A STUDY TO ANALYZE THE PROBLEMS OF POST GRADUATE STUDENTS IN SPEAKING ENGLISH LANGUAGE AT THE ISLAMIA UNIVERSITY OF BAHAWALPUR, PAKISTAN

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Abstract

This study was planned to analyze the problems of speaking English at post graduate level in the Islamia University Bahawalpur. English language has become compulsory at every level of education, because all the studies are in English nowadays. Speaking English language plays a vital role for the better jobs also. The objectives of the study were, (1) To find out the problems of speaking English language at post graduate level in the Islamia University Bahawalpur. (2) To find out the factors effecting on speaking English language. (3) To give suggestions for improving the speaking English language. The population of the study consisted of all students of the Islamia University Bahawalpur. 400 students were selected randomly for this purpose. Data was collected through questionnaire, and analyzed by mean score and percentage. Findings were drawn on the basis of analysis of data and it was recommended that there may be a compulsory subject of speaking English language. There may be some extra classes on speaking English language. Teachers may deliver the lecture in English language. Teachers may motivate the students for speaking English language. Teacher may give them confidence in speaking English language. Teacher may use the different teaching methods and techniques for improving the speaking skills of English. Students may speak English inside and outside the class.

Key Words: English language, Speaking problems, Post graduate level.

Introduction

The place of English as a subject has always remained a matter of controversy in the system of education in Pakistan. English language has become important for the students because, without proper speaking English, there is no better future for students, no appropriate job
for them anywhere, and instead of having good degrees students cannot get good jobs. It is a big dilemma that students feel hesitation in speaking English language. Though teachers emphasize on speaking English language, but in Pakistan, system of education at basic level is not satisfactory that is why students feel difficulty in speaking English at post graduate level (Sharma, 2004).

Language is the most important area of human development and communication. People use language to convey their message. To persuade and educate, language connected and linked the people with each other. Now the world is becoming a global village and people are getting closer with each other than any era of history, at this stage requirement of global and international language rises much more than past. Every country has a national language which is used to show the expression of its thoughts, culture and its national life. The language covers the whole range of its social, cultural and official activities. In the modern age because of fast developing science and technology, English has become very important and in some cases, more important than native language. Considering the status of English, in Pakistan, it is given the status of compulsory subject and it is also the medium of instruction in scientific and technical education at every level (Sarwar, 2002).

English is the language of knowledge, information and research. Almost all latest knowledge and modern researches are available in English language. It is also reasonable source to communicate with internationally recognized scholars and researchers so it is need of the hour to aware of our new generation with English. In order to get communal over the use of English language, learners should master the basic skill, listening (comprehension), speaking, reading comprehension and writing. So far speaking skill has been neglected at almost all levels in Pakistan.

**English Speaking Skill**

Speaking means convey the message through words of mouth, allowing and admitting of speech. It is also termed as oral skill or communication skill. Students do not get any chance either in the classroom or outside to speak English. Speaking is not a part of our examination. Learning to speak also demands a lot of practice and attention. We learn to speak our mother tongue just by listening and repeating. Teachers can adopt the same natural way; he can give them certain structure and ask them to repeat. This will remove their shyness. He can give those drills in the basic patterns of language (Mueen, 1992).

**Various Activities Used for the Development of the Speaking Skill**

These most commonly used activities are as followed

- Drills
- Dialogues
- Discussion
- Short Lecture
- Role play
Drills
The students are given a structure and are asked to repeat it. Drills are usually very controlled. They are fairly repetitive, and not very creative. But very good for students to practice and speak. It creates the habit of speaking in students.

Dialogues
A dialogue is a conversation between two persons. The students are asked to talk and introduce themselves to each other. And talk on different issues.

Discussion
The teacher gives some topics to different groups of students. He gives them instruction how to proceed. Then students discuss the topic to each other and the group leader will tell about the results of the discussion.

Short Lecture
The students may be given some easy topics by the teacher. They prepare those topics in verbal and written form. One by one they come to stage and deliver the lecture for two minutes before the class.

Role play
This is also form of dialogues. In this type, the students are asked to play the role of different persons and talk to each other.

Problems for Speaking of English language learners
1. There is no correspondence between sound and symbols. For Pakistanis whose national language is highly phonetic, English pronunciation offers difficulties, particularly in clusters like “ough” that has many different sounds as found in ‘rough’ (raf) ‘plough’ (plow), ‘thought’ (thot), and ‘naughty’ (naty) etc.

2. The silent letters are usually baffling because in Urdu we have very rare such occurrence e.g. Psychology, Psalm, Wrap etc.

3. Hard and Soft sounds create difficulties e.g. letter ‘C’ in Cat gives hard sound and letter ‘C’ in Cinema produces soft sound.

4. The chief problems arise out of the contrasting patterns of the sounds of the mother tongue and English. Our students utter the sound of English letters in the pattern of Urdu.

5. Letters in English spellings do not correspond with their sounds. One letter ‘a’ gives different sounds in father, fate, late, cat and fall.
6. Sounds of vowels are confusing e.g. ‘a’ with short ‘o’ sound and with ‘au’ sound.

7. The problem of stressed and unstressed syllables, vowels and consonants.

8. Translation creates pronunciation problems. By Translation we mean to write the English word in Urdu script, for example, ‘Electric’. The danger of it is that the students pronounce the English word as it is expressed in Urdu. This sort of practice of the teacher has spoiled the correct pronunciation of our students.

9. Lack of understanding of the systematic arrangement of various sounds which a human vocal organ is capable of producing.

**Overview of the Related Researches**

By reviewing the related literature, some researches related to the topic came into account. Brief discussion of these researches is given here. Boonkit (2010) worked for enhancement and the development of speaking skills for non-native speakers of English. Speaking is one of the four macro skills to be developed as a mean of effective communication in both first and second language learning contexts. In the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pedagogy environment, how to increase speaking competence and confidence for undergraduate students tends to be a crucial question among instructors. This concern led to a qualitative research design as an action study in a regular course employing a task-based approach. The findings indicated that confidence, creativity of topics, and speaking competence were the key aspects of improvement when speaking to the audience.

Kocak (2010) worked on a novice teacher’s action research on EFL learners’ speaking anxiety. The purpose of this paper is to share the findings of an action research which aims at helping students to overcome anxiety problem they suffer while speaking in speaking-listening course. The first step was identification of the problem and for this purpose an open-ended questionnaire was given to all of the students in that class. Following this, interviews were conducted with eight students, six of whom were highly anxious and two of them were not anxious according to their answers to the questionnaire. After identifying the causes of their anxiety most of which were related with fear of failure as a result of poor performance, an action plan was developed and implemented. In this presentation, both this action research process and its role in the researcher’s professional development were shared.

Gan (2012) reported the result of a research study that aimed to identify the problems of oral English skills of ESL (English as a second language) students at a teacher training institution in Hong Kong. The study addressed the gap in the understanding of the problems of ESL students encountered in their oral English development in the context of a Bachelor of Education (English Language) programme. Insufficient opportunities to speak English in tutorials, and the input-poor environment for spoken communication in English outside class apparently contributed to a range of problems that closely related to the sociocultural, institutional and interpersonal contexts in which individual ESL students found themselves.
Liu and Jackson (2008) claimed that lack of vocabulary was regarded as a main hurdle for spoken communication by Chinese English learners. In the present study, inadequate vocabulary was also reported as a prevalent concern among the students.

**Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study were

1. To find out the problems of speaking English language at post graduate level.
2. To find out the factors affecting the speaking English language.
3. To give suggestions for the improvement of speaking English language.

**Research Methodology**

This study was descriptive in nature. A five point rating scale questionnaire was developed to collect the data. The questionnaire consisted of 17 closed ended and 2 open ended questions. The questionnaire was developed keeping in view the objectives of the study and then checked by eminent Experts. Necessary amendments were done under their suggestions. The intended target population was all the students (male and female) of faculty of Education, faculty of Science, faculty of Islamic Learning, faculty of Arts and faculty of Management sciences of The Islamia University of Bahawalpur. Out of whole population, Four hundred students were selected through simple random sampling. The questionnaire was distributed among the respondents by approaching them personally. They were given enough time to fill the questionnaire. So the return rate of questionnaire was 100%.

**Data Analysis**

The data collected through questionnaire was analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. After collecting data it was analyzed by applying frequency and percentage. Mean score was calculated for overall level of agreement/disagreement of each statement. For mean score norm was 3.00. However level of agreement was different for each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Speaking of English language must be compulsory at post graduate level.</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Students feel problem in speaking English because of lack of vocabulary.</td>
<td>4.35</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Students feel problem in speaking English because of grammar illiteracy.</td>
<td>3.80</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Students feel problem in speaking English because of improper accent and pronunciation.</td>
<td>3.93</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Students feel shyness in speaking English because they think if they will speak wrong English; rest of the class will laugh on them.</td>
<td>4.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Students of English medium schools speak English confidently at post graduate level.</td>
<td>4.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Students of English medium schools, speak English with proper accent and pronunciation.</td>
<td>3.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Students of Urdu medium schools, feel hesitation in speaking English at post graduate level.</td>
<td>3.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Students of Urdu medium schools can speak English with proper accent and pronunciation.</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Students of Urdu medium schools firstly translate the Urdu into English and then speak English.</td>
<td>3.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mother tongue does not affect the accent of English language.</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>University teachers deliver the lecture in English language totally.</td>
<td>2.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>University teachers motivate the students for speaking English language.</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Students do efforts for speaking English language with poor accent and pronunciation.</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>There must be a compulsory subject of speaking English language at post graduate level.</td>
<td>3.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>There must be some extra classes on English language speaking.</td>
<td>3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>There must be a rule that students have to speak English language otherwise they will have to pay fine.</td>
<td>3.34</td>
</tr>
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Responses to open ended questions

1. Majority of respondents mentioned that the lack of confidence is the big hurdle in speaking English language at post graduate level, the basic education is not very much sufficient and it does not provide a satisfactory base for proper speaking. That is why students feel problem in speaking English language.

2. Teachers should motivate the students and give the extra time to the students to improve their English. Teacher may use the different teaching methods and techniques for improving the speaking skills of English.

Conclusion

This study was designed in part to contribute to the relatively small body of knowledge so far available on the English speaking problems of post graduate students. Majority of the respondents agreed that speaking of English language must be compulsory at post graduate level, students feel problem in speaking English because of inadequate vocabulary and grammar illiteracy. Students feel shyness in speaking English because they think if they will speak wrong English; rest of the class will laugh. Students of English medium schools speak English confidently at post graduate level. Majority of the respondents agreed that students of English medium schools speak English fluently with proper accent and pronunciation. Respondents agreed that students of Urdu medium school firstly translate the Urdu into English and then speak English. Mother tongue effects on the accent of English language. University teachers motivate the students for speaking English language. Students do efforts for speaking English language with poor accent and pronunciation. There must be a compulsory subject of English language at post graduate level. Respondents showed agreement that there must be some extra classes on English language speaking.

Recommendations

On the basis of finding results from the study the following recommendations are here for proposed. There may be a compulsory subject of speaking English language. There may be some extra classes on speaking English language. Teachers may deliver the lecture in English language. Teachers may motivate the students more for speaking English language. Teacher may give them confidence in speaking English language. Teachers may use the different teaching methods and techniques to enhance the speaking power of students. Students may speak English inside and outside the class. There should be a great focus on language improvement in the curriculum at every level of Education.
References


