Analysing Linguistic Barriers faced by Secondary Level Students while Speaking English as a Second Language

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ABSTRACT

In the Pakistani education system, English is a mandatory subject, whereas students at the secondary level in Sanghar find it extremely difficult to speak English. These problems are caused by various linguistic, pedagogical, and socio-cultural issues, such as the absence of an English-speaking environment, insufficient vocabulary, poor grammar, pronunciation issues, and fear of making mistakes, which leads to minimal confidence and unwillingness to communicate. Despite a few language policies being undertaken, very little research has been conducted on real barriers within rural areas such as Sanghar. The proposed study seeks to investigate the linguistic obstacles experienced by secondary-level students in Sanghar when learning a second language, which is English. The objectives are: (1) to distinguish the most frequently occurring linguistic difficulties using quantitative analysis; and (2) to evaluate the statistical significance of the first language (L1) of students and their English-speaking abilities. The quantitative design was adopted with the data gathered via a 20-questionnaire closed-ended questionnaire focusing the pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, fluency, and exposure to spoken English. Sixty-six students (randomly chosen) were based in different schools in Sanghar. The data were analysed by using SPSS, and descriptive statistics were given in the table and graph. The limiting vocabulary, wrong pronunciation, and interference with the mother tongue were seen to be the most significant ones according to the analysis. The L1 influence was raised in the form of phonological, grammatical, and lexical transfers and caused a lack of mistakes and hesitance. Psychological variables worsened these problems: fear of error and low confidence. The paper has determined that L1 interference and the absence of vocabulary and pronunciation skills are the main barriers to achieving successful spoken English. To solve them, English teaching in Sanghar needs to be more communicative and student-oriented, with the inclusion of explicit vocabulary training, emphasis on pronunciation, less L1 use, and a friendly and positive mood to speak.

Keywords: Linguistic barriers, English speaking, phonological, syntactical, lexical

INTRODUCTION

English is the main requirement to succeed at school, get a job, and achieve it, and move upward in a more globalized world. In Pakistan, English is applied as an official language in which is widely used in the teaching/learning process in secondary schools. This notwithstanding, a large number of students,

especially those in the rural and underdeveloped regions like Sanghar, still have trouble speaking English amid the periodic and loud confidence.

Sanghar is a district of a province called Sindh, which has many problems of education, such as the absence of qualified teachers in English, minimal exposure to the English language, and lower social and cultural acceptability of the use of English in real-life situations. These lead to unwavering language barriers, which impede the oral communication ability of the students. The knowledge of the nature and extent of such barriers is essential to the educator, policy maker, and curriculum designer so that they can develop effective interventions that may benefit the students to communicate fluently and effectively in the English language.

The case in Pakistan is special because English is both the second and the official language. It is used as the leading mode of instruction in most schools, and it is viewed as a requirement for higher institutions, jobs, and socio-economic improvement (Rahman, 2020). Nevertheless, there is also a huge disconnect between the policy and actual practice of the English language in subjects such as rural and semi-urban regions and the district of Sanghar in the Sindh province. Students in these scenarios are usually confronted with a set of barriers as they seek to acquire spoken, fluent English.

Traditionally, English language pedagogy has been poor in rural Pakistan because of resource-limited schools, unqualified teachers, and also because of poor socio-cultural opinions concerning the active use of English (Farooq & Sajid, 2022). (Mahmood et al., 2023) mention that rural learners have even more difficulties in their studies because they have fewer opportunities to receive English-speaking experience, they lack vocabulary, and they have no way to practice authentic communication. Sanghar is mostly rural and agricultural, with these problems coming to life.

Furthermore, the fact that Sindhi (or other local languages spoken in Sanghar) is far linguistically different from English complicates second language acquisition. Students usually have difficulties with phonological disparities, grammar systems, and cultural expressions firmly installed in the English language that cannot be found in their native language (Ellis, 2021). Such differences in languages, together with poor pedagogical approaches, are some of the factors that make students very weak speakers.

The other factor is affective barrier: most students have very high levels of language anxiety, fear of errors, and feeling unconfident when speaking in English (Horwitz, 2020). These mental obstacles are a major setback to active involvement and oral competence as well. Although teachers are usually non-native speakers themselves, they might not have the education or confidence to conduct communicative activities that develop fluency (Gan, 2013).

Policies in recent years have given priority to English language proficiency as a means of modernity and economic development. Nevertheless, such policies often do not take into account the socio-cultural and infrastructural realities of such areas as Sanghar rural districts (Rehman & Anwar, 2023). Although students living in urban classes could access the English-language media, individual study, and teachers with better training, rural students continue to be susceptible to their limited resources and opportunities.

The growing emphasis on communicative competence in language education requires students to be not merely aware of English but capable of that language functioning where they operate (Richards & Rodgers, 2022). In the case of the students of Sanghar, however, they have little to draw language in the real-life situations of English. In this way, classroom communication becomes the major form of speech practice, which is why the quality of instruction and learning atmosphere becomes more important than ever.

Hence, it is possible to state that the close examination of the linguistic obstacles to secondary-level learners in Sanghar can be used to improve policies, teacher training, and curriculum. Priorities of the most urgent linguistic, pedagogical, and socio-cultural problems will help educators and policymakers to develop an approach that encourages higher oral communication skills in rural learners.

This paper seeks to discuss the cognitive-linguistic, psychological, and socio-cultural inhibitors that do not allow the students at the secondary level in Sanghar to speak English with confidence. Through the analysis of these mutually constructive barriers, the study will inform contextually sensitive pedagogical approaches that may generate the connection between formal learning of spoken English and its authentic competence in the real-life context.

In the Pakistani education system, English is a compulsory subject; despite this, most students at the secondary level in the Sanghar district have major challenges when it comes to speaking English as a second language. All these challenges have been contributed to by different linguistic, pedagogical, and socio-cultural issues that have hindered their oral performance. The absence of an English-speaking environment, small vocabulary, poor knowledge of grammar, pronunciation problems, and fear of committing a mistake usually leads to low confidence and fear of communicating in English.

Although the past few years have witnessed different language policies and programs, no concerted research has been conducted that looks into the actual language barriers that secondary students encounter in such rural regions as Sanghar. This paper endeavours to close such a gap by evaluating the main linguistic challenges that limit the capacity of the students to speak English, because the information presented is expected to be utilized in advising, teaching, and language learning facilitations at the secondary school level.

In students in Pakistani schools start studying English at the compulsory level. The students of secondary schools in Sanghar have great difficulties in speaking English as a second language. The cause of this struggle is a variety of interconnected linguistic barriers that include low vocabulary knowledge, inadequate grammar, improper pronunciation, and inability to express oneself fluently, which, in addition, results in low confidence and unwillingness to speak English (Farooq & Sajid, 2022).

The existing proficiency disparity between the native tongue and the target language increases the linguistic challenges of students in Sanghar, where the Sindhi language is used (Mahmood et al., 2023). The educational environment lacks the proper infrastructure to facilitate the immersive or interactive experiences of learning languages. The classroom almost always focuses on rote learning and grammar translation and places a lot on communicative competence (Richards & Rodgers, 2022). This study aims to examine the linguistic barriers faced by secondary-level students in Sanghar when speaking English as a second language.

Research Questions

1. What are the most significant linguistic barriers faced by secondary-level students in Sanghar when speaking English, based on quantitative data?

2. How does the students' first language (L1) statistically influence their speaking English abilities?

Null Hypothesis

Linguistic barriers do not have a significant statistical impact on secondary-level Students' ability to speak English as a second language in Sanghar.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although many multilingual countries have embraced diversity, English as a Second Language (ESL) is still a challenge to teach and learn in countries such as Pakistan because of some language barriers to the native language. Such obstacles are usually demonstrated in the problem of secondary-level people with spoken English, even in spite of years of training. According to various studies, the sociolinguistic situation, low exposure rates, and institutional barriers to teaching in spoken English in areas such as Sanghar a district dominated by Sindhi and Urdu speakers only force students to develop their communicative skills in speaking English to a point where they are only able to talk (Ahmed, 2021; Jabeen & Kazemian, 2021). The given literature review explores the linguistic obstacles of ESL students at the secondary level in regard to phonological, grammatical, lexical, sociolinguistic, psychological, and pedagogical issues, paying more attention to the current research findings in Pakistan and similar environments.

Phonological Barriers

A major language barrier to ESL students is phonology. The phonetic variations between English and the first languages (L1) experienced by the students of Pakistan are many and hence cause difficulty to these students in pronunciation. As an example, a large number of regional languages in Pakistan do not include specific sounds of English, including / a slash / or / d / (Khan, 2020), such as Sindhi or Urdu. Mughal and Gulzar (2022) state that because of the lack of knowledge about such foreign sounds, students often replace them with the most similar ones in their L1, which leads to the inability to understand each other and causes a lack of speaking confidence. Research by Khokhar and Shaikh (2022) also states that this low level of phonological awareness can be partially explained by the absence of phonetic training during the study. Teachers themselves could also not be trained in phonetics in English, and this has caused a continued and fossilized occurrence of pronunciation errors amongst learners. What is more, according to Akram and Mahmood (2021), the issue of mother tongue interference is especially evident in such rural districts as Sanghar, as students have little (or no) experience of hearing or pronouncing real English sounds beyond the schooling process.

Barriers of Grammar and Syntax

Another central obstacle to verbal fluency is grammar competence. The study demonstrates that when writing in English, Pakistani ESL learners tend to reproduce L1 in a word-by-word manner, which leads to a mistake in word order or tense usage (Abbas & Farooq, 2021). This mostly arises as a result of variances between the syntactic ruptures of the English language and the local languages, such as Sindhi. According to the recent study by Shah et al. (2023) on secondary students of the interior Sindh, they particularly have issues with the use of auxiliary verbs and subject-verb matching and usage of tenses when speaking. The complications are caused by rote-learning-based teaching that focuses on written grammar and does not focus on communicative practice of grammar (Rind & Ali, 2020). As a result, students will have abstract knowledge of grammatical rules in their heads but will be unable to use them in real-time conversation.

Lexical Barriers

Another prevalent impediment to ESL students at the secondary level is vocabulary limitation. A typical characteristic of Pakistani students is their limited active vocabulary when it comes to speaking, although the passive vocabulary (reading) may be larger. The mismatch is a result of the intense emphasis on

teaching that is based on reading and translation of their textbooks, as opposed to real-life, practical vocabulary used in conversations. Monolingual English: Nawaz and Malik (2022) suggest that the small language bank prevents a student from speaking fluently or with accuracy. Further, the students can opt not to talk at all due to fear of having lexical gaps or wrong use of words. According to Farooq and Mahmood (2023), such districts as Sanghar do not present an authentic form of English to students in rural areas, and therefore, they do not have many chances to learn the vocabulary accidentally, as urban students can gain with the help of media and the internet.

Social Linguistic and Cultural Obstacles

The development of sociolinguistic competence, or the skills of using language following the specifications of the context, does not really receive that much attention in the ESL classes within Pakistan (Akhtar & Jabeen, 2023). Research findings show that rural students in Sindh have a low capacity to modulate their speech style in different communicative contexts because they have not been exposed to a variety of communicative situations (Shaikh, 2021). Also, cultural differences between the backgrounds of students and artistic material in textbooks in English classes can be a source of misunderstanding (Abro, 2022). Most secondary-level textbooks are culturally alien, and the students find it hard to identify themselves or to exercise the same in a meaningful manner, as the examples and dialogues provided are too far-fetched and alien (Rashid & Tariq, 2021). This cultural break can be a barrier to learners in attaining pragmatic skills in order to communicate efficiently through the spoken word.

Psychological Barriers: Fear and Self-Assurance

The concept of language anxiety has been acknowledged as one of the greatest impediments to communicating in English as a second language (Horwitz, 2020). The students tend to be afraid to make a mistake or to be the laughingstock, or to be mistreated in the classroom. This fear makes one afraid to learn to engage in speaking activities (Khan & Khaskheli, 2023).

According to Gan (2013), Asian EFL learners are usually wary of expressing themselves in the classroom in a culture of silence and respect for hierarchy. At Sanghar, which is populated by a large number of classes and the teacher-centred approach, learners hardly have a moment in which they can speak in low-anxiety environments. Shaikh and Memon (2022) say that this creates a vicious circle in which a student keeps silent, never becomes fluent, and still feels anxious to speak. Pedagogical and institutional barriers Pedagogical and institutional barriers This paper will explore the possibility of reducing pharmacy tuition fees to benefit potentially marginalized groups and what can be done to overcome the associated pedagogical and institutional difficulties. One of the large bodies of research shows the contribution of teaching strategies to linguistic barriers. Conventional instructions in Pakistani schools focus on rote learning, grammar-translation, and lectures by the pedagogues, and not much communicative practice (Rind & Ali, 2020; Mahmood & Gulzar, 2022). Rural schools in Sindh have no or minimum speaking activity during classroom observation, as it includes role plays, debates, and presentations (Shah et al., 2022; Abbas et al., 2023).

Besides, even teachers themselves might not be confident enough or trained in communicative language teaching (CLT). According to Gan (2013), unless thorough training is done, the non-native English teachers are likely to apply the old techniques, which fail to cultivate the spoken competence. Ahmed and Memon (2022) emphasize that in inner Sindh, English teachers are mostly teenagers or young people with

low levels of English proficiency themselves, which limits their opportunity to become role models of fluent speakers or to design English-speaking scenarios.

The other institutional element is the examination system that places more significance on reading and writing skills compared to speaking and listening (Kazemian & Ali, 2021). Most board exams do not assess spoken English directly, and hence, teachers and learners have little incentive to devote their time to practicing it.

Exposure and environmental factors

Students who live in the Sanghar region are not exposed to spoken English outside the classroom because the sociolinguistic context of studying does not encourage it. Shah and Khokhar (2023) state that in rural Sindh, students talk Sindhi or Urdu at home and use them to communicate, and speaking English is limited only to textbooks. Rural students and urban center students lack opportunities for English-language media, social connections, and extracurricular activities, which are highly available in the urban centers (Nawaz, 2021). In addition, the digital divide also restricts the accessibility of rural students to authentic English materials. Although urban students can combine classroom education with YouTube videos, online courses, and social networks, students in Sanghar usually do not have a good internet connection (Ahmed, 2021).

The most recent research reports interventions and recommendations.

Recent research has postulated different strategies that will help overcome these barriers. To give students an opportunity to speak in real conditions, Khan and Khaskheli (2023) suggest adding more tasks that could be task-based learning activities, i.e., group discussions and role plays. Akhtar and Jabeen (2023) conclude that teaching communication skills and practices, phonetics, and classroom interaction skills is to be trained. It is also suggested to introduce the use of technology or limited exposure with applications like mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) and online conversation clubs (Mahmood & Gulzar, 2022). These digital tools may assist rural students in engaging in listening to real speech; practicing talking to peers outside the local setting. Lastly, a change in the curriculum with the inclusion of the assessment of spoken English in the board exams might motivate students and teachers to pay more attention to communicative competence (Rashid & Tariq, 2021).

As revealed in the literature, the linguistic barriers of secondary-level students in Sanghar are complicated and mutually interlinked. The phonological challenges, grammatical gaps, small vocabulary size, sociolinguistic restraints, mental issues, and pedagogical system weaknesses cause these. A single solution cannot solve these obstacles: it is vital to enhance educator training, consider communicative activities in classrooms, use technology, and transform assessment methods. Learning about such barriers within the local sociolinguistic situation in Sanghar may help policymakers, teachers, and researchers design better interventions to enable the students to communicate in English with confidence.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a quantitative research method to examine the linguistic barriers that secondary-level students face in speaking English as a second language in Sanghar. The research mainly relies on a survey questionnaire designed to collect information from students about the challenges they encounter in spoken English.

The descriptive statistics were employed in this study for frequencies, percentages, and other statistical calculations. The study is quantitative. Data was explained in the form of tables and graphs. A total of 66 students out of a Questionnaire for students were randomly chosen to represent different schools across the region, ensuring a fair and balanced sample. The descriptive statistics were employed in this study for frequencies, percentages, and other statistical calculations. The study is quantitative. Data was explained in the form of tables and graphs. The data for this study were collected through a closed-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 20 items, all designed to explore different aspects of linguistic challenges in speaking English. These include problems related to pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, fluency, and exposure to English-speaking skills.

Questionnaires were distributed randomly among students. The researcher explained all the items to the students to clear their minds on the questionnaire. The researcher also explained the goal of data collection. The questionnaire used in this research was adapted and developed with the help of previous studies (such as Farooq et al., 2020) to ensure that it is valid and relevant to the research objectives. It focused specifically on linguistic issues affecting English-speaking proficiency among students. The data were analyzed through SPSS software, which is software for quantitative data analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to answer the research questions. The study of data was carried out using SPSS, which stands for Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. For the survey data (n = 66), descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and frequency were used to find trends in the use of metacognitive strategies. Reliability testing (Cronbach's alpha) confirmed the questionnaire's internal consistency.

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the linguistic barriers faced by secondary-level students in Sanghar when speaking English as a second language. The study aimed to identify the most dominant linguistic challenges and determine how these factors impact students' English-speaking proficiency. Descriptive statistics were collected from a sample of 66 students through a structured questionnaire. The data were analyzed using SPSS to measure the mean, minimum, maximum, and standard deviation of various linguistic and psychological barriers. The findings provide valuable insights into the extent to which lexical, grammatical, phonological, and first-language interference factors hinder students' oral English communication skills.

Research Question 1

What are the most significant linguistic barriers faced by secondary-level students in Sanghar when speaking English, based on quantitative data?

Figure 1: Descriptive statistical analysis indicated that students in Sanghar working at the secondary level have encountered various linguistic challenges that impede their level of communication in English as a second language. Two of the seven barrier items recorded the highest, with the most important barrier being termed as Lack of Vocabulary, with the mean score reading 4.3 (SD = 0.65). This means that most of the students meet a significant challenge in coming up with the right words in trying to express themselves in English. There will be inadequate vocabulary, which will make students unable to construct meaningful and grammatically correct sentences, thus speaking halting and fractured.

Next comes the second most important barrier called "Incorrect Pronunciation," which scored a mean score of "4.1" (SD = 0.72). Most of these students do not know the right pronunciation of the English phonemes not used in their mother tongues, like Sindhi or Urdu. These tend to result in mispronunciation, and this may impede comprehensibility among them as well as provoke a lack of confidence in the students, and hence, they become shy to speak in front of people due to fear of ridicule.
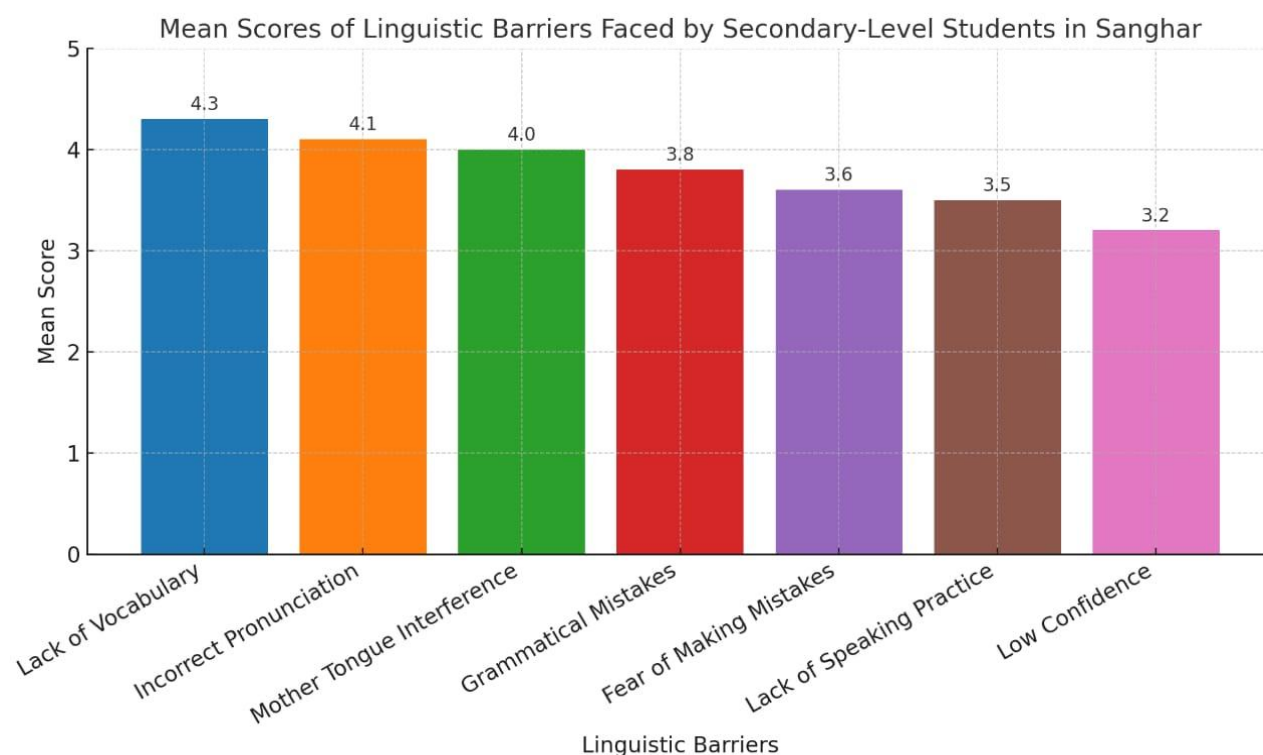
Figure 1: Mean Score of Linguistic Barriers Faced by Secondary-Level Students in Sanghar

The second important barrier is called Mother Tongue Interference, which got a mean of 4.0 as well (SD = 0.80). This indicates that learners often practice rules of grammar, syntax, and phonetics in their native language (L1) in English. The direct translation of L1 into English will commonly cause mistakes in both sentence construction and tense expression, in addition to word order, that altogether interfere with the fluency of speech and understandability.

Another identified barrier is the category of Brinks called "Grammatical Mistakes" (M = 3.8). Participating students have certain difficulties reading and writing English grammar, as their mother tongue grammars differ. The "Fear of Making Mistakes" (M = 3.6) reveals psychological barriers because it indicates that students do not speak English often. After all, they are afraid of mistakes and negative judgments of peers. The barrier of a lack of speaking practice (M = 3.5) is still also in high ranking, confirming that students do not have many chances to speak during the lesson and in their free time.

Finally, the low level of confidence (M = 3.2) shows that the students are usually not confident about their ability in terms of spoken English, which also means that they are not encouraged to be active.

These results are also displayed graphically in a histogram, whereby lack of vocabulary, incorrect pronunciation, and mother tongue interference stand out above the rest of the barriers. The trend corresponds to the necessity of specific vocabulary development activities, pronunciation, and measures on coping with L1 interference during the lesson on spoken English.

Research Question 2

How does the students' first language (L1) statistically influence their speaking English abilities?
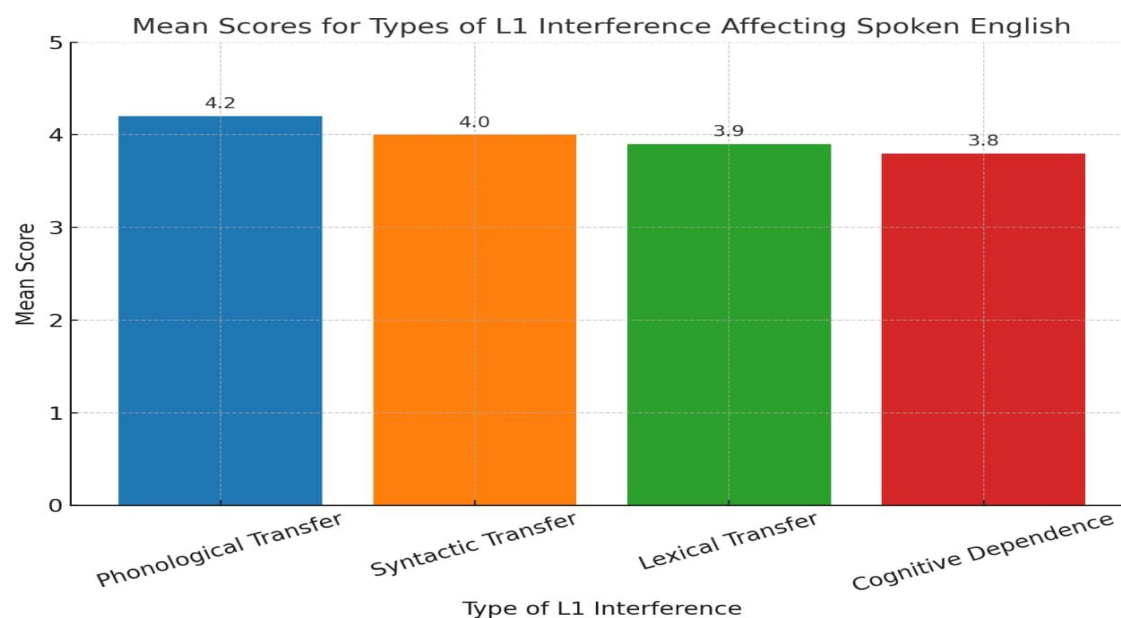
Figure 2: Mean Score for Types of L1 Interference Affecting Spoken English

The quantitative data highlights that the particular concern is with L1 interference, which plays a vital role in defining the performance of the students in terms of spoken English. The average mark of 4.0 on Mother Tongue Interference indicates that there is a significant negative effect of the native language, or the consistent one is Sindhi or Urdu, on the performance of the students in attaining skills in speaking English with fluency and accuracy.

The interferences happen in several ways:

1. Phonological Transfer There are sounds in the English Language that are absent in the L1 of the students; thus, systematic mispronunciations occur. As an illustration, in the case of think, the English /th/ can be replaced by /t/ or /s/, thus leading to mispronunciation.

2. Syntactic Transfer Students transfer sentences of Sindhi or Urdu, which often use a different word order. The result of it is grammatically wrong constructions, like the placement of verbs in English sentences or the placement of articles in English sentences.

3. Lexical Transfer Lexical transfer makes students use direct translation, i.e., it does not show the intended meaning in English because of the idiomatic difficulties. This restricts their naturalness and the naturalness of the language spoken.

4. Cognitive Dependence As students relate their thoughts in their L1 and then translate them into English, fluency is slowed down, and more chances are likely of mistakes.

More so, the interference influences the accuracy of pronunciation, which is highly relates to the second-highest barrier (Incorrect Pronunciation, M = 4.1). This relationship means that influences have submerged the pronunciation challenges beyond the individual situations.

All the descriptive statistics and the histogram combined illustrate that before enhancing the English-speaking skills of students, there is a need to address the issue of L1 influence. The methods which teachers should employ are directive contrastive analysis, pronunciation drills concerning difficult parts

of the speech, and the chance to have more immersion practice that will decrease the dependence on the mother tongue when communicating in a situation to do so in English.

Summary of Findings

The facts are that Lack of Vocabulary, Incorrect Pronunciation, and Mother Tongue Interference are the most common linguistic issues. The initial language of the students highly affects the level of speaking abilities because it transfers some phonological, grammatical, and lexically cognitive patterns to English, therefore, leaving consistent mistakes and hesitation. The identified results provide strong grounds for curriculum designers and language instructors to implement measures that would enrich vocabulary, focus on pronunciation reinforcement, and introduce discipline-specific procedures to address L1 interferences. Confidence and fear of mistakes will also be increased through creating an environment that will promote risk-taking and ample speaking opportunities.

Discussion

The observation and the results of this research provide an important clue to the language barrier existing between the secondary level students of Sanghar who are not able to speak English confidently and fluently. The most significant ones, the deficit in vocabulary, flawed pronunciation, and mother tongue interference, reflect a trend recorded in recent trends in second language acquisition (SLA) studies.

It has been commonly accepted that vocabulary is the key to successful communication in every language. This research proves that low English vocabulary is the greatest obstacle, as it received a mean score of 4.3. This is similar to what Nation (2020) is saying, whereby vocabulary size directly influences the fluency and ability to speak with confidence on the part of the learners. The fact is that, as Webb and Nation observe, in the case of limited vocabulary, students are challenged to communicate complicated concepts, so simple and repetitive speech is typically produced, causing the inability to have meaningful conversations. Likewise, Schmitt (2020) does not reject the idea that the lack of vocabulary inhibits learners from producing grammatically complex sentences, falling back on the use of simple structures.

Restricted access to the English reading resources and the reality of the English-speaking environment can further widen this gap in the case of rural regions such as Sanghar (Afzal, 2019). It is not uncommon to find teachers who choose rote grammar rather than active vocabulary-building techniques because this is the reason why they see students standing on the fence and not making progress towards being a dynamic speaker, even after years of training.

The second-highest barrier, which had a mean score set at 4.1, was incorrect pronunciation. In the Pakistani context, the pronunciation is usually ignored during English language classes as instructors tend to pay more attention to reading and writing (Sarwar et al., 2022). However, Munro and Derwing (2020) emphasize that effective spoken communication and the development of confidence rely on intelligible pronunciation. The problem that can arise due to the errors caused by mispronunciation of common sounds when students are talking to one another is that the message may be lost, which is embarrassing and causes fear of speaking.

In addition, the first languages of students (which were mainly Sindhi and Urdu) do not contain some English phonemes and lead to systematic speakers. Cross-linguistic phonological interference of this sort is known. To illustrate, Rahman and Khan (2020) observed that Pakistani ESL students usually have difficulties with consonant combinations and vowels because of their non-existence in their native languages.

The spoken English also heavily relies on mother tongue (L1) interference, as it scored a mean of 4.0 in the present study. That is why the theory, according to which Odlin (1989) grounded the language transfer,

proves to be applicable nowadays. A recent survey conducted by Mahmood et al. (2021) in Sindh revealed how the L1 structures are used extensively by students when constructing sentences in English, which results in some syntax and tense errors. As an example, Sindhi in general follows the Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) method of organization, which does not match the English interpretation of the same, Subject-Verb-Object (SVO), thus creating uncomfortable phrases. There is the interference of L1 in pronunciation and idiomatic expressions. The results provided by Zhang (2023) indicate that a bilingual learner subconsciously translates L1 into L2 and ends up with literal translations that sound unnatural in the given language. This mental reliance on L1 reduces the speed of speaking and brings about more hesitation (Ellis, 2021).

The L1 interferes with pronunciation and idiomatic style. Bilingual learners, as was discovered by Zhang (2023), automatically translate the phrases used in L1 to L2 and produce literal translations that are unnatural and unacceptable to native speakers. This mental reliance on L1 has a negative effect at a mechanical level because it leads to a slower speed of speaking and reluctance to communicate (Ellis, 2021).

The feelings of fear of making a mistake, low confidence, are other psychological barriers that were noted in the findings. These aspects are interrelated with language discontinuities. Horwitz (2020) explains that language anxiety has a huge potential to disrupt oral proficiency, notably in situations when the students are afraid of peer and teacher judgments. This fear is frequently exacerbated in situations in rural classrooms, where speaking in real life is unlikely (Shamim & Kuchah, 2021).

These results confirm that pedagogical interventions that address these barriers directly are required. According to Lin and Teng (2023), vocabulary enlargement, explicit pronunciation training, and tasks minimizing the effects of L1 interference (immersion and authentic interaction activities) should be an effective part of the course when teaching speaking skills. Such interactive techniques as role plays, peer discussions, and pronunciation sessions will contribute to developing confidence and fluency in the learners.

Moreover, language policy and curriculum designers ought to be certain that the rural schools obtain enough resources, such as multimedia material as well as trained English teachers, so that they would be able to establish an atmosphere wherein active use of spoken English might be fostered (Farooq & Sajid, 2022).

Recommendations

The set of following recommendations are made based on the findings and discussion in the hope that they will assist educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers to overcome the major linguistic obstacles standing in the way of students in Sanghar to speak English confidently and flowingly:

- The teachers are advised to incorporate massive vocabulary-building exercises in everyday classes. This may involve visual aids, word games, setting-based tasks, and real-life conversations, which enable students to internalize new words. The use of reading texts such as graded readers and storytelling can introduce students to a variety of vocabulary (Nation, 2020).
- Explicit training of pronunciation should be allocated in schools. Educators are advised to engage students in phonetic drills, minimal pair activities, in addition to audio-visual tools, to teach them how to pronounce difficult English sounds correctly. Where feasible, mobile apps and online pronunciation instruments ought to be presented to offer personal practice (Munro & Derwing, 2020).
- The teachers' role should be to assist the students in identifying the differences in the structure of their first language (Sindhi/Urdu) and English. The use of contrastive analysis tasks can increase

the consciousness of the learners towards the typical mistakes and can make them avoid similar first-language-based errors in syntax and word order out of conscious choice (Odlin, 1989; Mahmood et al., 2021).

- Speaking in classrooms is there to lose control by teachers, but to hand over to the students. Games like pair work, group discussions, debates, as well as role plays should be ordinary activities. An environment that is free of judgments will also help the students to talk without fearing making mistakes (Horwitz, 2020).

- There is a necessity to provide English language teachers with training in the contemporary communicative approaches to teaching. The teaching of pronunciation, vocabulary, and ways to limit L1 reliance should be transferred and focused during the workshops and refresher courses (Farooq & Sajid, 2022).

- Sensitization of parents and communities on the need to promote spoken English at home should be done. To help in this matter, schools can conduct awareness programs and also give simple directions to the families on how they can support a child when it comes to oral practice outside the classroom.

- Policymakers ought to make sure that the rural schools are furnished with the required language learning facilities like audio-visual systems, English reading corners, and the availability of online learning websites, among others. The alliance with NGOs and EdTech providers is a good way to fill in the resource issues of under-resourced places (Lin & Teng, 2023).

CONCLUSION

The research conducted in this paper focused on major obstacles encountered by students at the secondary level in Sanghar when communicating in English as a second language, and specifically, the role of the first language (L1) in determining the spoken English skills. The quantitative results visibly appealed to the fact of the prevailing issues of so-called lack of vocabulary, incorrect pronunciation, and mother tongue interference as the most popular ones, and were reliably substantiated by descriptive statistics and conceptualized by graphical display through the histogram.

This research is in agreement with the general studies in the area of second language acquisition since it proves that poor usage of the authentic use of the language in students, pronunciation challenges caused by L1 phonic deficiencies, and syntax transfers to their first languages all contribute to poor fluency and reliability. Psychological barriers like fear of mistakes and low-level confidence compound all these linguistic challenges.

To avoid these obstacles, English teaching in Sanghar should be more communicative, student-centered, involving explicit training of vocabulary and pronunciation, decrease of mother tongue interference, and creating a positive speaking atmosphere. The stakeholders need to come together to ensure that the schools are supplied with sufficient means and to offer proper training to the teachers so that they will be able to present adequate spoken English classes.

With these specific measures, policymakers and educators will be able to make learners more personified in acquiring the skills and confidence to communicate with fluency in English and, therefore, improve their performance in school and their future careers in a more globalized world.

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