English Language Classroom: A Factor Obstructing Communicative Collaboration among L2 Teachers and Students

Humaira Akbar  
Visiting Lecturer, Department of English, Ghazi University, Dera Ghazi Khan, Punjab, Pakistan.

Muhammad Asif  
Assistant Professor, Department of English, Ghazi University, Dera Ghazi Khan, Punjab, Pakistan.

Saeed Ahmad  
Assistant Professor, Department of English, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar, Punjab, Pakistan.

Abstract: The key objective of the study was to determine the views of ESL students regarding English language classroom environment in obstructing communicative collaboration and to assess the impact of English language classroom environment in obstructing communicative collaboration among ESL students. To realize the prior drive this research uses the mixed method approach and for the proper execution of this work the researcher collected data through a questionnaire. Research data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). A major portion of the students agreed that the existing classroom environment of BS English is absolutely unfavourable for the best communicative interaction as it produces negative impacts on learning. This undesirable situation can be altered altogether by extending the role of the English language teacher as in most of the Outer Circle countries like Pakistan teacher is considered the custodian of the class and the most authoritative figure in the ESL classroom.

Key Words: Communicative Collaboration, English Language Classroom, ESL Teachers, ESL Students

Introduction

According to Richards (1990), learning English speaking skills has been the most significant preference for a number of L2 learners in EFL classrooms, and most often, English language learners evaluate their achievement in L2 learning based on how well they have improved their communicative language abilities. Teachers and curriculum in the EFL environment are designed for either direct methodologies that focus on particular aspects of verbal communication such as turn-taking and subject management, or indirect methodologies that provide opportunities for oral engagement through group work and task work. Furthermore, Harmer (2007) and Gilakjani (2016) expanded the scope of the discussion by suggesting that human communication is a dynamic process in which people need communication to communicate something and transmit information about people or events. Speakers converse in their own language in order to accomplish their own aspirations, needs, and priorities. Speakers can be both listeners and speakers at the same time, because of the turn-taking activity for successful communication.

In foreign language learning, students' communicative abilities from their background are extremely important. Even though spoken English is important, it has often been undervalued in colleges and universities for several reasons, including grammar and disapproving teacher-student ratios. Because of the difficulty in accurately assessing communication abilities and the time required to conduct communication evaluations,
communication abilities have long been excluded from these institutions’ testing systems (Clifford, 1987). Attention must be given to communication skills in both the first and second languages. The most critical aspect of learning a second language is developing communication skills, and progress in a foreign language is determined by communicative ability in an EFL classroom (Nunan, 1995). Since learners who study a language are often referred to as speakers of that language, interactive communication is given extra weight among the four language skills (Ur, 1996). In the previous sense, Davies & Pearse (2000) claimed that the primary aim of English language instruction is to allow students to interact more efficiently and adequately in English in L2 and everyday situations. Somehow, it appears that L2 students in Pakistani colleges where the BS in English program is continued, universities in the South Punjab, and their sub-campuses are unable to communicate fluently and accurately both within and outside the foreign language classroom due to a lack of knowledge in this area. Bashir, Azeem, and Dogar (2011) have correctly mentioned that when we speak about spoken English, we don't just mean saying a few words with our mouths; rather, we mean transmitting a message with our mouths. This critical ability is routinely overlooked in Pakistani L2 classrooms. L2 students do not have enough opportunities to speak English with their parents, elders, or peers, either inside or outside of the classroom. Regrettably, from a Pakistani viewpoint, assessing students' communication skills is not an essential part of the examination system from elementary school to university. Teachers in Pakistani L2 classrooms, especially in South Punjab, only give their students basic structures and handouts, and then ask them to repeat and cram. This practice would not be able to eliminate their students' hesitation and shyness.

Research Design

The objective of the study is to explore the role of internal and external target language barriers to effective communication at the graduation level. To fulfil the preceding aim structured L2 learners' questionnaire was used as the key research instrument. The authenticity of the research methodology is vindicated by Strydom and Venter (2002) as these two are of the view that research methodology had better contain an account of research respondents, research sites, the plan regarding sampling technique used for the study, and research instruments deployed for collecting research data. This study was conducted while utilizing the mixed-method approach. For the proper execution of this work, the researcher collected data through a questionnaire for the study face to face along with online due to COVID-19 restrictions so that a huge junk of data can be gathered. With a view to fixing the topics' findings regarding the role of internal and external target language barriers to effective communication, the researcher constructed an L2 learners' questionnaire and this questionnaire was rationalized from the studies accomplished by Belegdair, A. (2015), Al Hosni, Samira (2014), Bourezzane, Nadia (2014), Al Othman, Fadel & Shuqair, Khaled (2013), Nombre, Segura Alonso & de Junio (2012), Al-ma'shy (2011), Ahsan, Ali, & Hussain (2021), Ahsan, Ashger, & Zafar (2020), Ahsan, Seemab, & Nawaz (2021), Ahsan, Asif, & Hussain (2021), Ahsan, Younus, & Husain (2020), Ahsan, Asif, Kaukab, Zafar, & Naeem (2020), Ahsan, Asgher, & Hussain (2020), Younus, Nawaz, & Ahsan, (2021), and Ahsan, Nawaz, & Seemab (2021) as models for this research with trivial modification on the basis of scholar's own five years of teaching/learning experience at public sector college and university level. The questionnaire used in this research has two fragments i.e. research question 1-5 is comprised of demographic information and the remaining 74 statements are based on the format of a five-point Likert scale.

Objectives of the Study

i. To determine the views of ESL students regarding the English language
classroom environment obstructing communicative collaboration.

ii. To assess the impact of the English language classroom environment in obstructing communicative collaboration among ESL students.

**Research Questions**

i. What are the views of ESL students regarding the English language classroom environment obstructing communicative collaboration?

ii. What is the impact of the English language classroom environment in obstructing communicative collaboration among ESL students?

**Sampling and Research Tool of the Study**

Research data was collected by administering an L2 learners' questionnaire. The research sample included in this work was limited to the the 17-22 years learners' age group. Above one thousand L2 learners' close-ended questionnaires were circulated among the participants. The participants for the present study were from BS English program continued in Public Sector University i.e. Ghazi University, affiliated public and private sector colleges to the said university and sub-campuses of Bahaudin Zakariya University Multan and Govt. College University Faisal Abad is situated in Dera Ghazi Khan Division.

Close-ended, well-structured research questionnaire comprised of a 5-Point Likert-scale was projected to accumulate researchable data. The researcher reviewed a huge bulk of relevant research to find out a suitable research tool that might be easily managed and administered to the respondents of the current study. The researcher constructed an L2 learners' questionnaire and this questionnaire was rationalized from the studies accomplished by Belegdair, A. (2015), Al Hosni, Samira (2014), Bourrezzane, Nadia (2014), Al Othman, Fadel & Shuqair, Khaled (2013), Nombre, Segura Alonso & de Junio (2012), Al-ma'shy (2011), Ahsan, Ali, & Hussain (2021), Ahsan, Ashger, & Zafar (2020), Ahsan, Seemab, & Nawaz (2021), Ahsan, Asif, & Hussain (2021), Ahsan, Younus, & Husain (2020), Ahsan, Asif, Kaukab, Zafar, & Naeem (2020), Ahsan, Ashger, & Hussain (2020), Younus, Nawaz, & Ahsan, (2021), and Ahsan, Nawaz, & Seemab (2021) as models for this research with trivial modification on the basis of scholar's own five years of teaching/learning experience at public sector college and university level. The questionnaire used in this research has two fragments i.e. research question 1-5 is comprised of demographic information and the remaining 74 statements are based on the format of a five-point Likert scale.

i. Completely Agree

ii. Agree

iii. Neutral

iv. Completely Disagree

v. Disagree

**Context of this Research Work**

The pure focus of this research is adult L2 learners enrolled in BS English program continued in public sector university i.e. Ghazi University, affiliated public and private sector colleges to the said university and sub-campuses of Bahaudin Zakariya University Multan and Govt. College University Faisal Abad is situated in Dera Ghazi Khan Division. These are those L2 learners who want to achieve better L2 skills so that they can do excellent in their L2 classrooms, jobs or in academics. In this study, adult L2 learners are those students who have completed their intermediate studies and they are of above 17 years of age.

**Significance of the Study**

Since this research work will attempt to disclose the role of internal and external target language barriers to effective communication at public sector universities i.e. Ghazi University, affiliated public and private sector colleges to the said university and sub-campuses of Bahaudin Zakariya University Multan and Govt. College University Faisal Abad situated in Dera Ghazi Khan Division, its worth is restricted to the following considerations:
1. This research work is significant as it fixes whether L2 learners are willing to accept the role of internal and external target language barriers to effective communication in L2 classrooms.

2. Statistics from this work regarding L2 learners’ attitudes towards the role of internal and external target language barriers to effective communication encourage and persuade students in L2 settings.

3. The present study is noteworthy as it will exalt the level of L2 learners’ speaking skills by overcoming internal and external barriers by adopting appropriate methods, techniques and procedures for proficiency, aptitude, and accuracy of speaking skills.

4. This research project will highlight the reasons and causes of such barriers and challenges and will try to discover a suitable solution for the same.

5. This work would facilitate curriculum developers in developing and designing apposite curricula to make L2 learning more advantageous in the context of Pakistan.

Delimitation of the Study

This research work was demarcated to explore the role of internal and external target language barriers to effective communication at the graduation level. The current study was conducted at Public Sector University i.e. Ghazi University, affiliated public and private sector colleges to the said university and sub-campuses of Bahaudin Zakariya University Multan and Govt. College University Faisalabad is situated in Dera Ghazi Khan Division, where BS in English is in progress.

Data Analysis

Table 1. Statistical Description of the Psychological Factors i.e. Language Classroom Environment Category of the Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of the Scale</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>Split-Half (odd-even) Correlation</th>
<th>Split-Half with Spearman-Brown Adjustment</th>
<th>Mean for Test</th>
<th>Standard Deviation for Test</th>
<th>KR21 (use only 0 and 1 to enter data for this)</th>
<th>KR20 (use only 0 and 1 to enter data for this)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Environment</td>
<td>0.882048932</td>
<td>0.959832837</td>
<td>0.979504801</td>
<td>18.1666667</td>
<td>5.111981313</td>
<td>1.741921813</td>
<td>1.74548224</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Screening Frequency of Students Testified on English Language Classroom Environment Category of the Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Category</th>
<th>Sum of Students</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Frequency of Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Environment</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>18.16666</td>
<td>5.1119</td>
<td>0.8820</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Frequency, Mean and Standard Deviation about the Perceptions of EFL Learners regarding Classroom Environment in Obstructing Communicative Collaboration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Frequency categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>My class fellows...............in the L2 classroom.</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>0.7843</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>The syllabus taught in the class.....on verbal communication.</td>
<td>2.0809</td>
<td>0.9199</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>The atmosphere of the class........for speaking English.</td>
<td>2.2481</td>
<td>0.8995</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The acknowledged descriptive digits in table 3 demonstrate that English language learners reacted regarding 'the perceptions of EFL learners regarding classroom environment in obstructing communicative collaboration' from high to medium and medium to low degree values. It is the second last classification among the eight sub-categories of the main scale and this group is further disjointed into 07 sub-statements of the major statement and the most ideal statement recounted by the L2 learners was Item # 69 ‘Teachers teach English through translation method’ (M=2.4430 & SD=0.9891), Item #67 ‘Teachers mostly avoid classroom activities to improve students’ communication skills’ (2.3980 & SD=1.080), Item #68 ‘Students badly imitate me when I speak a wrong English word’ (M=2.3310 & SD=1.085), Item #66 ‘Atmosphere of the class is not healthy for speaking English’ (M=2.2481 & SD=0.8995), Item #70 ‘Teachers hardly correct my verbal mistakes in the class, so I remain confused whether I am speaking right or wrong’ (M=2.2330 & SD=1.1410), Item #65 ‘Syllabus taught in the class scarcely focusses on verbal communication’ (M=2.0809 & SD=0.9199), Item #64 ‘My class fellows do not interact in English in L2 classroom’ (M=2.000 & SD=0.7843).

Table 4. Age Group T-test Showing Relation of Age Group on Classroom Environment Scale Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Classroom Environment</td>
<td>17-19 years</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>0.7817</td>
<td>0.081</td>
<td>0.957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20-22 years</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>1.9949</td>
<td>0.7877</td>
<td>0.079</td>
<td>0.876</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(0.05) level of mean shows a significant difference.

Table 4 shows that the data of 307 male and female L2 learners were divided into two major categories of age groups i.e. 17-19 years and 20-22 years age groups. In the first category of the age group of age groups i.e. 17-19, there were 109 male and female respondents who were 35% of the total participants. In the second category of age group i.e. 20-22 years, there were 198 respondents who were 65% of 307 male and female foreign language learners. The collaboration of the age group category with ‘the perceptions of EFL learners regarding classroom environment in obstructing communicative collaboration’ with F=0.081; 0.079 and P=0.957; 0.876 showed a non-significant relationship.

Table 5. Gender T-test Showing Relation of Gender on Classroom Environment Scale Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Classroom environment</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>1.9925</td>
<td>0.7833</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>0.934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>2.0000</td>
<td>0.7828</td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td>0.918</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(0.05) level of mean shows a significant difference.
In table 5, the acknowledged data was alienated into male and female categories of the participant and in the female gender category there were 133 respondents who were 43% of total of 307 accomplices and in the male category, 174 L2 learners were included who were 57% of the overall numbers who contributed in this research project. The interaction of the gender group with 'the perceptions of EFL learners regarding classroom environment in obstructing communicative collaboration' with F=0.011; 0.043 and P=0.934; 0.918 showed a non-significant correlation with the main scale category.

Data for the current study exhibited in table 6 were collected from the four semesters of the Spring-2021 session i.e. 2nd, 4th, 6th, and 8th. In the first category, i.e. from the 2nd semester 56 foreign language learners participated and it was 18.24104% of the total population. In the second category i.e. from the 4th semester 55 male and female students contributed and it was 17.91531% of the total numbers. In the third category i.e. from the 6th semester, 105 participants were included that indicating 34.20195% of 307. In the last category i.e. from the 8th semester, 91 L2 learners participated and this was 29.64169% of the total population. The collaboration of the current semester of enrolment category with "the perceptions of EFL learners regarding classroom environment in obstructing communicative collaboration" with F=0.612; 0.081; 0.011 and P=0.846; 0.643; 0.643 respectively showed non-significant affiliation.

In table 7, firstly, the established information was distributed to public and private teaching institutes and it was recounted that 260 respondents were enrolled in the public sector institutes which were 84.6905% of the total 307. The second category signified that 47 learners who participated in this research were from private affiliated colleges and degree awarding institutes and they were 15.3095 per cent of the selected sample of the current study. The relationship of learners’ institution-wise category with 'the perceptions of EFL learners regarding classroom environment in obstructing communicative collaboration' with F=0.612; 0.579 and P=0.846; 0.643 showed a non-significant connection.
Table 8. Living Background T-test Showing relation of Living Background on Classroom Environment Scale Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Classroom Environment</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>2.0083</td>
<td>0.7799</td>
<td>0.249</td>
<td>0.621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>1.9545</td>
<td>0.7929</td>
<td>0.213</td>
<td>0.418</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(0.05) level of mean shows a significant difference.

In table 8, the first category was about the rural background of the selected population and it showed that 134 male and female students were from countryside areas and this was 43.6482% of the whole figure. The second category indicated the 173 male and female students who were 56.3518% of the total number of the sample were from urban areas who contributed to the current study. The collaboration of living background category with 'the perceptions of EFL learners regarding classroom environment in obstructing communicative collaboration' with F=0.249; 0.213 and P=0.621; 0.418 showed a non-significant relationship.

Findings and Discussions of the Research Questions

Research Question 1

What are the views of ESL students regarding the English language classroom environment obstructing communicative collaboration?

The results about the perceptions of EFL learners regarding classroom environment in obstructing communicative collaboration signpost that the participants of the study answered only in medium mean values degree and do not fall in a single low mean value degree i.e. Completely Disagree or Disagree. It shows that L2 learners consider the role of the classroom environment in obstructing communicative collaboration. It is because they think that communicative collaboration cab is shattered when there is less or zero mutual interaction among the learners in the learning environment. Similarly, the syllabus designed and taught to the students stresses undue or less focus on the oral activities of the students. Likewise, the English language classroom atmosphere remains unsmoothening for communicative interactions among the stakeholders, teachers mostly avoid classroom activities to improve students' communication skills. A number of students also reported that their class fellows most frequently imitate them in an improper way which causes a huge hurdle in obstructing communicative collaboration when they mispronounce even a single word.

Research Question 2

What is the impact of the English language classroom environment in obstructing communicative collaboration among ESL students?

The present study shows that the major portion of the students agreed that the existing classroom environment of BS English is absolutely unfavourable for the best communicative interaction as it produces negative impacts on learning. This undesirable situation can be altered altogether by extending the role of the English language teacher as in a number of countries like Pakistan English language teacher is viewed as the guardian and custodian of the classroom. In this context, it becomes imperative for English language teachers to guide their students in a direction where they can be capable to gain reasonable ESL communicative ability.

Conclusion

With the help of research results and findings, it can be clearly concluded that the participants of the study answered only in medium mean values degree and do not fall in a single low mean value degree i.e. Completely Disagree or Disagree. It shows that L2 learners consider the role of the classroom environment in obstructing communicative collaboration. It is because they think that communicative
collaboration cab is shattered when there is less or zero mutual interaction among the learners in the learning environment. Similarly, the syllabus designed and taught to the students stresses undue or less focus on the oral activities of the students. Likewise, the English language classroom atmosphere remains unsmoothing for communicative interactions among the stakeholders, teachers mostly avoid classroom activities to improve student's communication skills. A number of students also reported that their class fellows most frequently imitate them in an improper way which causes a huge hurdle in obstructing communicative collaboration when they mispronounce even a single word. More equally, English language teachers teach the English language by using the translation method, teachers hardly correct their verbal mistakes in class.
References


https://www.ucm.es/data/cont/docs/119-2015-03-17-12


