the researcher moved on to gathering data by observation, another type of data-collection. The researcher sat in the classroom and closely watched the classroom setting in order to reinforce and increase reliability of data. The study wanted to identify the participants' speaking skill weaknesses in Florida. The whole learning process between the students and the teacher was monitored by the researcher. Finally, the researcher came to the conclusion that the classroom setting was inadequate. The researcher saw a disconnect between teacher and students. Particularly the teacher displayed rigidity rather than flexibility. Due to their continual exposure to reading and writing, the children were not sufficiently motivated to engage in spoken conversation.

During class, the teacher asked a few questions of the pupils, and they barely managed to respond with only a few fragmented syllables. They didn't tend to talk much. Because they were so self-conscious when speaking, the pupils made a lot of blunders. When the students conversed and responded to the teacher's inquiry, the researcher maintained a close eye on their facial expressions. Together with observing the students' body language, the researcher also assessed the students' levels of anxiety. They were more worried about being teased by their peers. It was abundantly evident that the pupils suffered from severe psychological issues, such as anxiety of making errors, fear of looking foolish, hesitancy, fear of being teased by their classmates, and other issues.

A Comparison between the Result of Questionnaire and That of Observation

Both the results of the questionnaire and the observation have "factors" that are essentially the same. Psychological issues including the dread of making errors, being self-conscious, and running out of words dominated the results from the questionnaire. The researcher who was the observer in the classroom saw nearly the same variables. The researcher observed the students' lack of assurance, hesitancy, and self-consciousness, which ultimately caused them to pronounce things incorrectly and use fewer words. Together with the dread of "being laughed at" by classmates, making errors was another common anxiety among the pupils. There were also extrinsic issues, such as a lack of a suitable place to practise speaking and rigidity in the teachers' interactions with the pupils. The findings from both data-collection

methods support the "hypothesis" that FL learners experience issues with their speaking abilities that are primarily psychological in character with a small amount of general/external nature.

Conclusion

This research article actually addresses the variables that influence the speaking skills of learners at Government Degree College Peshawar. The researcher is primarily interested in the affecting factors that have somewhat bigger detrimental impact on the speaking abilities of FL learners. The researcher has identified these often mentioned issues and is now offering some useful advice to overcome them. The recommendations are made in light of the researcher's prior efforts and the outcomes of a methodical approach. As speaking is one of the fundamental abilities of language acquisition, this study sheds light on the challenges encountered by students when learning English as a foreign language. It primarily focuses on the methods that may be used to improve students' capacity to articulate a spoken language. Also, the research's findings were thoughtfully presented and examined. Answering fundamental problems that have been posed as the key goals of the current research is the main goal of the small-scale study.

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