



Factors Causing Hesitation and Shyness as Barriers to L2 Learners' Speaking Skill

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Abstract: *The aim of this research was to discover 'the factors causing hesitation and shyness as barriers for L2 learners' speaking skill and to find out the influence of hesitation and shyness as barriers for ESL learners' speaking skill'. This study employed a questionnaire as a data collection tool. Research data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings of the study conclude that majority of the responses from the students fall from high to medium degree of mean values, which means, learners have the inclination to say that internal factors i.e. hesitation and shyness work as barriers for L2 learners' speaking skills. It is crystal clear from the findings that as hesitation and shyness increase the speaking skill of the students decreases. Likewise, as the hesitation and shyness decrease the speaking skill of the students increases.*

Key Words: Communicative Barriers, Hesitation, L2 Learners, Shyness, Speaking Skill

Introduction

The ability to communicate in English has long been recognized as one of the most critical aspects of internal and external mobility. It has always been a top priority of foreign language learners to give supreme importance to communicating verbally in the target language in the present world, with suitable access to travelling abroad, receiving education inside or outside the country, benefitting from science and technology, familiarizing with the globalization of business and industry (Nunan, 1991). As soon as this world has transformed into a single globe and it has become less expensive rather quicker to communicate with the inhabitants of the globe, the English language performs a pivotal role as the key language of this globe. People connect in order to maintain and expand on existing social relationships as well as to form new ones.

Career opportunities, role standing, and compensation are all linked to communicative ability. The ambition and aim of Pakistani youth who spend ample time studying English as a foreign language in schools, colleges, and universities are to learn English properly. Youth employability can be increased and strengthened by developing learners' communicative skills, which can lead to more lucrative work opportunities (Ahsan, Asif, Kaukab, Zafar & Naeem, 2020). Similarly, Ur (1996) asserts that communicative ability is the most critical and relevant of the four main language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, since he believes that people who are familiar with a language are considered speakers of that language. The ability to communicate is known as the most challenging and multifaceted skill to master. Learning to converse in a foreign language, according to Scrivener (2005), entails more than memorizing its grammatical

rules as it necessitates the skill to cooperate proficiently in social settings. The basic objective of teaching/learning is to inspire the students to use English for expressive and proficient communication.

The Significance of Interactive Communication

The most critical ability is communicative engagement since it is one of the skills that students need to conduct a conversation inside or outside the classroom. Students find it difficult to communicate in English since they must be aware of many essential aspects of communication, such as grammar, pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skill. It is important for L2 students to have adequate English-speaking skills to interact comfortably and efficiently with their teachers, classmates, colleagues, and other people. Brown & Campione (1994) derived the definition and stated that students use listening and speaking as language resources both inside and outside the classroom. Efrizal (2012) and Gilakjani (2016) shared Brown & Campione's viewpoint and believed that speaking is essential for learners' interactions because they talk everywhere everything, and every day. The verbal exchange of thoughts and messages is known as communicative contact. If only teachers are eager and want to encourage and empower their students to engage in English both within and outside of the classroom, English language teachers must use a foreign language in an everyday contexts, and situations and ask his/her scholars to repeat this activity. However, in Pakistani L2 classrooms, the situation is completely different and depressing, as English teachers often use GTM, other regional languages, or conventional methods and techniques in English teaching, even at higher levels of education such as college and university, which often results in disaster. Learners can improve their writing skills with the aid of communicative interaction because it helps them grow their vocabulary and grammar skills. Students may convey their feelings, emotions, and ideas/, tell stories,

inquire, speak, discuss, and even perform different language functions in both indoor and outdoor activities in this way.

Variables Affecting Interactive Communication

If English language teachers want to assist their students in overcoming their barriers to acquiring communication skills, they must first spot the factors that can influence their speaking performance. Performance environments, affective factors, listening ability, topical awareness, and input during speaking exercises all influence learners' communicative competence (Gudu, 2015). The following are some of the factors listed above:

L2 Learners' Participation

The first element that influences communicative interaction is learners' participation in a speaking activity under various conditions. Time pressure, preparation, performance quality, and the amount of support from teachers, family, and friends are all factors that affect communicative competence (Nation & Newton, 2009).

Affecting Dynamics

Motivation, self-confidence, shyness, hesitation, fear, and anxiety, according to Krashen (1982), have been affecting greatly L2 learning.

Capacity to Listen

Listening ability is the third factor that affects communication skills. Doff (1998) views that Students can't improve their speaking skills unless they improve their listening skills. To have a constructive relationship, learners must consider what is expressed in front of them. Shumin (1997) said that when students speak, the other students respond by listening to them. Both listeners and speakers are represented by speakers. From the discussion above, it is obvious that students are unable to respond if they are unable to comprehend what is being said in front of them. It can be deduced that

speaking and listening are inextricably connected.

Up-to-date Information

Bachman and Palmer (1996) have described this 4th element as long-term memory information structures and it is, topical awareness which refers to L2 speakers' understanding of current events. It facilitates the learners to take benefit from the world in which they live and work. According to Bachman and Palmer (1996), existing knowledge of the language has a major effect on the learners' ability to communicate.

Factors Influencing Students' Ability to Communicate

There are several internal and external or socio-psychological factors that hinder and discourage students from speaking English fluently. The aforementioned influences do not function in isolation; rather, they are intertwined. There is a brief but precise overview of just a few of the many unsophisticated descriptions that subsidize students' unresponsive, tentative, and unwilling involvement in foreign language classroom speaking activities.

Internal Factors/Affective Factors Influencing Students' Ability to Interact

All psychological factors such as lack of trust, shyness, anxiety, hesitation, self-esteem, lack of motivation, fear of making mistakes, lack of interest, and so on are affective factors.

Shyness and Hesitation

Shyness, according to Gebhard (2003), is a psychological and emotional element that many students encounter at some point in their L2 classroom when they are asked to speak in English. This clearly demonstrates that shyness can be a source of problems in students' L2 classroom learning activities, especially during communication-based activities. As a result, concentrating on this feature is crucial in assisting students in offering their best results in their classroom speaking presentations. In

this vein, Oga-Baldwin (2011) affirms that speaking in front of others is one of the most common anxieties that students face, and that shyness causes their minds to go blank.

Bases of Shyness and Hesitation

Bowen (2005), and Robby (2010) maintained that a substantial number of shy students are instigated by their nature to be very still and quiet while explaining the causes of shyness. In this regard, the majority of students are not very self-assured and have a tendency to be shy, as they find speaking English in front of their classmates, and teachers to be very unsociable. Furthermore, Saurik (2011) observes that most students are apprehensive about speaking English because they believe they would make mistakes when conversing with their teachers and classmates. Occasionally students are also frightened of being giggled at by their friends, classmates, and teachers.

Research Design

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.

Objectives of the Study

- i. To explore the factors causing hesitation and shyness as barriers to L2 learners' speaking skills.
- ii. To find out the influence of hesitation and shyness as barriers to L2 learners' speaking skills.

Research Questions

- i. What are those factors which are causing hesitation and shyness as barriers to ESL students' speaking skills?
- ii. What is the influence of hesitation and shyness as barriers to ESL learners' speaking skills?

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 that was formulated by the works of 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 based on 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 an L2 setting.
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. Hesitation and Shyness Parameter of the Scale

Cronbach's Alpha	0.768672052
Split-Half (odd-even) Correlation	0.710205406
Split-Half with Spearman-Brown Adjustment Mean for Test	0.830549832
Standard Deviation for Test	13.79411765
KR21 (use only 0 and 1 to enter data for this)	3.109141808
KR20 (use only 0 and 1 to enter data for this)	1.712674155
	1.77309449

Table 2. Screening Frequency of Students Testified on Hesitation and Shyness Parameter of the Main Scale

Scale Category	Sum of Students	Mean	Standard Deviation	Frequency of Category
Hesitation and Shyness	307	13.7941	3.1091	0.7686

Table 3. Frequency, Mean and Standard Deviation of the Factors Causing Hesitation and Shyness as Barriers to L2 Learners' Speaking Skill

Sr. No	Statements	Mean	SD	Frequency categories
14	I feel hesitation..... in speaking English with class fellows	2.2331	0.5058	Medium
15	I feel hesitant to communicatebefore the class	4.0293	0.4948	High
16	If a teacher asks me to speak..... without hesitation	4.0940	0.4929	Low
17	I start to panic..... without preparation	1.0827	0.2765	Low
18	Due to shyness.....unable to convey my feelings and ideas in English in the EFL classroom	2.0827	0.3118	Low
19	I feel uneasy.....in the class	2.2707	0.6756	Low
20	Speaking English.....shyness halts me	2.0602	0.2387	Low
21	I prefer studying in my mother tongue..... to learning in English	3.0835	0.6931	High
22	I like to give my opinion..... shyness I remain silent	3.0030	0.4480	High
23	I feel shy..... during speaking activities in the EFL classroom	2.000	0.6814	Medium

In table 3 the descriptive data validates that the students responded on the subject of the ‘the factors causing hesitation and shyness as barriers for L2 learners’ speaking skill’ from high to medium and medium to low degree values. It is the second taxonomy among the eight sub-categories of the main scale and this group is additionally divided into 10 sub-statements of the major statement and the most ultimate statement reported by L2 learners was

Item # 16 (M= 4.0940 & SD= 0.4929), Item #15 (M=4.0293 & SD= 0.4948), Item #21 (3.0835 & SD=0.6931), Item #22 (M=3.0030 & SD=0.4480), Item #19 (M=2.2707 & SD=0.6756), Item #14 (M=2.2331 & SD=0.5058), Item #18 (M=2.0827 & SD=0.3118), Item #20 (M=2.0602 & SD=0.2387), Item #23 (M=2.000 & SD=0.6814), Item #17 (M=1.0827 & SD=0.2765).

Table 4. Age Group T-test Showing Relation of Age Group on Eight Scale Categories

Sr. No	Variables	Age Group	N	Mean	SD	F	P
1	Hesitation and Shyness	17-19 years	109	1.3486	0.4787	0.563	0.456
		20-22 years	198	1.4091	0.7669	0.349	0.491

(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 divulges a statistically non-significant correlation of 'the factors causing hesitation

and shyness as barriers for L2 learners' speaking skill' with $F=0.563$; 0.349 and $P=0.456$; 0.491 .

Table 5. Gender T-test Showing Relation of Gender on Eight Scale Categories

Sr. No	Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD	F	P
1	Hesitation and Shyness	Female	133	1.2331	0.5058	12.64	0.000
		Male	174	1.5057	0.7659	11.24	0.000

(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 reveals the statistically most significant correlation of 'the factors causing hesitation and shyness as barriers for L2 learners' speaking skill' with $F= 12.64$; 11.24 and $P=0.000$; 0.000 values respectively.

Table 6. Current Semester of Enrolment T-test Showing the relation of Current Semester of Enrolment on Hesitation and Shyness Scale Categories

Sr. No	Variables	Current Semester	N	Mean	SD	F	P
1	Hesitation and Shyness	2 nd	56	1.1607	0.3706	3.46	0.017
		4 th	55	1.5636	0.5005	3.62	0.015
		6 th	105	1.3905	0.7658	3.46	0.017
		8 th	91	1.4176	0.7755	3.19	0.034

(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. 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 factors causing hesitation and shyness as barriers for L2 learners' speaking skill' with $F=3.46$; 3.62 ; 3.46 ; 3.19 and $P=0.017$; 0.015 ; 0.017 ; 0.034 showed most significant correlation.

Table 7. Populations' Institution Wise T-test Showing Relation of Populations' Institution Wise on Hesitation and Shyness Scale Categories

Sr. No.	Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD	F	P
1	Hesitation and Shyness	Public	260	1.3704	0.6884	0.75	0.386
		Private	47	1.4531	0.6407	0.913	0.214

(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 of 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 factors causing hesitation and shyness as barriers for L2 learners' speaking skill' with $F=0.75$; 0.913 and $P=0.386$; 0.214 correspondingly showed a non-significant connection.

Table 8. Living Background T-test Showing the relation of Living Background on Eight Scale Categories

Sr. No	Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD	F	P
1	Hesitation and Shyness	Rural	134	1.4315	0.6926	4.75	0.030
		Urban	173	1.2273	0.6024	4.82	0.019

(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 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 'the factors causing hesitation and shyness as barriers for L2 learners' speaking skill' with $F= 4.75$; 4.82 and $P=0.030$; 0.019 values respectively showed a non-significant relationship.

hesitation and shyness work as barriers to L2 learners' speaking skills. To overcome psychological factors such as hesitation and shyness as barriers, English language teachers need to stimulate students and support their positive speaking capabilities and proficiencies rather than snub them, and this positive speaking to the foreign language learners will make them feel stress-free, comfortable, motivated and self-confident.

Findings and Discussions of the Research Questions

Research Question 1

What are those factors which are causing hesitation and shyness as barriers to ESL students' speaking skills?

The findings of the study indicated that learners responded with relation to 'the factors causing hesitation and shyness as barriers for L2 learners' speaking skill' from high to medium and medium to low degree mean values. A majority of the responses from the students fall from high to medium degree of mean values, which means, learners have the inclination to say that internal factors i.e.

Research Question 2

What is the influence of hesitation and shyness as barriers to ESL learners' speaking skills?

While examining the reasons and influence of hesitation and shyness, most of the respondents argued that hesitation and shyness have the most significant impact on the speaking skill of foreign language learners. It is crystal clear from the findings that as hesitation and shyness increase the speaking skill of the students decreases. Likewise, as the hesitation and shyness decrease the speaking skill of the students increases. In this regard, the greater part of the undergraduate studies is not exceptionally confident and tends to be modest as a large portion of them think that it's entirely inaccessible when communicating in English before their schoolmates, companions and English language educators. Additionally, in this setting Saurik (2011) perceives that a large portion of the understudies have expressed a

similar thought that they feel hesitant and shy in an interactive communicative atmosphere as they have a negative belief that probably they are likely to commit errors when they will have an interactive session with their instructors and classmates.

Conclusion

The findings of the study conclude that majority of the responses from the students fall from high to medium degree of mean values, which means, learners have the inclination to say that internal factors i.e. hesitation and shyness work as barriers for L2 learners' speaking skills. It is crystal clear from the findings that as hesitation and shyness increase the speaking skill of the students decreases.

Likewise, as the hesitation and shyness decrease the speaking skill of the students increases. In this regard, the greater part of the undergraduate studies is not exceptionally confident and tends to be modest as a large portion of them think that it's entirely inaccessible when communicating in English before their schoolmates, companions and English language educators. To overcome psychological factors such as hesitation and shyness as barriers, English language teachers need to stimulate students and support their positive speaking capabilities and proficiencies rather than snub them, and this positive speaking to the foreign language learners will make them feel stress-free, comfortable, motivated and self-confident.

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