



RESEARCH PAPER**Language Barriers to Effective Communication in Speaking English: A Phenomenological Study of Pakistan International Cricketers**

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ABSTRACT

This study examines language barriers to effective communication in speaking English among internal cricket players of Pakistan. The study discovers various language communication barriers to maintain effective English speaking communication between players and coaches and root causes of those barriers. Six international cricket players are selected to collect qualitative data for the research. The technique of semi-structured interview is adopted to enrich the research data. The data is analyzed with the help of theoretical framework of Braun & Clarke (2006). The findings describe those language barriers to effective communication in speaking English play very important role in their professional growth of participants. Further, this study's findings suggest establishing basic English language communication classes at regional level cricket academies for junior cricketers to improve their basic English language communication skills to meet with future English language communication issues.

KEYWORDS Effective Communication, Language Barrier, League Cricket

Introduction

Cricket is not only source of entertainment in the 21st century rather it has been industrialized to develop economy. Likewise in Pakistan, it is profession for many youngsters who dedicate their lives for achieving their future goals in cricket, their passion and dream is to be international cricketer and professional cricketers. According to Lin (2019) "Sport is big business" further she maintains that the growing concept of globalized sports involves global interaction.

This research explores different situations where Pakistan international cricketers cope with English language barriers in effective communication in speaking English throughout their domestic and international career. It can't be ignored that cricket is world's most attractive sports that has been more commercialized and modernized in this 21st century where speaking English language for effective communication with foreign players and coaches is essential need of the time. So, this study is involved in two objectives; the first one is to investigate how language barriers challenge for Pakistan international cricketers and the second one is to study how Pakistan international cricketers manage them in different situations and their suggests for solutions.

This study is phenomenological qualitative research. As Creswell (2009) states that "phenomenology research is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the

lives of individuals and the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants” (p. 3). The qualitative research approach is chosen for this study mainly to know more about the individual phenomena, not only to measure the research issues in numbers. It rather explores the answers to the quest of “how” and “why”.

Literature Review

Language and Communication

Language is productive ability in any field of life to establish an effective communication between two people or groups of people. Language and communication are the two terms that closely related to each other with separate functions and meanings. Language functions as tool for communication while communication functions as behaviors of individual. Communication is a dynamic procedure to understand each other in any group or organization through verbal and non-verbal process of language. A strong communication system produces useful understanding and relations. Thus, Rai (2010) states the language communication process is a useful way for transformation of any information from one person to other. Moreover Rai refers the concept of E. McFarland that he believes communication is a useful interaction among the members of the particular group that needs to understand each other. Rabiah (2012) finds out the language keeps pivotal position in the communication system. Additionally Badi (2023) states verbal communication is the process of understanding of two people by using the verbal language. It is considered the best way of conveying the message between two people or two groups of people. Further, the verbal communication has been defined in various ways by different theorists and researchers. An additional study is reviewed for enriching the literature review of this study. As mentioned by Cameron (2001) that verbal communication is an active process of a language that describes the concept of speaker very clearly so the listeners can understand the speaker’s message.

Barriers to Effective Communication in Speaking English in the field of sports

The concept of globalization involves effective communication between nations. In the field of sports, effective communication plays vital role for the development of players’ growth and relations with his foreign players and coaches. English language is considered medium of that communication that leads mass media, education, science art and sports. Moreover English dominates growing technologies and internet. (Todorova & Todorova, 2018)

As Mustafa et al. (2023) observes that doctors need particular course at undergraduate level to learn the targeted language to deal with local patients. He puts his conclusion by suggesting that doctors and patients should be facilitating with basic language skills in the curriculum design at their medical schools. Chen (2019) finds that his local football player from avoid speaking English with foreign teammates because of not being comfortable in English language. All team players from foreign are fluent and quick in speaking English during the communication. That is the reason which makes their communication limited and insufficient. These language barriers restrict them to get advantage by having useful communication with coaches and fellow players.

Hoy (2022) squeezes conclusion that sportsmen must focus on English language and improve their fluency in English to achieve high level of communication skills in the field and outside of the field. Effective communication skill in English language encourage them to lead in front and makes them fluent speakers of English language to ask questions from coaches to improve their skill. As Dotto (2021) stresses by mentioning the example of

a football player; a Spanish David who seriously worked to improve English language to communication in English language by personal comfort. After getting grasp on English language communication skills, David was extremely confident to communicate with his all team member as he possessed an important position of captainship in the team

Material and Methods

This study is based on qualitative approach. According to Yin (2016) qualitative research explores depth meaning of lives and experience of people through their personal perceptions. Yin (2016) also added that qualitative research comprises real life issues of people how they think and feel about the problems. Their lived perspectives are observed by the researcher very closely.

The research involves deeply in the phenomenological approach. As Creswell J. W (2009) states that "phenomenology research is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the lives of individuals and the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants" (p.3). In this research, the researcher interviews six international cricketers of Pakistan from various levels for aiming to understand different language communication barrier in speaking English with their foreign team mates and coaches during their professional period. There is only one source is applied for this qualitative data collection for this research is semi-structured interview. According to Smith & Osborn (2003) semi-structured the interviewer is free to move from the listed questions from research protocol to form new questions according to participants' experiences. Further, this study follows thematic analysis method to analyze the qualitative data. A thematic analysis mainly discusses themes and elaborates the themes of the research. Moreover thematic analysis summarizes the data by interpreting it. (Braun & Clarke, 2006) The finding is presented by adopting open coding categories that helps to select the language barriers themes and sub-themes.

Results and Discussion

In order to achieve main objects of this research, three questions are set and they are categorized in different sections to be answered by six selected participants. The findings of every question are further divided in themes and sub-themes to achieve detail insight of the research. Each question produces impactful findings that are elaborated with original responses of individual participants. All the themes and sub-themes are intended to meet the mentioned objects of the research. Deductive approach is adopted to achieve more creative and appealing themes and sub-themes to enrich the findings.

Table 1
Language Barriers to Effective Communication in speaking English

Main Theme 1: Challenges, Causes, and importance of Effective Communication in Speaking English Language

Themes and Sub-themes	Responses
Challenges:	Communication barriers remain very common to all participants during their match and training sessions.
Inside the field:cricket and plan,when we can't convey our message to our foreign coach or players and it usually fielding placement	"We are well aware of our fielding possession in cricket means particular term of plan,when we can't convey our message to our foreign coach or players and it usually happens." (P-4)

Outside the field: catering, shopping, traveling

In this modern day cricket, the players travel in different countries with their national teams and alone to take part in well-established league services, cricket where they have to cope with English language communication issues outside the field. All the participants agree that they face different problems there. One of the participants states;
We face English communication problem everywhere even outside the field as I lived in London for my league cricket, I suffered a lot. Once I had to buy some grocery in London. I was alone; I hardly managed the communication with shopkeeper there. I couldn't make the shop keeper clear about my need." (P-3)

Causes: Cricket players of Pakistan usually come from different backgrounds of the country by dedicating their day and night to cricket. So the participants enlighten various causes for barriers to effective English language communication.

Week academic background

One of the participants elucidates;
"We are well aware of our fielding possession in cricket means particular term of cricket and plan that we try to follow but yet sometimes we feel very confused when we can't convey our message to our foreign coach or players and it usually happens." (P-4)

Lack confidence

It is observed that majority of participants believe they don't take part in important discussion of the game because of lack confidence. One of the participants mentions,
"Sometimes in training session we need to ask foreign coach but the lack of confidence in English language makes us silent and I don't bother to discuss with him." (P-4)

Fear and Avoidance

The fear of speaking English language is another important cause is observed that makes participants avoid speaking with foreign teammates and coaches. With this regard, one participant points out,
"I usually avoid asking anything from our foreign coach or trainers because I believe it might go in deep discussion that is hard for players like me. So I don't dare to discuss very important things with foreign coach, trainer or physisc sometimes." (P-4)

Importance:

In sports, players keep on developing their skills very day in different situations and in every event of the game by sharing technics and important skills of the game. Language barriers become resistance to their development when they have foreign players and coach around them. In this regard one participant reveals,

Importance of Professional Growth Players

of
"I don't bother to discuss with our foreign coach. I know if I speak, I will make mistakes. It has impacted on our improvement. If I had asked some important things them frequently, I would have improved more skills of my bowling." (P-3)

Importance of Professional Relationships of Players

in
 In cricket, players have opportunities to have close relations with foreign players and coaches, so they can develop their professional relations with them. But language barriers are great hindrances in their relations. In this regard one participant states,
"Actually in the starting of the tournament, our team mate Carlos Braithwaite was quite close to me but soon after I felt he was avoiding me. Surely it was my hesitant communication with him in speaking English language; we didn't have

Strategies and Planning	<i>a good communication most of the times so that I couldn't make him a good friend." (P-1)</i>
Interpreters	All participants come up with very nice responses that how they have adopted the different strategies to face English language communication barriers. There is not any official interpreter's availability nor needed any because these players keep learning through the particular passage of time. Some of the players are well experienced and got good grip on English language communication, they are usually available for new entered players to help out them in such situations. On the regard one participant describes, <i>"When I was in UK for league cricket, there were some Asian players with me. They could understand Urdu so I had their support for filling that communication gap. They translate me what English players spoke to me."</i> (P-2)
Support Provided by PCB	According to all participants there is no proper support available for international players to face such English language communication challenges. One of the participants expresses; <i>"No, there is nothing like that. I have never seen any formal English language classes or particular in the training by PCB but it is a common practice that we get someone to translate us."</i> (P-6)
Suggestions	Majority of perceptions agree that there is great need of English language communication skills' trainings at initial level of players when they play junior level cricket. So players once reach at international level, they should be well trained and confident to face the upcoming challenges of English language communication skills. One of the participants states, <i>"Sure, there must be English language communication classes at junior level; under16 and under19. And I am sure soon there will be such policies by Pakistan Cricket Board to facilitate young cricketers of Pakistan."</i> (P-6)

The first main theme deals with the challenges and difficulties of English language communication faced by participants. The five of the respondents agree that they usually suffer from the English language communication challenges, either inside the field in play ground during the match or outside the field in hotel, airports, or shopping malls. Majority of the participants show their agonies for lack of English language communication skills in the field of sports. This study confirms the study by Hoy (2022) who presents the main element of his findings that players in any sports need grip and fluency in English language communication to acquire great success inside the field and outside the field.

Further, the second main theme reveals three significant causes of English language communication challenges. Among them; the first challenge is their educational background, the second one is lack of confidence and the third is shyness. As Chen (2019) presents the findings that the participants avoid any further involvement with their team's foreign athletes because of the lack of confident and felt embracement when they cannot convey their point of views to their foreign team-mates or trainers in English language.

The third main theme is importance of English language communication skills for their professional growth. One of the participant claims that he lost an opportunity of cricket league contract in England as he didn't have proper communication in English with English league contractor and miscommunication in English language causes him lose the contract. Additional data analysis provides another emerging sub-theme; the relationship

between the local players and foreign coaches is not maintained properly for long term because of that English language communication gap. All the participants are on the same page that those barriers create huge hindrance in establishing a positive relation between local and foreign players and coaches and they are unable to maintain constructive relation with their foreign coaches and players. The study by Mustafa et al. (2023) confirms this study as their findings show that doctors and patients relationship is spoiled by of lack of language communication skills of both; senders and receivers. Doctors are not able to make patients understand the basic ideas about the treatment and they got frustrated.

Another important theme reveals the strategies and planning adopted by international players of Pakistan to face the challenges of English language communication barriers. Moreover, two enlightening sub-themes are identified; Interpreters and adopted Strategies. The well-stable sub-theme is driven from the findings is interpretation which is wide consented by all participants. All the participants agree that interpretation is very common strategy applied by all international cricketers who are unable to speak English language at international level.

In the end of this section, the data analysis produces two sub-themes, the availability of support for players to improve English language communication skills by Pakistan Cricket Board and participants' suggestion to facilitate Pakistan cricket players to improve their English language skills in future. All the participants show their witness that there is no basic official facility available anywhere in cricket academies of Pakistan. One of the senior participants states that once PCB arranged English language classes for regional players in regional academies in 2001-2002 for just one year. But that process couldn't continue further.

However, another important and evolving sub-theme "suggestions" is identified through self-perception of individual participant about English language communication challenges. Thus, all the participants show their positive consensus that there must be English language communication skill classes for young cricketers of Pakistan at regional and provisional level to make them confident English speakers besides well-established international cricket players to represent their country at international level. This finding associates with the finding of Kumarin (2019) whose findings suggest that football professional players of Thai should be facilitated with assistance of English native teachers to help them improve their English language communication skills.

Conclusion

This study is based on the findings of language barriers to effective communication in English language through in-depth semi-structured interview from convincingly selected international players of Pakistan. This study has discovered the challenge faced by international players of Pakistan in English language communication inside the field and outside the field. Besides that the researcher has observed the causes of all the challenge and their remedies to improve the needed English language communication skills of individual player who represents his county at international level. Moreover, this study's findings correlate the results of Isphording & Otten (2014) who exposes that language is a very serious barrier to effective communication. Their study confirms the conclusion of this study that language barrier is important factor for international players to maintain positive relation with foreign coaches and players. However, the study concludes that English language communication is a real challenge for the cricket players of Pakistan at international level which are caused by three major elements; weak educational background, lack of confidence and shyness. Players' lack of confidence and shyness creates a gape of communication between local players and foreign coaches. However, the

result further explores there is no available support for the players is provided by PCB or any other related department. Finally, all the participants show their mutual consensus that there must be proper English language communication classes and training for young cricketers in under16 or under19 level at regional academies to prepare them well established communicators in English language besides being a skillful cricketer star.

Recommendations

The study discovers some important reasons for barrier to effective communication in speaking English language among international cricketers of Pakistan. The findings suggest some essential recommendations;

1. The most of the cricket players are not highly educated and usually remain away from English language learning since schools as they are all the time interested in sports activities. So PCB must provide them English language communication skill classes at regional cricket academies at junior level.
2. It is suggested the private cricket academies must be bond to ensure some English language classes for under13 and under16 cricket players to improve their English language communication skills besides cricket coaching.
3. It is recommended that senior cricketers should be encouraged to have regular English speaking practice with junior partners to get used to English language communication with foreign players and coaches.
4. It is put forward that district cricket associations should adopt some policies to provide English language learning course to junior players at district level in every district.
5. It must be primary responsibility of all cricket academies of PCB and district associations to arrange some activities based English language teaching program weekly for players to improve their primary English language communication skills.

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