



## English Language Teacher as an External Barrier among Foreign Language Learners' Communicative Interaction: A Case Study of South Punjab

Humaira Akbar

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

Muhammad Yousuf

English Teacher, Government Higher Secondary School Samina, Dera Ghazi Khan, Punjab, Pakistan.

Saeed Ahmad

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

**Abstract:** *The key objective of the study was to 'explore EFL students' approaches towards teaching obstructions to 'improve students' communicative skill and to reconnoitre the impact of EFL learners' attitudes about teaching hurdles to increase students' communicative skill at BS level in South Punjab'. To execute the basic aim of 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). This research concludes that the majority of the learners agreed that they feel hesitant in speaking English with class fellows as their English language teacher hardly implies spoken language improving strategies in class, as their teacher gazes at them for their making mistakes, they cannot keep on speaking, when learners make mistakes, instead of motivating, the teacher makes them silent, their English language teacher delivers lecture in Urdu or in his native language which mars the communicative competence, their English language teacher never uses audio-visual aids in the class to improve their communication skill.*

**Key Words:** Communicative Interaction, English Language Teacher, External English Language Barriers, Foreign Language Learners

### Introduction

Reading, writing, listening, and communicating are the four skills that make up a language, and these skills are commonly divided into two categories: active and receptive skills. The active skills are speaking and writing, while the receptive skills are listening and reading. The same is true for the English language, and teaching English as a foreign language involves teaching all four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Boonkit (2010) considers speaking to be one of the four macro skills needed for effective communication in any language, especially when speakers are not fluent in their mother or native tongue. At this point in the debate, it is

obvious that speaking skills are the most valuable skills that adults at the university level need to learn in order to communicate effectively both within and outside the classroom. Furthermore, the ability to communicate is the most valuable human skill (Crystal, 2003). Zaremba (2006) supports the preceding viewpoints by stating that of the four macro English skills, speaking appears to be the most important skill necessary for communication in both classrooms and outdoor activities. Further, Ahsan, Ghani, and Khaliq (2016) believe that graduate students in Pakistan who were accustomed to using Urdu in their L2 classrooms faced difficulties in oral communication and interaction with other

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students, teachers, and people, which discouraged them from using English for communication and people who prevented them from successfully using English for communicative purposes. As a result, at this point in the debate, the primary aim for teachers and students in the classroom is to improve their ability to interact effectively in spoken English with their peers. Students in Pakistani public and private schools are taught English from kindergarten until they graduate from their colleges and universities; however, the majority of students are unable to communicate and express themselves effectively in English, and even when they achieve graduation level, they still struggle with accuracy and fluency. Most teachers believe that their students can comprehend, speak, react, and interact both inside and outside of EFL classrooms when teaching speaking skills in L2 classrooms. Indeed, it is the idea that has been assumed and taught in English classrooms that will assist students in being prepared to connect and engage with others outside of the classroom. In the meantime, since teaching speaking English is the most important skill in L2 learning, English teachers bear a lot of responsibility. Since then, English teachers who teach English classes have faced many obstacles and challenges (Kannan, 2009). Clearly, English language classrooms in Pakistan require further growth, especially in terms of teacher teaching quality, due to students' low performance even at the university level (Ahsan, Ghani & Khaliq, 2016). Many teachers concentrate on improving students' reading and writing skills rather than on improving their overall academic performance. Al-Ma'shy (2011) emphasizes the importance of speaking and listening skills in learning a second language. Brown and Yule (1983) agreed that for much of the history of language education, the focus has been on writing a language. This means that the teaching of speaking skills is completely overlooked, and the focus is shifted to reading and writing skills

## **Barriers to EFL Teachers and Students in L2 Classrooms Speaking English**

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Both L2 teachers and students must go through a variety of highly demanding and extremely severe phases of teaching/learning speaking in an EFL sense. Teachers and students of English, especially in the Outer and Expanding Circle countries, face significant challenges. A great deal of difficulty in getting started speaking among L2 learners, who frequently experience anxiety, lack of confidence, hesitation, fear, misunderstanding, and misconception about speaking L2 (Richards and Rodgers, 2014).

## **Absence of Reciprocal Contact and Interaction**

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Richards and Rodgers (2014) revealed in the above-mentioned discussion should be considered by English language teachers who are directly or indirectly involved in L2 speaking teaching. Talking, in the eyes of non-native English language teachers, is comparable to the other three skills of reading, writing, and listening. Committing certain grammatical constructs, cramming several English words, and performing them on test papers during a test or exam are examples of writing and listening. These ideas about speaking in an EFL situation exasperate the enhancement of speaking skills in situations where students lack good and resilient engagement, interaction, and communication. When we consider the L2 case, we can conclude that most of the students are shy, tentative, confused, lacking trust, fearful, confused, and hesitant to prove themselves in front of crowds, peers, and teachers. They neither articulate nor contribute what they are developing in their minds. Participate in, inspire, and empower other peers to freely express themselves without jeopardizing some kind of trembling approach or fearful display. Harmer (2001) backed up the previous theory, stating that students are always afraid to talk because they are shy, anxious, or unable to communicate in front of others. Especially when they are asked and requested to express their personal views on a particular event or subject. Furthermore, most students are concerned about making

mistakes, speaking inappropriately, and thereby losing face in front of their teachers and classmates.

### **Teachers' Dominating Role in Outer and Expanding Circle Speaking Situations**

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In most EFL classrooms, non-native English teachers tend to exert control over the students, and teachers make every effort to achieve the goals they set in the L2 setting. English teachers in these types of classrooms typically have the authority to choose the subjects, provide input, distribute turns, and ask the majority of the questions (Nunan, 2003). Language comprehension is essential in attracting, encouraging, and motivating students because they need to understand their importance, worth, and the challenges they face in speech perception, interaction, and output. Furthermore, humanistic learning helps English teachers to devote more time to what students want to express in front of their peers and audiences, as well as encourages students to do so. Language comprehension is essential in attracting, encouraging, and motivating students because they need to understand their importance, worth, and the challenges they face in speech perception, interaction, and output. Furthermore, humanistic learning helps English teachers to devote more time to what students want to express in front of their peers and audiences, as well as encourages students to do so.

### **Non-native Teachers have a Deficiency in Communicative Interaction**

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Speaking English correctly allows students to accomplish their goals and objectives in the L2 classroom, and L2 speaking strategies are indicators that teachers may use to assess what their students say in a changing situation and how they present their topics in front of their teachers and classmates. In any communicative and collaborative scenario, non-native teachers assess such strategies as role-playing, simulations, and scales of oral assessment requirements.

### **Role-play**

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Role-playing is a form of acting in a real-life environment that is initiated by the teacher for students who are uncomfortable acting like real people. Nunan (2003) provided an accurate example of the situation: in a skit, one student plays a tourist who calls the police to report his wallet stolen. The other student plays a police officer who attempts to assist the tourist in filing a complaint. Since the role-play activity resembles a real-life scenario, students are encouraged to use the target language.

### **Simulations**

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Simulations or reproductions cover a wide range of activities, including role-playing in a real-life environment. Nunan (2003) addresses "props" and "documents," which are real-life objects that are used in a performance between two individuals, one of whom is a customer and the other a shopkeeper. The single participant speaks and reacts as themselves in simulations, but the group position, scenario, and task they are given are all made up.

### **Scale of Oral Testing Criteria**

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Non-native teachers are unconcerned about enhancing the speaking output of L2 students in every classroom environment, which is why they are uninterested in evaluating students' speaking performance and preserving the scale of the oral examination. In L2 classrooms, English teachers combine target and native languages and become less concerned about students' success in L2 situations (Nunan, 2003).

### **Research Design**

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The objective of the study is to explore the role of internal and external target language barriers in 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), Bourez zane, 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 explore EFL students' approaches towards teaching obstructions to improve students' communicative skills at the BS level in South Punjab.
- ii. To reconnoitre the impact of EFL learners' attitudes about teaching hurdles to increase students' communicative skills at BS level in South Punjab.

### Research Questions

- i. What are EFL students' approaches

towards teaching obstructions to improve students' communicative skills at the BS level in South Punjab?

- ii. What is the impact of EFL learners' attitudes about teaching hurdles to increase students' communicative skills at the BS level in South Punjab?

### Sampling and Research Tool of the Study

Research data was collected by administering L2 learners' questionnaires. The research sample included in this work was limited to 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 the 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), Bourez Zane, 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.

- 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 programs continued in 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 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, it's

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 Faisal Abad 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. English Language Teachers' Role Parameter of the Scale

Statistical Description	Values
Cronbach's Alpha	0.717709432

Statistical Description	Values
Split-Half (odd-even) Correlation	0.875403852
Split-Half with Spearman-Brown Adjustment	0.933563031
Mean for Test	15.83660131
Standard Deviation for Test	3.318511195
KR21 (use only 0 and 1 to enter data for this)	2.353925839
KR20 (use only 0 and 1 to enter data for this)	2.397616101

**Table 2.** Screening Frequency of Students Testified on English Language Teachers' Role Category of the Scale

Scale Category	Sum of Students	Mean	Standard Deviation	Frequency of Category
English Language Teachers' Role	307	15.8366	3.3185	0.7177

**Table 3.** Frequency, Mean and Standard Deviation Regarding L2 Learners' Attitudes about English Language Teachers' Role in Improving Students' Speaking Skills

S. No	Statements	Mean	SD	Frequency Categories
71	As the teacher gazes at me for my mistake, I cannot keep on speaking.	2.167	0.9528	Medium
72	When I make a mistake, instead of motivating me, the teacher makes me silent.	2.173	1.175	Medium
73	There is a lack of motivation to improve our interactive communication on the part of the English teacher.	1.5434	0.4996	Low
74	My English teacher delivers lectures in Urdu or in his native language.	2.000	0.4890	Medium
75	I am not asked in the class to speak English.	1.6936	0.4623	Low
76	My teacher does not encourage me when I try to speak in English.	2.000	0.4642	Low
77	My English teacher hardly implies spoken language-improving strategies in class.	1.6185	0.4872	Low
78	My teacher never gives learners' the autonomy to interact in English with the class within the class.	3.000	0.5765	High
79	My English language teacher never uses audio-visual aids in the class to improve my communication skills.	2.000	0.4890	Medium

The data in table 3 reveal that the target language learners responded regarding 'L2 learners' attitudes about teaching barriers to improve students' speaking skill at graduation level' from high to medium and medium to low degree values. It is the last taxonomy among the eight sub-categories of the main scale and this group is further segregated into 09 sub-statements of the main statement and the most ideal statement communicated by L2 learners was Item # 78 'My teacher never gives learners' autonomy to interact in English with the class within the class' (M=3.000 & SD=0.5765),

Item #72 'When I make a mistake, instead of motivating, teacher makes me silent' (M=2.1730 & SD= 1.1750), Item #71 'As the teacher gazes at me for my mistake, I cannot keep on speaking' (2.1670 & SD=0.9528), Item #74 'My English teacher delivers lecture in Urdu or in his native language' (M=2.0000 & SD=0.4690), Item #76 'My teacher does not encourage me when I try to speak in English' (M=2.0000 & SD=0.4642), Item #79 'My English language teacher never uses audio visual aids in the class to improve my communication skills ' (M=2.0000 &

SD=0.4890), Item #75 'I am not asked in the class to speak English' (M=11.6936 & SD=0.4623), Item #77 'My English teacher hardly implies spoken language improving strategies in class' (M=1.6185 & SD=0.4872),

Item #73 'There is lack of motivation to improve our interactive communication on the part of English teacher' (M=1.5434 & SD=0.4996).

**Table 4.** Age Group T-test Showing Relation of Age Group on Teachers' Role Scale Category

S. No	Variables	Age Group	N	Mean	SD	F	P
1	Teachers' Role	17-19 years	109	2.1651	0.9767	0.01	0.905
		20-22 years	198	2.1515	0.9437	0.03	0.861

(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 age group category with 'EFL students' approaches towards teaching obstructions to improve students' communicative skill' with F=0.010; 0.030 and P=0.905; 0.861 respectively showed a non-significant relationship.

**Table 5.** Gender T-test Showing Relation of Gender on Teachers' Role Scale Category

S. No	Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD	F	P
1	Teachers' Role	Female	133	2.1504	0.9574	0.01	0.924
		Male	174	2.1609	0.9541	0.03	0.861

(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 in the female gender category there were 133 respondents who were 43% of the total 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 gender group with 'EFL students' approaches towards teaching obstructions to improve students' communicative skill' with F=0.01; 0.03 and P=0.924; 0.861 respectively showed non-significant correlation with the main scale category.

**Table 6.** Current Semester of Enrolment T-test Showing the Relation of Current Semester of Enrolment on Teachers' Role Scale Category

S. No	Variables	Current Semester	N	Mean	SD	F	P
8	Teachers' Role	2 <sup>nd</sup>	56	2.1607	0.9682	0.009	0.913
		4 <sup>th</sup>	55	2.1636	0.9768	0.015	0.941
		6 <sup>th</sup>	105	2.1524	0.9485	0.026	0.962
		8 <sup>th</sup>	91	2.1538	0.9536	0.011	0.915

(0.05) level of mean shows a significant difference.

Data for the current study exhibited in table 6 were collected from the four semesters of the

Spring 2021 session i.e. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup>. In the first category, i.e. from the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, 56

foreign language learners participated and it was 18.24104% of the total population. In the second category i.e. from the 4<sup>th</sup> semester 55 male and female students contributed and it was 17.91531% of the total numbers. In the third category i.e. from the 6<sup>th</sup> semester, 105 participants were included that indicating 34.20195% of 307. In the last category i.e. from the 8<sup>th</sup> semester, 91 L2 learners participated

and this was 29.64169% of the total population. The collaboration of the current semester of enrolment category with 'EFL students' approaches towards teaching obstructions to improve students' communicative skill' with  $F=0.009; 0.015; 0.026; 0.011$  and  $P=0.913; 0.941; 0.962; 0.915$  respectively showed non-significant affiliation.

**Table 7.** Populations' Institution Wise T-test Showing Relation of Populations' Institution Wise on Teachers' Role Scale Category

S. No	Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD	F	P
8	Teachers' Role	Public	260	243	0.9767	0.01	0.905
		Private	47	2.1515	0.9437	0.06	0.913

*(0.05) level of mean shows a significant difference.*

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 'EFL students' approaches towards teaching obstructions to improve students' communicative skill' with  $F=0.01; 0.06$  and  $P=0.905; 0.913$  correspondingly showed a non-significant connection.

**Table 8.** Living Background T-test Showing the relation of Living Background on Teachers' Role Scale Category

S. No	Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD	F	P
1	Teachers' Role	Rural	134	2.1784	0.9516	0.609	0.879
		Urban	173	2.0758	0.9657	0.903	0.712

*(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 the living background category with 'EFL students' approaches towards teaching obstructions to improve students' communicative skill' with  $F=0.609; 0.903$  and  $P=0.879; 0.712$  respectively showed a non-significant relationship.

## Findings and Discussions of the Research Questions

### Research Question 1

What are EFL students' approaches towards teaching obstructions to improve students' communicative skills at the BS level in South Punjab?

The outcomes of the current study revealed that the target language learners responded regarding 'L2 learners' attitudes about teaching barriers to improve students' speaking skill' from high to medium and medium to low mean



values. It is the last taxonomy among the eight sub-categories of the main scale and this group is further segregated into 09 sub-statements of the main problem statement. A majority of the responses from the students fall in high to medium mean values, it is, therefore, revealed that the learners are of the view that the work and attitude of English language teachers in L2 classrooms are creating troubles for L2 learners in developing good communicative skills. The high and the medium mean values show that the mainstream of the learners replied from 'completely agree' and 'agree' on the Likert scale which means teachers' teaching techniques and attitudes halt learners' communicative competence. Moreover, in this setting Harmer (2007) perceives that the motivation of learners and encouragement of students' language understanding is essential and it owes to English language teachers to motivate his/her disciples during interactive communication. This attitude will help English language teachers to devote more time to what students want to express in front of their peers and audiences.

## Research Question 2

What is the impact of EFL learners' attitudes about teaching hurdles to increase students' communicative skills at the BS level in South Punjab?

The study reveals that the majority of the learners agreed that they feel hesitant in speaking English with class fellows as their English language teacher hardly implies spoken language improving strategies in class, as their teacher gazes at them for their making mistakes, they cannot keep on speaking, when learners make mistakes, instead of motivating, the teacher makes them silent, their English language teacher delivers lecture in Urdu or in his native language which mars the communicative competence, their English language teacher never uses audio-visual aids in the class to improve their communication skill. The results of this study also bear a resemblance to the research findings conducted

by Kannan (2009) while examining the reasons and teaching attitudes of the teachers, Kannan argued that teaching speaking English is the most important skill in L2 learning in the non-native classroom as English teachers who teach English classes have to face a huge number of obstacles and challenges i.e. the interference of mother tongue, non-availability of audio and visual materials which is crucial for developing proper communicative interaction among students and even their teachers.

## Conclusion

This work has a concise but precise conclusion that the target language learners responded regarding 'L2 learners' attitudes about teaching barriers to improve students' speaking skill' from high to medium and medium to low mean values. As the majority of the responses from the students fall in high to medium mean values, it is, therefore, revealed that the learners are of the view that the work and attitude of English language teachers in L2 classrooms are creating troubles for L2 learners in developing good communicative skills. The high and the medium mean values show that the mainstream of the learners replied from 'completely agree' and 'agree' on the Likert scale which means teachers' teaching techniques and attitudes halt learners' communicative competence. This research also concludes that the majority of the learners agreed that they feel hesitant in speaking English with class fellows as their English language teacher hardly implies spoken language improving strategies in class, as their teacher gazes at them for their making mistakes, they cannot keep on speaking, when learners make mistakes, instead of motivating, the teacher makes them silent, their English language teacher delivers lecture in Urdu or in his native language which mars the communicative competence, their English language teacher never uses audio-visual aids in the class to improve their communication skill.

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