EXPLORING ESL LEARNERS' SPEAKING PROFICIENCY ISSUES AT BS LEVEL AT UNIVERSITY OF SIALKOT, PAKISTAN

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Abstract
This study explores the speaking proficiency issues faced by ESL learners at the bachelor level at the University of Sialkot, Pakistan. Speaking is a fundamental skill in English language acquisition, facilitating communication of ideas, emotions, and messages. However, many ESL learners encounter significant challenges when attempting to communicate in English, their second language. This research identifies specific speaking proficiency issues among bachelor students at this prestigious institution, employing a mixed-methods approach with a purposive sample of 50 students. Data were collected through a questionnaire utilizing a 5-point Likert scale, grounded in Krashen's Affecting Filter Hypothesis as the theoretical framework. The findings reveal that psychological and social obstacles significantly hinder the speaking proficiency of these learners. These barriers not only affect their confidence but also impede effective communication in English. The study aims to provide insights for educators and administrative personnel to address these challenges, ultimately enhancing the speaking skills of ESL learners at the University of Sialkot.
Keywords: ESL Learners, English speaking proficiency, anxiety, low confidence, fear of English speaking, Affecting Filter Hypothesis

Introduction

Everyone uses language as a communication tool in daily life to share knowledge and debate with others (Rabiah, 2012). Linguistics is the earliest medium of communication. Language is where creation began. Humans use language to communicate their feelings and thoughts. Language makes understanding an audience's opinions and arguments feasible. Although others are unaffected by it, it aids in explaining its actions (Begum, 2023).

Speaking, listening, reading, and writing are the four abilities that are crucial to language learning. A person's language proficiency is enhanced by each of these abilities differently. Writing constitutes using symbols, such as alphabetical words, punctuation, and spaces, to communicate thoughts and feelings understandably. Knowing how to read is the process of understanding and decoding a written set of symbols. Our eyes read textual symbols like letters, punctuation, and spaces once we read, and our brains translate those symbols into sentences, paragraphs, and words that make sense to us (Sun, 2016).

Strong listening abilities are essential for becoming a fluent English speaker. Not only does listening enable you to comprehend what others are saying to you, but It also makes it easier for you to communicate with others. Delivering words orally is known as speaking. Our mouths, lips,

tongues, lungs, vocal cords, and vocal tract all work together to produce sounds when we talk. The most common language goal is probably to become fluent speakers of the target language (Sadiku, 2015).

English is acknowledged as a second language in Pakistan, but Urdu is the official tongue. From elementary school through university, teaching English is a mandatory subject in Pakistan. In Pakistan, after secondary school, all disciplines at the upper secondary, bachelor, master, and doctorate levels are offered in English in all public and private educational establishments. The English language is used in higher education as a medium of instruction and communication (Begum, 2023).

English is now used by speakers of non-overlapping language as "lingua franca" with one another. Furthermore, in the age of "Globalization" when people and nations are increasingly interconnected, it is imperative to speak a global language to survive in the modern world. English is the only language that can fulfill this need more effectively than any other (Maitlo, 2022).

Statement of Problem

Particularly at the beginning (BS) level, English as a Second Language (ESL) learners sometimes face issues in their quest for spoken English proficiency. Few researchers have worked on this problem but this particular study focuses on the University of Sialkot's BS-level learners who have trouble with pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and fluency, which makes it challenging to help the language learning process of ESL Learners', customized interventions that take into account the underlying variables causing these proficiency challenges must be developed. BS-level ESL learners' academic performance, social integration, and career progress are all significantly impacted by addressing their speaking proficiency concerns. For ESL students to actively participate in class discussions, understand the material being covered in class, and work well with peers and teachers, they must possess proficient oral communication skills.

Research Objectives

- To identify the issues that ESL learners' encounter in speaking proficiently at BS level in University of Sialkot
- To find the most common speaking issues among ESL learners' at BS level in University of Sialkot
- To analyze speaking proficiency issues ESL learners' face at BS level in University of Sialkot

Research Questions

- What are the issues that ESL learners' encounter in speaking proficiently at BS level in University of Sialkot?
- What are the most common speaking issues among ESL learners' at BS level in University of Sialkot ?
- How to analyze speaking proficiency issues ESL learners' face at BS level in University of Sialkot?

Significance

Predominantly speaking is considered an Index of language proficiency. It is assumed that one who can speak any specific language fluently is considered a proficient learner of that language. English is taught as a language in Pakistan from elementary school to university level as a required subject, however speaking the language effectively is a challenge for many Pakistani students, especially those in higher education. This investigation aimed to examine the challenges encountered by undergraduate students and potential reasons for issues behind their speaking proficiency. The study looked at several factors, including poor schooling, classroom culture, overuse of mother tongue, teacher and teaching, personal, social, environmental, and socio-economic status, and linguistic issues for speaking Proficiency difficulties. The study mainly focused on the issues related to the speaking proficiency of bachelor students of the University of Sialkot whether it is related to environmental, socioeconomic status personal, or linguistic factors. Obstacles that students encounter when speaking are issues such as poor pronunciation, lack of vocabulary, fear of being judged role of the teacher, and social and socio-economic status.

Delimitations

There are a lot of issues learners face when they use a second language either in writing, listening, reading, or speaking but research specifically focuses on the speaking proficiency issues faced by the bachelor students of the University of Sialkot. This study was conducted on the topic of ESL learners' speaking proficiency issues at the BS level at the University of Sialkot. This study delimitated to university students of the University of Sialkot which is one of the prestigious institutions of Pakistan. And the population related to this research are the random students from all the bachelor students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language has a very broad range of applications. Language is an intricate phenomenon that adheres to the criteria of all human expression presence. Learning languages is becoming more and more necessary as the modern world develops. Learning languages is becoming more and more popular. According to Ali et al. (2020), certain languages, such as English, have gained importance because of their global value.

The term "speaking" has been defined in a variety of ways by academics studying language acquisition. As per Nunan's (1991) account, the Webster New World Dictionary defines speaking as the act of expressing words orally, communicating through verbal exchanges, requesting something, and delivering a formal speech. As per previous surveys conducted by Dağtan & Cabaroğlu (2021), a significant proportion of ESL students worldwide utilize English as a means to attain speaking fluency.

According to Efrizal (2012) and Gilakjani (2016), speaking is another way to communicate ideas and messages. It Is widely acknowledged that ESL learners encounter numerous challenges when it comes to speaking English, even though the importance of English in ESL settings has been recognized for decades. Speaking in different settings proved to be difficult for them to do. According to (Ali, 2020), speech proficiency is hindered by psychological, social, and linguistic concerns, among other significant problems.

A significant portion of ESL students worldwide use English to become proficient speakers, according to past surveys conducted by Dağtan & Cabaroğlu (2021). While not all of the students

are skilled communicators, they can all be trained to be one. When they find themselves in these kinds of situations where they are the center of attention and have to give a presentation in front of a large audience they experience negative sensations such as nausea and profuse perspiration. The act of conveying information and expressing our emotions through spoken words is known as speaking. The sensation of unease that arises when someone must speak in front of a group of people, a teacher, or a sizable crowd is known as speaking anxiety (Raja, 2017).

Speaking challenges for ESL students can stem from a variety of issues, including fear of speaking, anxiety, a lack of confidence, a lack of vocabulary, a fear of making mistakes, shyness, poor pronunciation, a lack of vocabulary, a fear of the teacher's judgment, social and socioeconomic status, the importance of mother tongue, issues with proper grammar usage, pronunciation issues, teacher behavior, and socioeconomic status. Poorer nations have neglected to communicate. Speaking fear is a big concern, especially in Pakistan for a variety of reasons (Hussain, S. Q., Fareed, D. M., & Akhtar, D. N. (2020). Lately, academics from Pakistan have shown an incredible dedication to the study of speaking anxiety in the English language. Language acquisition-related anxiety has been studied by researchers such as Hussain (2021), who looked at students' beliefs and anxiety related to language learning. Learning a second language is surely difficult. There could be difficulties with writing style, grammar, and grammatical norms if you don't speak the native language from birth. The inability to retain new vocabulary, comprehend the instructor, and interact with others in the target language have all been sources of frustration for language learners (Banks, 2008).

In Pakistan, two languages are used in education: English and Urdu. For the students, several problems develop from their frequent switching between these two languages. Pakistan's educational systems require more rewriting, correcting, and adjustment a painful but true fact (Awan & Shafi, 2016).

The factors that contribute to anxiety in learners during the speaking skill development process were investigated in a study conducted by Tanveer (2007). The study also sought to determine how worry affected participants' capacity for efficient target-language communication. The study's findings indicate that stress and anxiety levels among learners have a detrimental effect on their capacity to learn languages and perform well. The researcher focused on the detrimental effects of elevated anxiety levels on trainees' speaking abilities.

Aftat (2008), proposes that teachers should ask probing questions that disclose the root of a student's problems in addition to offering ongoing encouragement and support to pupils to boost their motivation. This becomes crucial since encouraging pupils also makes them feel safe and included in their education. Liu and Huang (2011), offer further recommendations for boosting students' motivation. Proponents claim that to assist students in conquering their lack of motivation, teachers should take steps such as increasing their awareness of how crucial it is to use English, sparking their enthusiasm for the language, and building their self-confidence.

Dewi et al. (2017), state that for L2 learners to finish and contribute to their L2 learning at higher education institutions, they need to be capable of addressing difficulties. The L2 curriculum in higher education requires learning that fosters creativity and promotes individual and personal experience through the process of problem-solving. It is believed that the most sophisticated intellectual function is the ability to solve problems. Temel (2015), maintained that for L2 learners to succeed globally, they must have problem-solving techniques that support them in making

rational judgments that are methodical, cautious, and logical as well as taking into account challenges and issues from various perspectives. It is anticipated that the L2 learning paradigm will give students the chance to enhance their problem-solving skills to better study a language in higher education.

According to the study, using student errors to clarify teaching points and having peers or teachers correct you when you speak can both cause anxiety. A teacher's toolkit of techniques includes the difficult task of striking a balance between correctness and flow. It could be better to put more of an emphasis on fluency to boost confidence rather than accuracy. Teacher Development programs that leverage instructors' reflective practices may certainly help teachers as well as their students since it is unlikely to be constructive to utilize student blunders as an instant impetus for a teaching point (Alexander, 2006). It would seem that "the practice of using mistakes to highlight syntactic themes should only be advised in situations where accuracy is the main emphasis of the lesson and the activities the instructor uses to teach it.

It is commonly acknowledged that a teacher's discussion in the classroom should not be excessive and that students should not be discouraged from speaking in class (Xiao-Yan, 2006). It can be frustrating for students to use the target language in front of the class since it requires them to meet linguistic, cognitive, and psychological standards. It is therefore advised that before assigning students to speak in front of the class, teachers make sure they have enough time to prepare their speech or presentation. Speaking Chinese ESL in class nervousness is not caused by test anxiety. Exam anxiety doesn't seem to be limited to Chinese language learners in English language classrooms; rather, it seems to be a widespread issue that is a component of social anxiety. It is clear from this that this study has a lot of ramifications for language teachers who are not Chinese as well as Chinese teachers of English. There are ramifications for secondary and possibly basic language education in addition to higher education, according to the study.

The present study aims to investigate the various speaking proficiency challenges encountered by ESL students at the BS level at the University of Sialkot. The whole range of speaking competency problems is still not well understood, despite a great deal of study on the difficulties faced by ESL learners. An imperfect image of the larger difficulties has been produced by previous research, which has typically concentrated on one or a few particular topics at a time. To give a thorough grasp of the obstacles to effective English-speaking skills, this research looks at a wide range of problems and determines which ones come up most frequently in classroom environments. Creating more successful tactics and interventions to help ESL students improve their speaking requires a comprehensive strategy**.**

Research Methodology

The current study employed a mixed-method approach to effectively capture participant responses regarding their speaking proficiency. This methodology integrates quantitative and qualitative data, utilizing frequency tests to analyze learners' responses. The structured questionnaire comprised ten statements linked to the research questions, employing a Likert scale for responses where values ranged from "strongly agree" to "neutral." The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a value of .782, indicating acceptable reliability (values above .7 are considered valid). The study's theoretical framework was guided by Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which posits that high anxiety and low motivation can hinder language acquisition. The sample consisted of 50 bachelor's degree students from the University of Sialkot,

selected through random sampling to facilitate efficient data collection. Ethical considerations were strictly adhered to, ensuring participant confidentiality and voluntary participation throughout the data collection process. This methodological rigor aims to yield comprehensive insights into the speaking competency issues faced by ESL learners.

Data Analysis

The current study used a mixed-method research approach that was intended to capture participant responses. Frequency tests were used to get the results for the mixed method analysis based on the learners'' responses. For this regard, 10 statements were used and all the tests were applied through SPSS software.

Table 2: *Statistics of Frequencies*

Statements	N		Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing				
I cannot speak English as I have a fear of insult from people in the classroom	50	0	2.7600	3.0000	4.00	1.36367
Psychologically I feel myself under stress if I have to communicate in English in classroom	50	0	2.9600	3.0000	2.00	1.08722
I am cautious of committing mistakes that stops me to speak English in classroom	50	0	3.2000	3.0000	4.00	1.16058
I become nervous when I am to speak English in classroom	50	0	3.4600	4.0000	4.00	1.14660
The classroom atmosphere does not support me to speak English in classroom	50	0	2.4000	2.0000	1.00	1.26168
I believe English conversation is not generally appreciated in my community and classrooms	50	0	2.5600	2.0000	2.00	1.29615
The resources to attain proficiency in English are insufficient in classroom	50	0	2.8000	3.0000	2.00[a]	1.14286
There is no incentive or encouragement for English speaking in my classrooms	50	0	2.7800	3.0000	3.00	1.11190
I am unable to pronounce words accurately and hence reluctant to speak in classroom	50	0	2.6200	3.0000	3.00	1.22708
My English grammar (syntax) troubles me to speak English in classroom	50	0	2.9200	3.0000	2.00	1.48241

This table shows the statistics of the frequencies test in this table and the valid number of participants' range is 50 the highest standard deviation value is 1.48241 the lowest standard value is 1.08722 and the highest mean value is 3.4600and the lowest mean value is 2.4000.

Table 3: *I cannot speak English as I have a fear of insult from people in the classroom*

Statement 1		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	13	26.0	26.0	26.0
	Disagree	10	20.0	20.0	46.0
	Neutral	7	14.0	14.0	60.0
	Agree	16	32.0	32.0	92.0
	Strongly Agree	4	8.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

The table shows how students feel about speaking English in the classroom due to fear of being insulted by others. 13 students (26%) strongly disagree with the statement. 10 students (20%) disagree. 7 students (14%) are neutral; they neither agree nor disagree. 16 students (32%) agree. 4 students (8%) strongly agree. The results indicate that fear of insult is a significant obstacle for many students, as 40% (agree and strongly agree combined) feel this way. At the BS level, a notable number of students (32%) agree they face challenges in speaking due to fear of being insulted. The fear of speaking due to potential insults affects a significant portion of students, which highlights a common issue among undergraduates.

Table 4: *Psychologically I feel myself under stress if I have to communicate in English in classroom*

Statement 2		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	4	8.0	8.0	8.0
	Disagree	15	30.0	30.0	38.0
	Neutral	13	26.0	26.0	64.0
	Agree	15	30.0	30.0	94.0
	Strongly Agree	3	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

The table shows how students psychologically feel their selves under stress if they have to communicate in English in the classroom. 4 students (8%) strongly disagree with the statement. 15 students (230%) disagree. 13 students (26%) are neutral; they neither agree nor disagree. 15 students (30%) agree. 3 students (6%) strongly agree. The results indicate that psychologically feeling under stress while communicating in English in is a significant obstacle for many students, as 36% (agree and strongly agree combined) feel this way. At the BS level, a notable number of students (30%) agree they face challenges in speaking due to psychological stress for communication in English The fear of speaking due to potential stress affects a significant portion of students, which highlights a common issue among undergraduates.

Table 5: *I am cautious of committing mistakes that stops me to speak English in classroom*

Statement 3		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	6	12.0	12.0	12.0
	Disagree	6	12.0	12.0	24.0
	Neutral	15	30.0	30.0	54.0
	Agree	18	36.0	36.0	90.0
	Strongly Agree	5	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

This table indicates that 36% of respondents agree that they are cautious of committing mistakes which stops them from speaking English in the classroom. This is the most common response.10% strongly agree, showing some respondents feel very cautious about making mistakes.30% are neutral, indicating a significant portion of respondents do not have strong feelings either way.24% of respondents (12% disagree and 12% strongly disagree) do not feel that caution about mistakes stops them from speaking English. The majority of respondents (46%) experience caution about making mistakes that prevents them from speaking English in the classroom. A considerable portion (30%) remain neutral on this issue, while 24% do not feel that this caution impacts their willingness to speak English. The findings indicate that although students at the BS level at the University of Sialkot are generally concerned about making mistakes, there is also a notable difference in their perspectives on the consequences of such mistakes.

Table 6: *I become nervous when I am to speak English in classroom*

Statement 4		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	6.0	6.0	6.0
	Disagree	10	20.0	20.0	26.0
	Neutral	5	10.0	10.0	36.0
	Agree	25	50.0	50.0	86.0
	Strongly Agree	7	14.0	14.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

This table shows that 50% of respondents agree that they become nervous when speaking English in the classroom. This is the most common response.14% strongly agree, showing a significant number of respondents feel very nervous.10% are neutral, indicating no strong feeling either way.26% of respondents (20% disagree and 6% strongly disagree) do not feel nervous when speaking English in the classroom. The majority of respondents (64%) experience some level of nervousness when speaking English in the classroom. A smaller portion (26%) do not share this anxiety, while a minority (10%) remain neutral. This result indicates that becoming nervous during speaking in the classroom at BS level in University of Sialkot is a prevalent issue with classroom communication anxiety among the participants.

Table 7: *The classroom atmosphere does not support me to speak English in classroom*

Statement 5		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	15	30.0	30.0	30.0
	Disagree	14	28.0	28.0	58.0
	Neutral	11	22.0	22.0	80.0

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Agree	6	12.0	12.0	92.0
Strongly Agree	4	8.0	8.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

This table shows that 30% of respondents strongly disagree that the classroom atmosphere does not support them in speaking English. This is the most common response.28% disagree, showing a significant portion of respondents feel that the classroom atmosphere is supportive.22% are neutral, indicating a significant portion of respondents do not have strong feelings either way.12% agree and 8% strongly agree, indicating that a smaller portion of respondents feel that the classroom atmosphere is not supportive. The majority of respondents (58%) feel that the classroom atmosphere supports them in speaking English, either strongly disagreeing or disagreeing with the statement. A notable portion (22%) remains neutral, and a smaller group (20%) feels that the classroom atmosphere does not support them. This result suggests that at the BS level, most respondents find their classroom environment conducive to speaking English, though a minority experiences a lack of support.

Table 8: *I believe English conversation is not generally appreciated in my community and classrooms*

Statement 6		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	11	22.0	22.0	22.0
	Disagree	18	36.0	36.0	58.0
	Neutral	9	18.0	18.0	76.0
	Agree	6	12.0	12.0	88.0
	Strongly Agree	6	12.0	12.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

According to this table, 36% of respondents don't think that speaking English in class and in the community isn't commonly appreciated. This is the most typical reaction. A sizeable percentage of respondents—22% strongly disagree—feel that having conversations in English is valued. A percentage of respondents do not have strong opinions either way, as evidenced by the 18% who are neutral. A lower percentage of respondents—12% agree and 12% strongly agree—feel that English-language conversation is not valued. The majority of respondents (58%) disagree or strongly disagree with the assertion that English conversation is widely welcomed in their community and education. Notably, 18% are neutral, and 24% think that speaking in English is not appreciated. At the BS level, this result indicates a generally good attitude toward English talk in classrooms and the community, notwithstanding a sizable minority who feel that English conversation is not valued.

Table 9: *The resources to attain proficiency in English are insufficient in classroom*

Statement 7		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	7	14.0	14.0	14.0

	Disagree	14	28.0	28.0	42.0
	Neutral	14	28.0	28.0	70.0
	Agree	12	24.0	24.0	94.0
	Strongly Agree	3	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

This table shows that 28% of respondents disagree that the resources to attain proficiency in English are insufficient in the classroom. This is one of the most common responses.28% are neutral, indicating that many respondents do not have strong feelings either way.14% strongly disagree, suggesting a notable portion believes the resources are sufficient.24% agree and 6% strongly agree, indicating that a smaller but significant portion feels the resources are insufficient. The responses show a mix of opinions regarding the sufficiency of resources for attaining English proficiency in the classroom:42% (14% strongly disagree and 28% disagree) believe the resources are sufficient.28% remain neutral, suggesting uncertainty or mixed feelings.30% (24% agree and 6% strongly agree) believe the resources are insufficient. This indicates a divided view, with a sizable majority believing that the resources are sufficient and a smaller but considerable proportion feeling that the resources are insufficient. The neutral answers suggest that some respondents are unsure or uninterested in this issue. The main finding of this table indicates that the majority of respondents have a neutral opinion about whether or not there are rewards or encouragements for speaking English. When taken as a whole, nevertheless, the statement is viewed as having insufficient encouragement because more respondents disagree with it than agree with it. This shows that although there is some worry about the lack of support for English-speaking students, many students either don't think there is enough support or don't have strong opinions.

Table 10: *There is no incentive or encouragement for English speaking in my classrooms*

Statement 8		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	9	18.0	18.0	18.0
	Disagree	9	18.0	18.0	36.0
	Neutral	17	34.0	34.0	70.0
	Agree	14	28.0	28.0	98.0
	Strongly Agree	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

This table shows that 34% of respondents are neutral about the statement, indicating a significant portion does not have strong feelings either way.36% (18% strongly disagree and 18% disagree) believe there is incentive and encouragement for English speaking in their classrooms.28% agree and 2% strongly agree, indicating that a smaller but notable portion feels there is no incentive or encouragement for English speaking. The responses show a range of opinions regarding the presence of incentives or encouragement for English speaking in classrooms:36% (18% strongly disagree and 18% disagree) feel there is incentive and encouragement.34% are neutral, suggesting many respondents are undecided or indifferent on this matter.30% (28% agree and 2% strongly agree) feel there is no incentive or encouragement for English speaking. The data indicates that although some participants believe there is adequate support for using English in the classroom, a

considerable proportion are indifferent, and a noteworthy minority believe there is neither support nor motivation.

Table 11: *I am unable to pronounce words accurately and hence reluctant to speak in classroom*

Statement 9		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	12	24.0	24.0	24.0
	Disagree	11	22.0	22.0	46.0
	Neutral	14	28.0	28.0	74.0
	Agree	10	20.0	20.0	94.0
	Strongly Agree	3	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

According to this table, 46% of respondents—24% strongly disagree and 22% disagree do not believe that their inability to pronounce words correctly influences their hesitation to speak in class. This is the most typical reaction. A sizeable percentage of respondents—28%—do not have strong opinions in either direction.26% of respondents (20% agree and 6% strongly agree) said their inability to enunciate words correctly affects their hesitation to speak in class. This table's main finding is that most respondents (46%) do not think that their inability to pronounce words correctly has an impact on why they are reluctant to speak in class. While 28% of respondents are neutral, a sizable minority (26%) state that they are impacted by this problem. This shows that ideas about how pronunciation issues affect students' unwillingness to speak in class are divided.

Table 12: *My English grammar (syntax) troubles me to speak English in classroom*

Statement 10		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	11	22.0	22.0	22.0
	Disagree	12	24.0	24.0	46.0
	Neutral	8	16.0	16.0	62.0
	Agree	8	16.0	16.0	78.0
	Strongly Agree	11	22.0	22.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

This table demonstrates that 46% of respondents do not find that the English grammar (syntax) bothers them when speaking in class (22% strongly disagree and 24% disagree). Usually, people will respond like this. Many have no strong feelings at all, as seen by the 16% who are neutral. Speaking in class causes problems for 38% of respondents (i.e., 16% who agree and 22% who strongly agree) due to their English grammar (syntax). This table's primary finding is that, although a sizable majority of respondents (46%) said they are not troubled by English grammar (syntax) when speaking in class, a noteworthy minority (38%) said they are. A small percentage of respondents (16%) expressed neutrality, suggesting that they lack a strong opinion on the matter. This indicates disagreements over how grammar and syntax affect students' ability to speak English fluently in the classroom.

In response to open-ended questions only two respondents gave answer to these questions "*I can't speak English even I can't speak Urdu in front of others because of my past experiences*". And "*Teachers are not guiding in a proper way etc*".

Findings and Discussion

The results of this study reveal that ESL learners at the BS level at the University of Sialkot encounter significant speech difficulties, primarily categorized into psychological, social, and linguistic obstacles. Psychological challenges such as stress, low confidence, and anxiety are prevalent among participants, while social issues like fear of insult further complicate their ability to communicate effectively in English. Linguistic obstacles, including difficulties with grammar and pronunciation, also hinder their speaking proficiency. The research involved 50 respondents who answered ten statements regarding their experiences, and the analysis conducted using SPSS highlighted that many learners feel anxious and fearful when attempting to speak English in both classroom and community settings. The findings align with previous studies that indicate a range of factors contributing to speaking anxiety among ESL learners. Issues such as fear of making mistakes, shyness, and concerns about judgment from peers or instructors create an environment where students hesitate to participate. Open-ended responses from participants revealed additional challenges, including vocabulary limitations and a perceived lack of guidance from teachers. Recommendations from respondents emphasized the need for instructors to focus on real-life activities that enhance practical language use and improve student performance. Overall, these insights underscore the importance of addressing both psychological and social dimensions to support ESL learners in overcoming their speaking proficiency challenges.

Conclusion

This study finds out the elements or issues that affect English speaking proficiency issues of ESL learners at the BS level at the University of Sialkot. All the factors that were considered in this research were the obstacles to English speaking proficiency of the ESL learners of the University of Sialkot students. It examined that most students showed that psychological issues are the major obstacles that create hurdles in English speaking proficiently the psychological issues the ESL learners of the University of Sialkot faced societal or social issues such as the behavior and their behavior towards the students' English skills and their motivation of speaking. People demotivate them when they try to speak in the English language in front of them. They also faced other issues like fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and so on. This research demonstrates that ESL learners of Pakistan and the learners of the University of Sialkot want to speak in English but these issues always become hurdles for them. The fear of being judged, low motivation due to society, and low confidence make them lazy to speak in English proficiently.

Recommendations

1. Students should be engaged with various speaking tasks that encourage them to speak confidently.
2. There should be proper counselling given to students to lessen their psychological issues
3. Teachers and other students shouldn't highlight the mistakes of students to make them confident speakers.

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Appendix 1
Survey
Exploring ESL Learners' Speaking Proficiency Issues at BS level in University of Sialkot
Name (optional):_____   Age: _____
Sex: _____   Department: _____
Semester: _____
Dear Respondents,
I'm a student of BS English (linguistics) 8th semester in University of Sialkot. I am conducting a study entitled "**Exploring ESL learners' Speaking Proficiency Issues at BS level at University of Sialkot".**
This questioner divided into 5 categories and all the questions regarding these categories Firstly, I am very thankful that you spend your valuable time for helping me. Kindly attempt this questionnaire according to your speaking issues or speaking problems while speaking English. Your sincere response is very important for my research or study.
1= Strongly Disagree (SD)   4= Agree (A)
2= Disagree (D)   5= Strongly Agree (SA)
3= Neutral (N)

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA
I cannot speak English as I have a fear of insult from people in the classroom					
Psychologically I feel myself under stress if I have to communicate in English in classroom					
I am cautious of committing mistakes that stops me to speak English in classroom					
I become nervous when I am to speak English in classroom					
The classroom atmosphere does not support me to speak English in classroom					
I believe English conversation is not generally appreciated in my community and classrooms					

The resources to attain proficiency in English are insufficient in classroom					
There is no incentive or encouragement for English speaking in my classrooms					
I am unable to pronounce words accurately and hence reluctant to speak in classroom					
My English grammar (syntax) troubles me to speak English in classroom					

Any other issues regarding speaking proficiency: ---

Any recommendation regarding these issues:---