



RESEARCH PAPER

Impact of Mother Tongue Pronunciation and Motivation on the Speaking Skills of EFL Learners: A Study at BS level

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ABSTRACT

The effect of motivation and native-language pronunciation on the oral communication abilities of undergraduate-level English as a foreign language (EFL) students is examined in this study. The purpose of this research is to better understand the challenges these students face while trying to speak English and how their native language influences their pronunciation. Also, the research is aiming to find out how much of an influence mother tongue and motivation to learn English have on EFL students' speaking abilities. In order to accomplish these goals, the researcher meticulously crafted a 33-item questionnaire that focused on mother tongue, motivation, and speaking abilities. In the conclusion, this research gives useful advice for improving EFL students' speaking abilities and shines light on the important topic of mother tongue interference and the influence of motivation on these skills. The results of this study potentially have far-reaching implications for EFL students

KEYWORDS EFL, Language Learning, Mother Tongue Interference, Motivation, Native, Oral Communication Abilities, Pedagogical Strategies, Pronunciation

Introduction

A long-standing focus of language education research has been the learning of speaking abilities in an EFL environment. It is common to single out motivation and mother tongue pronunciation as two of the most important elements impacting EFL students' ability to communicate effectively in English. The purpose of this research is to examine how these variables affect the oral communication abilities of undergraduate EFL students. Across the globe, organized human communities were able to flourish with the development of written language, which completely altered the way people communicated (Patel & Jain, 2008). Studies released by Oxford University Press show that a person's linguistic abilities significantly impact their communication and relationship-building abilities. Students' proficiency in the language determines how effectively they can communicate and achieve academically. Learners of a new language often make errors in a variety of linguistic domains, such as syntax, vocabulary, pronunciation, and more. However, with consistent practice and supportive instruction, the majority of students may improve their results over time (Dockrell et al., 2012).

Accurate and fluent sound articulation is just as important as a large vocabulary and solid knowledge of grammar when it comes to communicating in English. Linguists

and language teachers have long been interested in and debated the topic of how students' native pronunciation patterns impact their English pronunciation. Another important factor in language acquisition is the intrinsic drive of the learner, which influences their level of involvement, perseverance, and openness to communication.

With their intermediate to advanced level of language competence, EFL students at the BS level are a great opportunity to explore the complexities of pronunciation and how motivation affects their speaking skills. Teachers and other professionals may better help students improve their communication skills by gaining a better grasp of the interplay between these characteristics and how they affect students' ability to articulate their ideas in class.

The researchers in this study used a mixed-methods strategy, collecting data quantitatively on students' pronunciation and fluency and qualitatively on their attitudes and levels of desire to speak English. Students of English as a foreign language (EFL) at the Bachelor's level from a variety of linguistic origins provide a rich setting in which to investigate the nuances of language learning and use.

Literature Review

An important topic of study for Bachelor of Science (BS) level EFL students is the impact of native language pronunciation and intrinsic motivation on their speaking abilities. What motivates and influences EFL students to talk has been the subject of a great deal of research.

Communicative speaking exercises have a favorable effect on EFL learners' motivation, which in turn leads to higher levels of accomplishment, according to research by Sharkh (2021) and (Ochoa et al., 2016). The importance of the ESA components in increasing EFL students' drive to speak is further highlighted (Khoshsima & Shokri, 2017).

Additionally, psychological variables including anxiety and fear of unfavorable assessment are the primary causes of speaking problems for Chinese EFL learners, according to (Seth & Yeboah, 2021). Learners' fears, orientations, motives, and attitudes all have a part in shaping their public speaking abilities, as pointed out by (Bagheri et al., 2019).

Interventions such as critical thinking training and vlogging activities might enhance EFL learners' speaking ability by decreasing fear and boosting their motivation to communicate (Jin, 2023; Sanavi & Tarighat, 2014).

Contrarily, Alrasheedi's (2021) study reveals that motivation and language abilities are favourably affected by learner attitude, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. Furthermore, in order to boost interest and motivation, Duong & Pham (2021) emphasise the need of giving EFL students chances to practice speaking outside of class (Duong & Pham, 2021).

The oral communication abilities of Pakistani EFL students pursuing a Bachelor of Science (BS) degree are fundamental to their future success in school and the workforce. With an eye towards resolving speaking issues, comprehending learners' motivations, fostering ideal self-concepts, incorporating critical thinking abilities, and taking factors like anxiety and active listening into account, this literature review synthesises current research on the elements impacting speaking proficiency among EFL learners in Pakistan.

Problems with Speaking: In their study, Seth and Yeboah (2021) draw attention to the fact that Chinese EFL students have problems with speaking, and they stress the

importance of developing individualised treatments to help these students overcome these obstacles. Students' varied motivational orientations should be taken into account when creating speaking assignments, since instrumental incentives predominate among these learners.

Alzabidi and Khadawardi (2022) highlight the strong relationship between students' desire to communicate and their Ideal L2 Self, implying that fostering a good self-concept may increase students' drive to participate in speaking activities. It is the responsibility of educators to create classroom climates that encourage children to speak English and build their self-esteem.

Sanavi and Tarighat (2014) state that in order to enhance public speaking abilities, it is necessary to train students to think critically. Teachers may help their students become better communicators and thinkers by preparing them to think critically and apply what they learn in class.

Various scholars who have investigated how people learn a new language have put forward various interpretations of the word "speaking." The Webster New World Dictionary defines speaking as expressing oneself verbally, requesting something, delivering a formal speech, or uttering words aloud (Choi & Nunan, 2018; Dörnyei, 2008). According to Boonkit (2010), speaking is crucial for good communication. The internet era, he continues, is the primary need for it. Because of the importance of oral communication in the English language school, speaking is a must. As a student of a foreign language, speaking is the process of articulating one's ideas and thoughts aloud. In addition to enhancing pupils' pronunciation, fluency, and accuracy, it is an entertaining practice that facilitates social interaction. Thus, students of English as a foreign language will be able to have conversations and receive information. In his work from 2002, Abdel Salam provides a comprehensive definition of language as a "collection of micro-skill which include syntax, grammar, morphology, pragmatics, semantics, and phonology." If pupils want to succeed orally, they must learn to talk clearly. Speaking may be seen as a two-way street where the speaker and listener engage in a dynamic exchange. Meaning is constructed using the given information in the process. But many students worry that picking up English will be a challenge (Akhter & Nordin, 2022).

Communicating one's ideas, emotions, and thoughts via vocalizations or audible gestures is called speaking. In addition, according to Wahyuni (2016), visual aids and demonstrations might be a helpful tool for enhancing public speaking skills.

Producing aural cues to induce diverse verbal replies from listeners is what Bygate (1987) defines as speaking. A common mental image is of a person meticulously piecing together individual phonemes to form whole phrases. (Kacatl & Klímová, 2019; Leong & Ahmadi, 2017; Rustamov, 2022) all characterized speech as a two-way activity that involves the sincere transfer of information, emotions, or ideas.

Speaking is an interactive process of meaning building that involves information generation, receiving, and processing (Johnson, 2017). He has a firm grasp on the idea that speaking encompasses the use of verbal and nonverbal cues to construct and communicate meaning across contexts. Monologue and conversation are the two main types of spoken communication. The former stresses the importance of solo speaking and the later of interacting with an audience (Nunan, 1989, p. 27). According to Brown and Yule (1983, p. 3), there are two basic functions of speech: transactional speech, which involves the transmission of information, and interactional speech, which involves the maintenance of social ties.

Material and Methods

The researchers have used quantitative method to conduct this study. Priority is given to quantitative method keeping in view the nature of the study.

Population

Undergraduates majoring in English from Rahim Yar Khan's educational institutions –Islamia University and KFUEIT Rahim Yar Khan

Sample Size

Three hundred undergraduates majoring in English from Rahim Yar Khan's educational institutions –Islamia University and KFUEIT Rahim Yar Khan –in southern Punjab took part in the research.

Tool Construction

A questionnaire is used for this research which was constructed by the researchers.

Validity & Reliability,

The reliability of the questionnaire was checked through by applying reliability test and it was observed within the approved limits to conduct this research.

Data Collecting Technique,

Simple data collection technique has been used in this research by asking the students to provide their Responses on the questionnaire.

Data Analysis Techniques

SPSS is used to analyze the data by applying simple frequency test.

Ethical Considerations

All the considerations are observed faithfully to conduct this research.

Results and Discussion

Data analysed through SPP by applying simple frequency test is explained based on the tendency of the respondents.

Table 1
My mother tongue effects my ability to learn English

Gender	Option	Rating Scale					Total
		A	SA	N	DA	SDA	
Male	F	42	36	13	12	2	105
	%	14.0%	12.0%	4.3%	4.0%	0.7%	35.0%
Female	F	73	58	34	24	6	195
	%	24.3%	19.3%	11.3%	8.0%	2.0%	65.0%
Total	F	115	94	47	36	8	300
	%	38.3%	31.3%	15.7%	12.0%	2.7%	100.0%

A significant portion (46.30%) either agrees or strongly agrees that their mother tongue affects their English learning ability. This suggests that many respondents acknowledge the impact of their native language on learning English.

Table 2
I actively try to modify my pronunciation and accent in English to sound more like a native speaker

Gender	Option	Rating Scale					Total
		A	SA	N	DA	SDA	
Male	F	38	42	13	10	2	105
	%	12.7%	14.0%	4.3%	3.3%	0.7%	35.0%
Female	f	72	74	29	13	7	195
	%	24.0%	24.7%	9.7%	4.3%	2.3%	65.0%
Total	f	110	116	42	23	9	300
	%	36.7%	38.7%	14.0%	7.7%	3.0%	100.0%

The majority (47.70%) either agree or strongly agree that they actively work on modifying their pronunciation and accent in English. This indicates a proactive approach to improving spoken English skills.

Table 3
I often rely on translation from my mother tongue when learning or using English.

Gender	Option	Rating Scale					Total
		A	SA	N	DA	SDA	
Male	f	34	28	24	10	9	105
	%	11.3%	9.3%	8.0%	3.3%	3.0%	35.0%
Female	f	73	35	44	20	23	195
	%	24.3%	11.7%	14.7%	6.7%	7.7%	65.0%
Total	f	107	63	68	30	32	300
	%	35.7%	21.0%	22.7%	10.0%	10.7%	100.0%

A significant proportion (67.70%) either agree or strongly agree that they rely on translation from their native language when learning or using English. This reliance on translation can impact language fluency and comprehension.

Table 4
I find it challenging to pronounce certain English sounds that do not exist in my mother tongue.

Gender	Option	Rating Scale					Total
		A	SA	N	DA	SDA	
Male	f	43	29	20	5	8	105
	%	14.3%	9.7%	6.7%	1.7%	2.7%	35.0%
Female	f	75	44	47	19	10	195
	%	25.0%	14.7%	15.7%	6.3%	3.3%	65.0%
Total	f	118	73	67	24	18	300
	%	39.3%	24.3%	22.3%	8.0%	6.0%	100.0%

Nearly half (45.30%) either agree or strongly agree that they find it challenging to pronounce certain English sounds not present in their native language, highlighting a common difficulty faced by language learners.

Table 5

I enjoy learning English despite the challenges posed by the influence of my mother tongue.

Gender	Option	Rating Scale					Total
		A	SA	N	DA	SDA	
Male	f	45	32	19	7	2	105
	%	15.0%	10.7%	6.3%	2.3%	0.7%	35.0%
Female	f	94	39	43	10	9	195
	%	31.3%	13.0%	14.3%	3.3%	3.0%	65.0%
Total	f	139	71	62	17	11	300
	%	46.3%	23.7%	20.7%	5.7%	3.7%	100.0%

A substantial majority (49%) either agree or strongly agree that they enjoy learning English despite the challenges posed by their native language's influence. This positive attitude can foster motivation and persistence in language learning.

Table 6

I am confident that with enough effort and practice, I can reduce the influence of my mother tongue on my English language skills.

Gender	Option	Rating Scale					Total
		A	SA	N	DA	SDA	
Male	f	44	31	15	10	5	105
	%	14.7%	10.3%	5.0%	3.3%	1.7%	35.0%
Female	f	75	63	39	9	9	195
	%	25.0%	21.0%	13.0%	3.0%	3.0%	65.0%
Total	f	119	94	54	19	14	300
	%	39.7%	31.3%	18.0%	6.3%	4.7%	100.0%

A significant portion (44.70%) either agree or strongly agree that they can reduce the influence of their native language on their English skills with sufficient effort and practice, indicating a belief in their ability to improve.

Table 7

I feel that teachers should avoid using students' mother tongue in the classroom at all costs.

Gender	Option	Rating Scale					Total
		A	SA	N	DA	SDA	
Male	f	41	31	16	9	8	105
	%	13.7%	10.3%	5.3%	3.0%	2.7%	35.0%
Female	f	72	50	41	24	8	195
	%	24.0%	16.7%	13.7%	8.0%	2.7%	65.0%
Total	f	113	81	57	33	16	300
	%	37.7%	27.0%	19.0%	11.0%	5.3%	100.0%

While a notable percentage (43%) agree or strongly agree that teachers should avoid using students' mother tongue, there's also a considerable neutral and disagree response, indicating a varied perspective on this issue.

Table 8

Using mother tongue in EFL classes can hinder learners' language development.

Gender	Option	Rating Scale					Total
		A	SA	N	DA	SDA	
Male	f	43	28	23	7	4	105
	%	14.3%	9.3%	7.7%	2.3%	1.3%	35.0%
Female	f	73	42	54	13	13	195
	%	24.3%	14.0%	18.0%	4.3%	4.3%	65.0%

Total	f	116	70	77	20	17	300
	%	38.7%	23.3%	25.7%	6.7%	5.7%	100.0%

A significant portion (44.40%) either agree or strongly agree that using the mother tongue in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes can hinder learners' language development, suggesting a concern about potential drawbacks.

Table 9
Learners' confidence in using mother tongue can affect their motivation in learning EFL

Gender	Option	Rating Scale					Total
		A	SA	N	DA	SDA	
Male	f	48	24	25	5	3	105
	%	16.0%	8.0%	8.3%	1.7%	1.0%	35.0%
Female	f	78	50	41	21	5	195
	%	26.0%	16.7%	13.7%	7.0%	1.7%	65.0%
Total	f	126	74	66	26	8	300
	%	42.0%	24.7%	22.0%	8.7%	2.7%	100.0%

A majority (44.70%) either agree or strongly agree that learners' confidence in using their native language can affect their motivation in learning English as a Foreign Language, highlighting the psychological aspects of language learning.

Table 10
I believe that exposure to English media (TV, movies, etc.) can help in reducing the influence of mother tongue while speaking in English.

Gender	Option	Rating Scale					Total
		A	SA	N	DA	SDA	
Male	f	42	31	25	6	1	105
	%	14.0%	10.3%	8.3%	2.0%	0.3%	35.0%
Female	f	69	72	24	23	7	195
	%	23.0%	24.0%	8.0%	7.7%	2.3%	65.0%
Total	f	111	103	49	29	8	300
	%	37.0%	34.3%	16.3%	9.7%	2.7%	100.0%

While a substantial portion (39.70%) either agree or strongly agree that exposure to English media can help reduce the influence of the mother tongue, there's also a significant neutral response, indicating some uncertainty or varying opinions on this belief.

Discussion

There are a lot of elements that determine how motivation and native language pronunciation affect EFL students' speaking abilities. There are pros and cons, according to the research, to using the mother tongue in English as a foreign language classes. Opinions on the matter vary. On one hand, research suggests that limiting students' exposure to the target language might make them feel insecure and limit their freedom of expression (Hawa et al., 2021). On the other hand, Rahmatullah (2021) argues that students who have less exposure to the target language may be more influenced by their mother tongue when speaking the second language. Furthermore, research has shown that learners' background, which includes their mother language, might impact their pronunciation development (Khalaf & Mohammed, 2022; Yaw & Kang, 2022), suggesting that the mother tongue may have an impact on EFL learners' pronunciation.

For English as a foreign language (EFL) students, intrinsic motivation is key to enhancing their pronunciation. Studies have shown that consistent encouragement and

openness to engagement may result in enhanced pronunciation (Jahara & Abdelrady, 2021). In addition, achievement of pronunciation in an EFL environment is favorably connected with learners' confidence, attitudes, and practice regarding pronunciation (Almusharraf, 2021). Research on the correlation between perseverance and successful pronunciation has also shown that students' mental states may have a major influence on their ability to master English as a foreign language (Shehzad et al., 2022).

Teachers and students of English as a foreign language have both stressed the need of pronunciation lessons. Instruction in proper pronunciation is thought to help students become more fluent speakers and listeners, which is crucial for their future pursuits (Nguyen et al., 2021). When it comes to improving their speaking abilities, Saudi EFL learners must have access to effective instructional techniques and enough practice time (Al-Hassaani & Abdulkarim Fadhl Mahmood Qaid, 2022). The communicative competency of EFL learners may be greatly impacted by elements such immersive EFL/ESL activities that emphasize speaking practices and pronunciation learning (Al-Rubaat & Al-Shammari, 2019).

Using the mother language, motivation, self-assurance, and successful teaching techniques are all elements that impact EFL learners' pronunciation abilities. In order to improve their students' English as a foreign language (EFL) speaking abilities, teachers must have a firm grasp of these elements and how they interact with one another.

Conclusion

Based on the survey replies, we may draw the following thorough conclusion on the impact of mother tongue on language acquisition:

Comprehending Difficulties: Those who took the poll are well aware of the difficulties associated with learning English as a second language. They spoke about how they had to rely on translation and how hard it was to pronounce certain English consonants that weren't in their own language.

Taking the Lead: Respondents are taking a very aggressive stance despite these obstacles. Many of these individuals make concerted efforts to change their accent and pronunciation so that they sound more like native speakers. A great desire to enhance one's English language abilities is seen in this proactive approach.

Having Fun and Believing in Yourself: Despite the challenges, most people who took the survey really like studying English. Furthermore, many participants are confident in their abilities to improve their English skills by reducing the effect of their mother language via practice and dedication.

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