



The Influence of EFL Apprehension in Speaking Performance

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Abstract, *The influence of EFL apprehension on speaking performance is a significant area of study in language learning. Empirical studies reveal that anxiety among EFL students is influenced by variables such as communication anxiety, fear of receiving a poor grade, and low self-esteem. during speaking activities. Speech anxiety among ESL/EFL learners can impact their oral communication skills negatively, leading to avoidance and withdrawal from speaking activities in the classroom. Language anxiety, specifically related to speaking, can hinder students' willingness to engage in foreign language acquisition and affect their speaking performance negatively. Research have indicated a connection between EFL students' oral communication anxiety and communication proficiency, highlighting the importance of addressing anxiety to enhance language proficiency.*

Key words; *Apprehension ,speaking performance, learning, anxiety, communication*

1. INTRODUCTION

The ultimate objective of studying a foreign language is usually to become fluent in that language. Regarding individuals acquiring a foreign language, , using that language might provide a variety of difficulties and difficult situations. Affective aspects appear to be one of the barriers to mastering a foreign language, although researchers have shown a wide range of factors can have an impact on the process, both favorably and adversely. EFL learners who experience fear, perplexity, embarrassment, or trepidation may find it difficult to continue learning a foreign language, particularly when they attempt to converse in the target language in a classroom setting. , otherwise they impact how well people function orally (Brahmia, 2021:12).

Speaking is one of the ways that individuals communicate. Speaking is the method humans use to communicate with others. The goal of speaking is to help the listener grasp the issue being discussed. Daily communication is inextricably linked to human interactions. (Brown, 2000: 273)

Individuals communicate with one another using a variety of linguistic styles and methods. When speaking a foreign language, language learners might employ a variety of techniques. We refer to these tactics as communication strategies(Rastegar & Gohari, 2016:12)

Anxiety associated with speaking a foreign language can hinder English fluency among EFL students. Anxiety related to language use is a significant issue that could affect pupils' speech output. To minimize its influence on their ability to communicate in class when speaking a foreign language, it is crucial to identify this fear. In a few years, phobia of using a

foreign tongue will be a phenomenon that is worthwhile to investigate. Several studies on anxiety have confirmed this (Akkakoson, 2016: 63-82).

Problem of the study

Since language development lays the groundwork for literacy and academic success, language proficiency should be sufficient. Having better speaking and reading abilities benefits students. It helps boost confidence as well.

Aim of study

It aims to investigate The Influence of EFL Apprehension in speaking performance.

Limits of the Study

The researcher has described the impact of anxiety in speaking performance.

Definition of Speaking skill

The abilities of speaking, listening, reading, and writing are all necessary when learning a foreign language. Enhancing the pupils' fluency (speaking and listening) and literacy (writing and reading) is the aim of these skills. Linguists claim that speaking is the most crucial of these four skills since it reveals one's level of language competency.

Speaking, according to many language instructors, is the best way to develop accurate pronunciation, fluency in reading, and the building blocks of strong writing (Hughes, 2002: 133). As a result, teaching speaking became a valued problem in the EFL sector.

According to Bygate (1985:1) Speaking is the ultimate means of fostering social cohesion, establishing one's social standing, advancing one's career, and conducting business. Additionally, it serves as a medium for learning a lot of languages, which is especially helpful for many people. So perhaps we should think more deeply about teaching speaking.

Speaking is essential language skill. that needs to be taught, which is the main reason speaking instruction is necessary. Speaking is a social activity in our culture where people use words for a variety of purposes and situations. Learning language skills requires speaking, which is necessary for communication so that the speaker and listener can transmit thoughts and share information [Brahmia, 2021:17].

Even though speaking seems to be understood by all, there are really many different definitions of speaking used in different professions, making it difficult to describe exactly.

According to (Haidara, 2016),(Lindsay & Knight ,2006: 57) Speech is regarded as a productive skill that includes assembling a message, conveying the message, and engaging with others." It has also been described as a sophisticated technique of communicating orally and nonverbally through gestures and facial expressions.

In order to communicate effectively, speech is one of the most crucial abilities to develop and improve. It's considered to be among the most challenging parts of learning a language, despite its significance (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017).

This is primarily due to the fact that it calls for the collaboration of many knowledge domains with strong communication abilities (Bygate, 1987:9).

For this reason, students must improve their capacity to link words and sounds. In order to effectively communicate with other speakers, people must also respond and use language that is appropriate for both the situation and the other person. Early on in their growth, students must be able to "talk around" unfamiliar words or idioms to avoid stopping the conversation while they look for the correct term..

They must acquire terms in order to define things. Additionally, students should practice speaking in a variety of settings, such as with friends, strangers, coworkers, or teachers. In addition, they must strike a balance between their fluency and accuracy and speak clearly enough for the listener to hear them without undue effort (Luama, 2004:7).

In summary, speaking is considered one of the most difficult components of learning and teaching a foreign language, but it's also a crucial ability that language learners must acquire.

Speaking Ability's Significance

Speakers are the most important learners of foreign or second languages. According to Brown (1987:12), "In real-life situations, speaking is the skill on which students will be evaluated the most." Even though speaking skills are important, they have not received much attention, and most EFL/ESL teachers still primarily teach speaking skills as dialogue or drill memorization.

Oral communication abilities have become increasingly important for students to succeed in both their academic and post-graduation employment. According to Rao (2019: 6–18), English is the language of opportunity for employment and achieving one's goals in life.

Additionally, learners might utilize these speaking abilities to help them settle in effectively at work, therefore speaking skills are essential, since everything depends on how people convey their ideas to others.

Characteristics of Speaking Ability

Early methods of teaching languages placed more emphasis on accuracy than on fluency. Later on, it became clear that this was insufficient for language learning. As a result, classroom activities have focused on fluency and accuracy, which have been recognized as its major attributes by contemporary teaching methodologies, most notably the Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT).

Therefore, in order to enhance their communication ability, language learners must find a balance between correctness and fluency. (Richards & Rodgers 2001:20)

Fluency

Fluency is the primary attribute of a speaker's performance and the primary objective that educators strive to attain while instructing speaking. Fluency is limited to speech production, as defined by Hedge (2000:54) as the capacity to link units of speech together in a smooth way without pauses, inappropriate slowness, or hesitation. That is, in order to participate in the discourse, students must be able to quickly select words and integrate them into a comprehensible message. Speaking with consistency is essential for Skill 8. To stay fluent, students must modify their ideas to fit the vocabulary they are using and come up with ways to discuss topics they are unable to articulate clearly.

According to Hughes (2002), while evaluating a learner's fluency, they are not required to deliver a speech quickly or in time with native speakers. However, students must read at a normal pace while maintaining a clear flow and a coherent sentence structure. Pye & Greenall (1996) stated that evaluating fluency involves evaluating coherent verbal engagement with good tempo, rhythm, and minimal obtrusive pauses.

Accuracy

(Nunan, 1999) asserts that language learners need to be linguistically competent in order to converse in another language., a sufficient vocabulary, and syntactic mastery. In fact, if speakers don't structure their speech accurately, their listeners won't understand them and will become disinterested in the discourse. Therefore, for oral competency, it is important to focus on the accuracy and completeness of the language forms. As a result, students must communicate in a way that is understandable for the listener in terms of word choice, word endings, and pronunciation.

(Brown, 2000: 49–58) agreed that although fluency may be the main objective of any language course, , accuracy should be reached in part by focusing on , vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation components to build a comprehensible and accurate language.

Grammar

Encyclopaedia Britannica defines grammar as the rules that regulate a language's sounds, words, sentences, and other constituents, as well as how those parts are combined and understood. In a limited sense, the phrase solely relates to the study of sentence and word structure (syntax and morphology), excluding pronunciation and vocabulary.

The grammatical structures employed in speech are usually distinct from those used in written language, as demonstrated by Biber and Conrad (in press) (as referenced in Nation, 2011:450).

Similarly, Thornbury (2005) argued that spoken and written language differ in their grammatical structures and proposed some standards for the former. These standards are as follows:

A clause is the smallest grammatical item in a meaningful structure. Clauses are coordinated in general.

frequent application of tag queries.

Direct speech is preferably used.

Head+ body+ tail construction.

Syntactic blend, incompleteness, false starts, hesitation, etc.

Vocabulary

According to Lessard & Clouston, (2013:2) vocabulary defines as a language's collection of words, including individual words, phrases, and groupings of words that together communicate a certain meaning. Reaching precision with vocabulary.

(Harmer, 2001) states the right choice of words should be chosen based on the subject's nature, the people involved, and the conversation's context.

According to Ellis (2005: 713–728), students frequently struggle to communicate what they want to say because they lack the appropriate terminology. or occasionally use words incorrectly—for example, by using synonyms that don't always have the same meaning. In order to accomplish this, students should have a large vocabulary that they may choose from and utilize to produce coherent sentences.

Pronunciation

According to Harrison (2001), students must understand the various phonological rules, locations of sound articulations, and sound characteristics. Furthermore, they would be able to comprehend others better, pronounce words correctly, and raise or lower their proficiency if they knew when to emphasize certain words and when to change their intonation. These characteristics aid FL learners in achieving the objective of precise pronunciation, which enables them to comprehend communication from others.

Factors Affecting of Speaking Performance

To assist pupils in overcoming speaking issues, teachers must determine what factors are influencing their students' speaking performance.

Prayuda (2021:26) states that the following can affect students' speaking performance: time restrictions, planning, performance standards, amount of support, affective elements (such as motivation, confidence, and anxiety), listening skills, topical knowledge, feedback during speaking activities

Performance conditions

Learners work in groups to complete a speaking assignment in various settings. According to (Astyk & Newton, 2009:60), speaking performance can be impacted by the circumstances of the performance. There are four suggested kinds of performance criteria: time restrictions, planning, performance standards, and amount of help.

Affective factors

Oxford (1990:267) asserts that a learner's emotive side is the most important variables influencing the success or failure of language acquisition. Research conducted over the past ten years has indicated that a number of affective characteristics are connected to success in 27 second language acquisitions, although the majority of those studies focused on three categories: motivation, confidence, and anxiety (Krashen, 1982, : 10).

Listening ability

According to Doff and Pisano (1999:199), the development of listening skills is a prerequisite for speaking skill development. Effective conversations require that students comprehend what is being communicated to them.

Humin(2002:18) asserts that when one person speaks, the other attends by responding through active listening. Actually, every speaker plays the part of both speaker and listener. Consequently, someone is obviously unable to reply if they are unable to comprehend what is being said. According to Doff and Pisano (1999:220), it suggests that speaking and hearing are connected.

Topical knowledge

Topical knowledge refers to knowledge structures stored in long-term memory (Bachman & Palmer ,1996:18)

The term topical knowledge describes the speakers' comprehension interpretation of relevant topical material. Students can use language in context and draw connections to their daily lives by using the information provided by topical knowledge provides. various test items may be easier for those who believe that speaking ability is influenced by 12 topical knowledge and more difficult for those who do not (Bachman & Palmer, 1996:18).

Feedback during speaking activities

The majority of pupils desire and anticipate receiving performance evaluations from their teachers. But not every spoken production needs to be approached in the same manner. that the choices teacher make for how to respond to their students' performance will be influenced by the activities, the lesson's phases, the kinds of faults students make, and the specific student committing error.

The goal of the speaking exercise as well as the conversational flow would be destroyed if professors corrected students whenever there was an issue (Harmer, 1991:70).

Students who are corrected all the time could get quite discouraged and afraid to speak up. When correcting students' mistakes, they advise teachers to constantly provide encouraging remarks and constructive criticism (Baker & Westrup, 2003:58).

Definition of Apprehension

Apprehension refers to two distinct meanings in the English language:(dictionary. cambridge,2024)

- Worry about the future or a fearing that something unpleasant is going to happen: This meaning is related to anxiety and unease about potential negative events or outcomes. It can be a general feeling of apprehension or a specific concern about a particular situation.
- The act of understanding or comprehending something: This meaning is related to the faculty of apprehending or understanding, which is the ability to perceive or grasp something directly and immediately.

It can also refer to the result of apprehending something mentally, such as conception or comprehension. In summary, apprehension can refer to a state of anxiety or fear about the future, or it can refer to the act of understanding or comprehending something. It means anxiety or fear of communication, Apprehension has been defined in a variety of ways. These meanings could change depending on how the construct is understood or viewed from different perspectives. In general, anxiety is a vague, unpleasant emotional state characterized by feelings of dread, uneasiness, apprehension, and misery. (Reber, 1985:43).

Anxiety as an emotion marked by feelings of stress, anxious thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure. (Brahmia, 2021:29)

Communication is regarded as a crucial component of language learning. Nevertheless, a lot of English as a foreign language (EFL) learners exhibit a form of communication anxiety when asked to perform in front of their peers or teacher. These learners typically struggle to understand, speak, or even just communicate with one another in the target language.

Horwitz & Cope (1986:127) stated that all speaking challenges encountered by students, whether in groups or outside of the classroom, are "manifestations of communication apprehension."

Communication apprehension is a sort of shyness characterised by fear or anxiety about speaking with people (Horwitz & Cope ,1986:128).

The unique communication anxiety that permeates learning a foreign language stems from the individual's knowledge that they would almost definitely struggle to communicate with others and make themselves understood. Many ordinarily outgoing persons are mute in a foreign language school, perhaps as a result of this awareness.

Because of their inadequate language proficiency, learners who exhibit CA feel uncomfortable to communicate in the target language in front of others (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009:43).

Impact of speech performance

The impact of speech performance in the context of English language proficiency can be profound, especially among students. (Jusuf, 2021: 307-309).stats factors affecting students' poor speaking performance:

- Internal factors: These include language competence issues like lack of vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and insufficient exposure to English during early education.
- Psychological aspects: Factors such as fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence, and anxiety can also contribute to poor speaking performance

- Solutions to Improve Speaking Performance:

- Strategies based on theories by various experts aim to address the identified factors. These solutions may involve techniques like slowed speech, repetition, and paraphrasing to enhance students' speaking skills

3- Importance of Speaking Skills:

- Research emphasizes the significance of speaking skills in English language learning. Students prioritize speaking as a crucial skill for effective communication and academic success

- Impact of English Proficiency on Academic Performance:

- Studies show a correlation between English language proficiency and academic performance among international students. Proficiency in English is essential for understanding academic content and communicating effectively in an academic setting.

- Benefits of Strong English Language Skills:

- Proficiency in English can lead to enhanced career opportunities, academic advancement, cultural exchange, access to information, and improved networking capabilities. In

summary, addressing internal and psychological factors, implementing effective strategies, recognizing the importance of speaking skills in language learning, and understanding the broader impact of English proficiency on academic performance and various aspects of life are crucial considerations when evaluating speech performance in the context of English language proficiency. (Jusuf, 2021:307-309).

Conclusion

This study clarified that anxiousness is one of the most challenging barriers to speech for EFL learners. It has attempted to explore how foreign language anxiety influences the oral performance of EFL learners. This study actually demonstrate a significant correlation between two variables; learners who have higher levels of anxiety when compelled to talk; hence, FLA is a significant barrier that is typically more connected with the speaking competence than the other skills. This further validated our argument, which holds that the more anxious EFL students are in the classroom, the worse their oral performance is. The study's findings about the effect of EFL anxiety on speaking ability highlight the significant impact that anxiety has on language learners. High levels of anxiety, stemming from factors like communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and low self-confidence, can lead to avoidance and withdrawal from speaking activities in EFL/ESL classes. Anxious students often associate English proficiency with social status and talent, leading to feelings of inferiority that hinder fluency and trigger anxiety during speaking tasks. Remedies suggested by participants include creating a friendly classroom environment to encourage practice and speaking opportunities. Studies emphasize that speech anxiety can negatively affect learners' confidence, fluency, and overall speaking skills, influencing their willingness to engage in oral communication activities. Addressing anxiety in language learning is crucial for enhancing students' communication competence and proficiency in the target language.

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