



English Literature and Language Review

ISSN(e): 2412-1703, ISSN(p): 2413-8827

Vol. 2, No. 4, pp: 43-48, 2016

URL: <http://arpgweb.com/?ic=journal&journal=9&info=aims>

Identification of the Teacher's Debilitating Attitude Involved in Acquiring Oral Competency of ESL Students at Graduate Level

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to identify the factors related to the teacher's attitude involved in oral communication of ESL students. The investigation was carried out at Bahawalpur, Pakistan. This research was reported on a survey study and used a questionnaire for the students and interview format for the teachers as tools to investigate the issue. The interview was taken from forty highly experienced ESL/EFL teachers; and for questionnaire almost 100 students from each college were selected, total 498 ESL students participated in this research. The data provided through interview from teacher was analyzed qualitatively and the data from the students was analyzed through SPSS and Microsoft Excel. The following conclusion was drawn from the data collected from this investigation: Instructor's attitude motivates debilitating speaking factors. This investigation has proved explanatory implications and additionally this study also examined the attitudes and opinions of language teachers about second language learning and teaching. Furthermore, the research suggested a variety of strategies for learners to cope with second language anxiety.

Keywords: Teacher's demotivating attitude; Oral communication snoothing; Communicative skills; Teacher's essential motivation; Hesitation due to interruption; Anxiety in oral competency.

1. Introduction

According to [Hewitt and Stephenson \(2012\)](#) teachers and researchers are well known for many years that language learning process, no doubt, is very disturbing experience for many students. Examiners in general have been involved in exploring, recounting, and sufficiently measuring debilitating factors, in foreign languages especially, just to help the students to cope with anxieties and to enlighten their language presentation. Anxious foreign language learners agree with the fact that even if they are well prepared for language class they get stressful. More struggle make them tenser because they always feel that other students will perform better than them ([Gregerse and Horwitz, 2002](#)). Furthermore, constant disturbance or nervousness has hostile affects on language acquisition. So there is need to tackle the problems related to oral competency. This would be helpful to know what interventions need to decrease hostile anxiety, substituted by facilitating type anxiety which may encourage the students in learning process ([Hewitt and Stephenson, 2012](#)).

There is serious need to focus on existence of speaking factors and its role in language learning before it gets worst. [MacIntyre and Gardner \(1991\)](#) state that, the difference between language anxieties and other form of anxiety is understood and now is known as the main issue to know the role of anxiety in language learning. Students are experiencing uneasiness in language learning for many years. In the history of language anxiety, speaking anxiety is counted as maximum anxiety generating ([Zhang and Zhong, 2012](#)). Furthermore, [Young \(1991\)](#) found that peers experience supreme fear in speaking the target language before, others in comparison of writing and reading. proposes that to handle with the language problems first there is need to recognize the speaking anxieties, negative evaluation and other factors which generate foreign language learning anxieties.

1.1. Statement of Problem

In Pakistan English has become status representation in social life. The globalization of English in every field especially in education system of Pakistan is compelling students to communicate in English but sometime due to instructor's attitude, the students feel stress in oral communication. So there is special need to focus on second language learning anxiety caused due to teacher's manners.

1.2. Aims and Objectives

The purposes of this investigation were:

- To highlight the major stressors and debilitating factors arose due to teacher's attitude among ESL students at graduate level, involved in speaking English.
- To identify the debilitating factors in classroom at graduate level classes due to the teacher's attitude.
- To help the instructors to understand the student's anxiety perfectly due to their own attitude.

1.3. Research Questions

1. Whether factors related to teacher's attitude hamper learners' communication skills and delay ESL learning process and learner's progress?
2. Is there any relationship between ESL oral competency skills and instructor's attitude towards learners?

1.4. Hypotheses

1. Instructor's attitude motivates debilitating speaking factors.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The basic aim of this research was to investigate the existence and the level of English language speaking worries among ESL graduate level students due to teacher's attitude. The outcome was valid for educators to review their teaching methods and students facing anxiety. The study was supportive for instructors to recognize their student's problems deeply with a better guidance in resolving their apprehensions by avoiding their irritating teaching style. Furthermore, research was beneficial to examine speaking anxiety issues related to the teacher's attitude extensively in college environment of Pakistan.

1.6. Delimitations of the Study

- This research only explored the effects of teacher's attitudes on speaking skills.
- Data was collected only from graduate level Government colleges of Bahawalpur, with mean age eighteen to twenty two years.
- The study was delimited to investigate the role of debilitating factors on learners' Speaking skills only.

2. Literature Review

This Chapter provides comprehensive review about disturbing factors arose from teacher's attitude involved in oral interaction.

2.1. Anxiety and Language Learning

Anxiety can be defined as the feeling of burden and nervousness specifically related to the second language learning environments; might be in speaking, listening and in writing (Onwuegbuzie *et al.*, 1999). It is well defined that learner is suffering from anxiety when he is not learning well, bunking from class, unable to answer and even not doing assignments; teachers and educators are strange that what happening. Young (1991) listed six sources of classroom language anxiety given below: (1) "personal and interpersonal anxieties, (2) learner beliefs about language learning, (3) instructor beliefs about language learning, (4) instructor-learner interactions, (5) classroom procedures, (6) language testing" (Pršić, 2013).

2.1.1. Foreign Language Anxiety

There are many types of anxiety but when anxiety associates with foreign language then it is known as FLA. No doubt it's vary complicated and multidimensional experience (Tanveer, 2007). FLA can be defined as an individual's feeling of anxiety, uneasiness, nervousness, and burden connected with a stimulation of the automatic nervous system (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991; Tanveer, 2007). According to Al-Saraj (2011) Oxford during the process of learning students experience anxiety and it is foreign language anxiety (FLA). According to a variety of researchers (Horwitz *et al.*, 1986; MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991) FLA can ruin the process of success in learning the second language. FLA occurs due to "self-assumed" opinions, feelings and performances related to classroom of second language learning during language learning process (Horwitz *et al.*, 1986). FLA is also different from trait anxiety, which is a long lasting. According to Horwitz *et al.* (1986) in fact FLA is situation specific anxiety and different from all other anxiety. This type of anxiety occurs in certain situations like public speaking or contributing in class (Ellis, 2008). FLA is unique in sense that it occurs specifically in the unique foreign language learning environment. Many investigators (Horwitz *et al.* (1986) cited in Price (1991)) said that in foreign language learning first anxiety felt by learners, in listening and speaking.

2.2. Anxiety Induced by Instructor's Attitude

According to behaviorist learning approach that teacher's negative reactions to learner's errors can promote learner's fear and hinder future communication. Commonly teachers provoke nervousness due their old concepts in language teaching or due to way of mistakes improvement. Sometime teachers acts like "drill sergeant" rather than a "facilitator" (Young (1991) cited in Tanveer (2007)). Frequent correction on errors is provided in the classroom leads learners to frustration and awkwardness and they become conscious about their lacks (Tanveer, 2007).

Students revealed that in classroom their mistakes and deficiencies are pointed out because of strict and reserved classroom environment that provoke their stress (Tanveer, 2007).

Harmer in 2011 condemns the idea that students get confused in a situation being forced to speak English and to become independent and said that the fact is that in the words of an old English proverb, you can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink. And if it does not want or need to drink, you should not make it do so anyway. Some students, like horses at water's edge, just don't get it; for them the teacher is the one who is responsible for their learning, and they expect the teacher to do their job. Faced with the reluctance of at least some of the students in a group to assume agency, we have to consider what we can do both for those students and for others in the group who are keener on the idea of taking learner responsibility. (P.23)

The commanding, embarrassing and humiliating behavior of the educators towards students is debilitating factor playing vital role in oral competency (Tanveer, 2007). Many instructors take classroom time as only performance time for students, not learning period. The most common complaint about instructors was found that many of them made classroom time a performance rather than a learning time (Tanveer, 2007). Learner's bond with their teachers also causes anxieties (Na, 2007).

2.3. ESL Learning and Teaching in Educational Perspective of Pakistan

It is important to assess the connection between English language, its development, learning English as a foreign or second language, and pedagogical implication of English language. English is now a lingua franca or a 'world language' recognized on global level. In Pakistan, at both the individual and national levels English language is progressive language (Shamim, 2011).

No hesitation, the linguistic map of Pakistan is complex due to many languages as all provinces have their own dominant languages and a number of minority languages. So Pakistani societies are multilingual and multicultural (Shamim, 2011). It's somewhat difficult to command over all languages perfectly but as English is world language so people want to acquire English perfectly.

According to (Shamim, 2011) in Pakistan recent Government policy 'Education for All' focused on ESL teaching and learning, enhance the use of English in the world level. Perhaps its complicated policy issues both for resource and achievement quality in English language in Pakistan. Moreover, English in Pakistan is successful, status symbol and also a key to national progress for both rich and poor for future life of their children.

2.3.1. ESL Learning

ESL learning in Pakistan is not as much successful due to many factors. Almost more than half of learner's ESL learning is hectic due to psychological and sociocultural factors as this study was also investigation of debilitating factors involved in English communication. In Pakistan, education systems are of different typed, mostly on bases of medium of instruction as identified English medium and Urdu medium. Mostly for upper class is private English medium schools and the Urdu medium schools are mainly for poorer (Shamim, 2011).

English medium private schools no doubt planned high quality education and developed classrooms through the medium of instruction in English, resulting rich students in full command and higher levels of talent in English (Shamim, 2011).

2.3.2. ESL Teaching

According to Pršić (2013) that the objectives of foreign language teaching are to make students fluent in target language communication. To learn second language effectively, general understanding is used in speaking and writing referred to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). According to Larsen-Freeman (2000) that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was established in 1980s when it became clear that to make learners fluent in communication desired not only linguistic competence, but also in other wider communicative competence. Moreover, in Pakistani communities ESL teaching is not as much successful as was expected because of instructor's attitude as discussed above in this chapter. Thus, for each succeeding Government the teaching of English noted as serious issue (Shamim, 2008).

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Design

Questionnaire's questions were drawn from the literature review. First of all, all government graduate colleges were selected for data collection. Sampling was two staged sampling. At first stage different arts and science classes were selected through cluster random sampling. At second stage actual sample from those clusters were selected through random sampling. Teachers sample was selected through convenient sampling from the same colleges, on the basis of suitability with people most convenient to approach in limit of time.

The survey held during the routine class hours. Questionnaires were given to the learners in printed form to fill them. The researcher first briefly introduced the topic of the research and administered and translated the questions in Urdu to avoid misunderstandings. Students were free to give their own and authentic answers. Students were allowed not to mention their names to maintain their secrecy if they feel uncomfortable. Furthermore it was optional to give their answers in Urdu if they could not express in English to know the actual reason of speaking problems. A face to face direct semi structured direct interview in English was favored for the teachers.

3.2. Research Population

The target population was the male and female students from different disciplines of science and humanities group. The approximate population of students at graduate level was about 4000 studying in different colleges of Bahawalpur city.

3.3. Sample Size

From the above given population 498 students were selected. The mean age of sample was from eighteen to twenty two years. For this research highly experienced forty English language teachers were selected from the same colleges. Stated age of teachers was from thirty to fifty years and their teaching experience ranged from eight to twenty five years.

3.4. Data Collection Tools

For this analysis, the data was collected through open and closed ended questionnaire from students and from language teachers with the help of interview. The questionnaire consists of fourteen closed ended questions. Semi structured interview was based on four questions covered all possible debilitating sociocultural factors.

3.5 Tools Validity

The experts and experienced personals with more than ten years of teaching experiences of the relevant subject have analyzed the tool validity; ten commandants (Ph D) were taken to validate the questionnaire.

3.6. Data Analysis

This was mixed research. Qualitative data was taken and research questions were satisfied through the quantitative analysis of by using SSPS, Microsoft Excel, Tables and charts. Similarly, both quantitative and qualitative methods have been adopted during analyzing data and given interpretations consequently.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Findings

The study investigated that (84.1%) students were in the favor of the statement that less fluent speaker was made more anxious by the teachers, in comparison to fluent speaker. The overall mean score was 4.04.

Data revealed that (90.6%) students were in the favor of the statement that facilitating and Positive attitude of teachers keep ESL learners relaxed and motivated learner's oral performance and the overall mean score was 4.35.

Data exposed that (75.3%) students were in the favor of the statement that students get confused in a situation of being forced to speak in English. The overall mean score was 4.01.

Moreover, (66.7%) students were agreed that Formal & reserved class setting is major cause of stress and barrier in fluency. The overall mean score was 3.57.

Data showed that (70.5%) students were in the favor of the statement that their English teachers did not prefer to deliver lectures in English. The overall mean score was 3.83.

Data exposed that (72.3%) students were in the favor of the statement that students felt insecurity when they are asked to compare their own oral competency with their classmate. The overall mean score was 3.93.

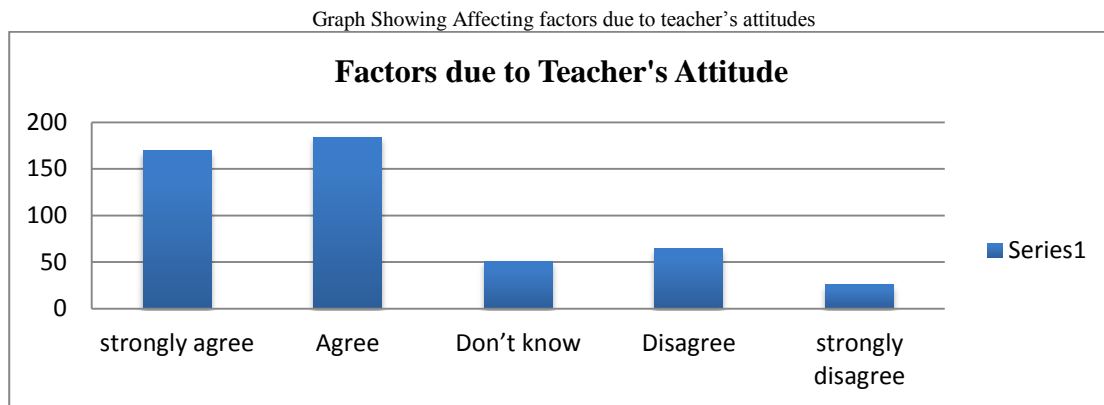
Data revealed that (64.7%) students were in the favor of the statement that teachers used humiliating behavior to snub oral performance. The overall mean score was 3.71.

Data revealed that (62%) students were in the favor of the statement that due to authoritative and humiliating behavior to oral performance, learners felt hesitations even communicating before their teachers. The overall mean score was 3.60.

Data exposed that (77.1%) students were in the favor of the statement that positive attitude of instructors, facilitated learner's oral performance. The overall mean score was 3.96.

Data revealed that (67.9%) students were in the favor of the statement that frequent feedback on student's error while speaking; acted as condemning behavior to speak further. The overall mean score was 3.65.

In interview analysis, the most repeated observation was that teachers themselves reported that the teacher's attitude was also responsible to shatter the learner's motivations. Additionally, lack of skilled and trained teachers in substandard school was also nourishing anxious learners. Mostly in Pakistani cultural teachers act like a commander and never hesitate to humiliate learner's respect on errors. Due to lack of skilled and trained teachers, sub standard school education, inadequate confidence and practice; students are not acquiring oral competency perfectly and feel it as challenging to acquire.



The gathered and latest analysis indicated that there are mixed opinion as shown in graph. Strongly agreed and agreed graph's movements showed that students highly approved the statements.

4.2. Discussion

Analysis of data successfully proved hypotheses. As hypothesized, this research effectively portrait the all probable factors related to the teacher's attitude. Research analyzed that instructor's commanding; embarrassing attitude and frequent feedback on errors were supreme factors, aroused because of teachers and was also discussed in studies of (Tanveer, 2007) and (Young, 1991). Others researchers also explored from their studies like Hilleson (1996), Tanveer (2007) and Harmer (2011) that sometimes just because of teachers (due to many reasons) students suffered. Students feel pressure when forced to give oral performances, or hesitate to contribute in crowd activities, leading to frustration and annoyance.

In Pakistan the language teachers are not skilled in oral competency especially at early school and they themselves feel uncomfortable, not being fully professional in grammar, pronunciation, accent and the rules related to the spoken English. The linguistic English especially is neither fully taught nor tested even by training academies. The trainers even hardly have any idea that their training may help the learners in developing their communicative proficiencies because of lacking information in regard to coaching and teaching strategies, leading to worst future with full of anxieties (Mahmood and Ghani, 2012).

Furthermore learners explored the many disturbing attitudes of the teachers which influences burden on learners.

5. Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1. Recommendations

Continued education should be mandatory for a coach and be observed by an expert panel to note any anxiety in writing and spoken English before one's selection. Otherwise one may deliver the same anxiety and stress among the language learners and could not balance with those destructive feelings and the student's bright future (Hashemi, 2011). As, second language learning mostly depends on teachers and every language teacher can adopt special behaviors to reduce stress. So first of all teachers should effectively recognize and discuss the language anxiety and then help anxious students. Second language learning is challenging but this process does not require special management. It only needs suspicious behavior of the language teachers in order to understand anxieties (Tseng, 2012). The natural and pleasant behavior of teachers toward their student may be more relaxing rather than authoritative attitude and might be more obedient. Instructors should assess their teaching principles and avoid the anxiety provoking situation. Instructors should reduce the competition between students if they feel that instead of benefits, competitions create uneasiness and sense of insecurity among anxious learners (Hilleson, 1996). Teachers must recognize learner's stress and should adopt strategies from cognitive, affective, and behavioral approaches to reduce their anxiety (Tanveer, 2007) and avoid talking more definitely that might contribute and provoke tight lipped but irritation in the class (Tsui, 1996). Future research may be undertaken in the direction for further identification of debilitating factor involved in oral competency, which should be more reasonable, as learning a second language is full of anxiety. Detailed study is also mandatory on factors eliminating debilitation in oral competency, considering the societies of Pakistan.

5.2. Conclusions

Researcher concluded that embarrassing behavior of a supervisor toward student was a debilitating factor because students can't communicate with teacher without hesitation and even cannot ask questions easily because of their authoritative and humiliating attitude. The formal, reserved, authoritative and forcing behavior of supervisors is extreme cause of pressure among learners, which make the students disinterested and non motivated. Students get confused in a situation of being forced to speak. Mostly English teachers do not prefer to deliver lectures in English rather in native language and support standard dialect only in written English.

Furthermore, research analyzed that instructor's commanding; embarrassing attitude and frequent feedback on errors were supreme factors. The study investigated that usually teacher encouraged fluent learners and compare

them with less fluent speaker, which created insecurity in anxious students. Moreover researcher concluded that formal & reserved class setting is major cause of stress and barrier in fluency. Additionally it is revealed that teachers used humiliating behavior to snub oral performance so due to authoritative and humiliating behavior to oral performance. In fact teacher's attitude was responsible to shatter the learner's motivations. Teachers never hesitated to crush student's respect on errors. Additionally, lack of skilled and trained teachers in substandard school was also nourishing anxious learners. It is concluded that facilitating and positive attitude of teachers keep ESL learners relaxed and motivated learner's oral performance.

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