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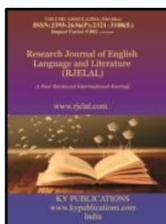
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TEACHERS PERSPECTIVE TOWARDS FACTORS THAT HINDER SPEAKING
DEVELOPMENT AMONG SUDANESE SECONDARY SCHOOLS STUDENTS
(Case study: English language teachers at secondary schools)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the factors that hinder speaking promotion among Sudanese secondary schools students. The problem of this study emerges from the fact that most of secondary school students are unable to speak English fluently. The aim of this study is to reveal the difficulties, and factors that restrict speaking promotion. A descriptive analytical approach is adopted in conducting this study. The population of the study is the English language teachers of secondary schools in the Locality of Bahri (2016). A questionnaire was constructed. The program used for statistical analysis to reach the results is SPSS. The main findings of the study are that teaching speaking doesn't find sufficient concern by using speaking techniques. Also the syllabus content doesn't contain materials that stimulate speaking. Moreover, the absence of language laboratories and insufficient listening affect negatively on the process of speaking. The study recommended some suggestions as more time and concern should be given to speaking skill. Using speaking techniques should be used to promote interaction in classroom. Schools should create periodical oral exams in order to make students deal more serious with speaking skill.

Key words: productive – pronunciation – inhibition

Introduction

Clearly speaking is a very significant skill in language, because it is the most used in communication. The child begins to learn speaking by imitation of his family and caregiver, but to acquire speaking in second language needs some techniques and steps. We can make first impression about a person we don't know before by his way of speaking, for example if he/she is polite, educated, cultivated and so.

Unlike listening and reading which are receptive skills of a given language, speaking and writing skills are widely classified by many researchers as productive and active skills. (Richards et al. 2002:293).

The ability to speak in a foreign language involves several components that speakers need to acquire in order to communicate effectively. For this reason, the enhancement of speaking ability involves not only the acquisition of linguistic forms but also the knowledge of communication contexts, which determine both the content and manner of verbal expression. The ability to interpret and appropriately respond to nonverbal clues such as facial expressions and tones of voice also plays apart. Therefore, learners should be provided with learning environment where different forms of social interactions are simulated in order to acquit them with a variety of linguistic forms and communicative contexts. One of the most influential

learning theorists, Vygotsky (1987), proposes that language development depends entirely on social interaction. He postulates that knowledge entails self-regulation and that social interaction enables individuals to construct knowledge which is meaningful to them.

B. Bloch and G.I. Trager (1942) write "A language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a group cooperates". By speaking, it doesn't mean merely uttering words through mouth. It means conveying the message through the words of mouth. This skill is neglected in our classrooms. Students don't get any chance either in the classroom or outside to speak English. Speaking is not a part of our examinations.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of study came out from the notice that most secondary schools students are disable to speak English language fluently when they find themselves in situation which requires speaking. The study is going to investigate the difficulties that prevent them to practice speaking in effective way.

Significance of the Study

It is observed that speaking skill stands as the most problematic issue facing many students at secondary schools. Furthermore, this problem continued to exist causing some phobia till they reach university education. The results of this study are expected to be useful to Sudanese secondary schools students, teachers as well as syllabus designers.

Moreover, the results of the study may open new horizons and encourages other researchers to make their contribution in this important and sensitive issue.

Objective of the Study

The paper aims to investigate the factors that restrict students from improving their speaking skill. It also aims to recommend suggestions that can help improving speaking skill, and encourages other researchers to give more concern about developing speaking skill.

Questions of the Study

- 1- Does the using of pair and group work can organize the process of teaching and improve learners' performance?

- 2- Do frequent course book activities develop learner's fluency?
- 3- Does the lack in listening activities impede or prevent learning correct pronunciation?
- 4- Does correcting all pronunciation mistakes discourage students' participation and their willingness to practice the language?

Hypotheses of the Study

- 1- Pair and group work may develop learner's interest and reduce tension.
- 2- Syllabus activities may help to focus on producing the language.
- 3- Lack of listening may impede learning correct pronunciation.
- 4- Correcting all pronunciation mistakes discourages students and minimizes their participation.

Limits of the Study

This study investigates the attitude of English teachers at secondary schools towards the factors and obstacles that hinder the development of speaking skill. The study concerns to grant more care for the speaking skill in the process of teaching.

Pronunciation

English language has long been considered by either native speakers or non-native speakers as a difficult language because of its pronunciation. Learners, then who want to develop their speaking skill in English should practice pronunciation overall. They should be aware of the different sounds and their features and where they are made in one's mouth; they have also to be aware of where the words should be stressed, when to use raising intonation and when to use falling one. All these issues give them extra information about how to speak English effectively and help to achieve the goal of a better understanding of spoken English. Redmond and Vrchota (2007:104) argue that "It is imperative that you use the correct word in the correct instance and with the correct pronunciation. Pronunciation means to say words in ways that are generally accepted or understood". However, if the pronunciation is not correct the speakers then will not be understood and therefore accuracy is not achieved.

Accuracy

Most second language teachers nowadays emphasize accuracy in their teaching because learners seek more to be fluent and they forget about being accurate. Without structuring accurate speech, speakers will not be understood and their interlocutors will lose interest if they perform incorrect utterances each time. Therefore, paying attention to correctness and completeness of language form is of more importance for oral proficiency. (Skehan 1996: 23 cited in Ellis and Barkhuizen 2005: 139) define accuracy as referring "to how well the target language is produced in relation to the rule system of the target language". Therefore, learners should focus on a number of things in their production of the spoken language, mainly, the grammatical structure, vocabulary and pronunciation.

Grammar

According to (Ellis, (1997: 15). cited in Hughes (2002: 31) the grammatical accuracy refers to the appropriate use of the learners' grammatical structure that involves the length and the complexity of the utterances, in addition to the ability to use the subordinating clauses. The grammar of speech differs of that of writing. Thornbury (2005) lists the following features of spoken grammar:

- Clause is the basic unit of construction.
- Clauses are usually added (co- ordinate).
- Head +body + tail construction.
- Direct speech favored.
- A lot of ellipsis.
- Many question tags.
- Performance effects (hesitation, repeats, false starts, incompleteness, syntactic blends).

Vocabulary

Achieving accuracy in terms of vocabulary refers to the appropriate selection of words during speaking. Students often find difficulties when they try to express what they want to say, they lack the appropriate vocabulary, and they sometimes use words incorrectly like in the case of synonyms which don't carry the same meaning in all contexts. Students then, have to be able to use words and expressions accurately. According to Harmer (2001)

the knowledge of the word classes also allows speaker to perform well formed utterance.

Syllabus Design

In order to define syllabus design, we need to start with the broader field of curriculum development. Curriculum is a large messy concept which can be looked at in a number of ways. A very broad definition is that it includes all of the planned learning experiences of an educational system. The field of curriculum development was first systematized by Tyler in 1949, who articulated four fundamental questions that must be answered by any curriculum developer.

1. What educational purposes should a school seek to attain?
2. What educational experiences can be provided that is likely to attain those purposes?
3. How can the educational experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes have been attained?

In the context of language teaching, the first two questions have to do with syllabus design, the third with language teaching methodology, and the fourth with assessment and evaluation. Syllabus design, then, is the selection, sequencing, and justification of the curriculum.

In language teaching content selection will include selecting linguistic features such as items of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary as well as experiential content such as topics and themes. This selection process is guided by needs analyses of various kinds. Needs analysis provides the designer with a basis both for content specification and for the setting of goals and objectives.

In 1976, David Wilkins published an influential book called *National Syllabus*, in which he argued that the point of departure for syllabus design should not be lists of linguistic items, but a specification of the concepts that learners wish to express (notions such as time and space), and the things that learners want to do with language (functions such as complimenting or apologizing). More recently, there have been calls for the adoption of a process approach, in which the point of departure is not lists of linguistic or notional – functional content, but a specification of

communicative and learning processes. This has resulted in proposals for task – based syllabuses.

Another significant trend, particularly in second as opposes to foreign language contexts, has been the emergence of content – based syllabuses. Most recently, an integrated approach has been called for. In such an approach, all most of the elements and processes described above are incorporated into the syllabus. (Marianne: 1992: 55)

We can choose any methods in ELT because all of them help to develop speaking skills. It is possible to use them in integration or separately to get positive results. Bailey (2005) and Goh (2007) proposed methods to enhance the development of speaking by means of syllabus design, principles of teaching, types of tasks and materials, and speaking assessment.

Teaching Speaking

In general there are four language skills which the language learner should adopt through the process of learning or acquisition. They are reading, speaking, listening, and writing. Along with the development of theories of language teaching and learning, there are several terms used for these skills which are conventionally accepted by most of language teachers as what Donald and Kneale (2001:14) say that: “Language teachers conventionally distinguish between four aspects of language which are mastered by means of the “four skills”: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening and reading might be taught as primarily “passive” “receptive” or ‘input’ skills, whilst speaking and writing are their ‘active’ ‘productive’ or ‘output’ counterparts” (Donald and Kneale,2001:14).

In real communication, these skills are often manifested integrative. For example, when learners listen to a lecture, they make notes. To clarify the message they got, they read the notes again and expressed their understanding by asking questions. The previous theory that English should be taught integrative is supported by Brown (2001:232). He states: “Despite our history of treating the four skills in separate segments of curriculum, there is a trend toward skill integration. That is rather than designing a curriculum to teach the many aspects of one skill, say, reading, curriculum designers are taking more a whole

language approach whereby reading skills, then, will also deal with related listening, speaking and writing skills”.

Meanwhile in Harmer’s (2007:265) words:“It would make no sense to teach skill in isolation since in meaningful communication, people employ incremental language skills not in isolation, but in tandem”. In summary, these four language skills should be carried out in a meaningful way and taught integrative”.

Teachers have an important role in making the teaching and learning process succeed. They may try to use various approaches to teach English and then select an appropriate approach which is suitable for their classes. It is necessary to connect teacher’s experience during the teaching and learning process with the theory of teaching derived from research so that it will help the teachers to comprehend when to use a certain technique, with whom it will work, how to adapt it for the students, and how to judge its effectiveness.

Characteristics of Speaking Performance

In the process of teaching speaking we need to make assessment for the learner to make sure that he makes proper progression in his performance. In recent teaching contexts, a lot of attention has been paid for to designing activities which focus on tasks that are balanced between the need to achieve fluency and accuracy. These criteria are also based upon in assessment of the oral skills. In the communicative approach, fluency and accuracy are of the main characteristics of this approach, and they are seen as complementary in accomplishing a given task. Although, Richards and Rodgers (2001:157) mention that:“Fluency and acceptable language is the primary goal: Accuracy is judged not in the abstract but in context”, and this is an obvious point since the emphasis of CLT is on the communicative process between learners or teacher - learners, rather the mastery of the language forms.

Many questions have been raised about the role of accuracy in CLT theory. Hedge (2000:61) makes the important point that “The communicative approach somehow excuses teachers and learners from a consideration of how to develop high levels of accuracy in the use of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary”. Learners then should develop a

communicative competence through classroom practice; however, simultaneously they should know how the language system works in a correct and appropriate way.

Speaking Difficulties in Foreign Language Learning

Always there are difficulties in the process of learning and the success of learner is measured by his ability to overcome these difficulties and doesn't give up. Practicing the speaking skill of the foreign language is not as knowing about this language. Echevarria et al. (2008) support that the difference between the knowledge of how things must be done and the ability to do these things is crucial in the learning process. Learners often find some difficulties when practicing the speaking skill, even those who know about the system of the foreign language. Parrot (1993: 72) asserts that teachers must perform a series of tasks that aiming to providing learners with the confidence and the skill required to take advantages of the classroom opportunities in order to speak English effectively.

According to Ur (2000) there are four main problems in getting students speak in the foreign language in the classroom:

- **Inhibition**

This problem reveals more when learners try to participate in the classroom but many factors stop them to do so. Littlewood (1999: 93) argues that: "It is too easy for a foreign language classroom to create inhibition and an anxiety" Such factors refer to the feeling of shyness and fear of making mistakes and these due to the ill development of communicative skills and the feeling of linguistic inferiority. Students fear to make mistakes especially if they will speak to critical audience. Ur (2000: 111) states that: "Learners are often inhibited about trying to say things in a foreign language in the classroom. Worried about, making mistakes, fearful of criticism or losing face, or simply shy of the attention that their speech attract."

This view is supported also by Bowman et al. (1989) who argue that in teaching speaking you are asking your learners to express themselves in front of the whole class, so this leads many of them to experience the stress when doing speaking activities. To end, stress and anxiety are two factors

that also can stop the students from speaking confidently in front of their classmates.

- **Nothing to say**

The common expression SL learners use when they are imposed to participate in a given topics "have nothing to talk about", "I don't know", "no comment", or they keep silent. These expressions are due to the lack of motivation in expressing themselves or the chosen topic they should discuss or talk about.

Rivers (1968:192) says that: "The teacher may have chosen a topic which is uncongenial to him {the learner} or about which he knows very little, and as a result he has nothing to express, whether in the native language or the foreign language". Moreover, the poor practice of the SL can contribute to create this problem.

Baker and Westrup (2003) support that many students find it difficult to answer when teachers ask them to say anything in the target language. The learners may have only some ideas to talk about; they may not know how to use some vocabulary or they are not sure of the grammatical correctness. Also, students could not carry out the discussion on topics that are not interesting for them.

- **Low Uneven Participation**

This problem refers to the amount of each student's time of talking. Rivers (1968) claims that some personality factors can affect participation in a FL and teachers then should recognize them. There are some students who tend to be dominant and take almost the whole students' talk time. However, others prefer to speak only if they insure that what they will say is correct, and some others keep silent, show no interest or participation all among the course. Harmer (2001) suggests streaming weak participants in groups and letting them work together. In such cases they will not hide behind the strong the strong participants, and teacher can achieve a high level of participation. Another factor that can create problem of participation is the classroom arrangement that may not help students to perform some speaking activities.

Bowman et al. (1989:40) support the idea by saying that "traditional classroom seating arrangements often work against you in your interactive teaching." Low participation is due to the

ignorance of teacher’s motivation too. If the teacher doesn’t motivate his learners, the talkative ones also will show no interest. So, increasing and directing student motivation is one of the teacher’s responsibilities.

• **Mother Tongue Use**

SL students of the same mother tongue tend to use it outside the classroom because they feel more comfortable and less exposed to the target language. According to Baker and Westrup (2003: 12) “barriers to learning can occur if students knowingly or unknowingly transfer the cultural rules from their mother tongue to a foreign language” therefore, the learners will not be able to use the foreign language correctly if they keep on being influenced by the use of their mother tongue. Lack of the vocabulary of the target language usually leads learners to borrow words from their native language.

Methodology

A descriptive analytical approach was used in this study. A questionnaire consisting of 15 statements was designed by the researcher and distributed to 66 English teachers from 24 schools in the Locality of Bahri in order to extract their point of view about the factors that hinder speaking development. A program (SPSS) was used to analyze data to reach to the result of study.

Subjects

The population of this study consists of 66 English language teachers. They were selected randomly from 24 schools of Bahri Locality to respond to restricted questionnaire of the study. They have different qualifications in English language but most of them have Bachelor degree. The range of their teaching experience is 3 – 36 years.

Tools

A questionnaire was designed for data collecting. It was filled by English secondary schools teachers in the locality of Bahri on December 2016.

Procedures of Data Collection

The researcher took permission letter from Education ministry and met schools managers who arranged to make him meet English teachers. Then he sat with teachers directly and they filled the questionnaire paper.

Testing the Validity of the Study Hypotheses

To answer the questions of the study and verify the hypotheses, median was calculated for each phrase of the questionnaire, which show views of the study sample, where it was given class (5) as a weight for each answer "Strongly agree", and class (4) as a weight for each answer "agree" and class (3) as a weight for each answer "neutral" and class (2) as a weight for each answer "disagree", and class (1) as a weight for each answer "strongly Disagree". To find out the direction of the responses; firstly making sure that they statistically significant through the Sig value.

According to the requirements of statistical analysis it is logical to convert nominal variables to the amount of variables, as it will use chi-square test to determine significance of differences in the respondents answers to the hypothesis phrases.

Table (1) reliability and validity testing

Test	Reliability	Validity
Value	0.693	0.832

The value of reliability is (0.693) and validity is (0.832). This implies that the phases in study are more consistency relating to the hypotheses of the study which indicate that a questionnaire is characterized by high validity and high reliability also to achieve the purposes of the study and makes a statistical analysis fit and acceptable.

Hypotheses testing

There are four main hypotheses in this investigation need to be checked. Frequencies tables are required to improve the opinions of the respondents, more ever, chi-square test was used to find out if there is statistically significance differences between respondent’s opinion or not? If significances were found, then median was used to show how the trends of the differences between those respondents are apparent.

First hypothesis: Group work and pair work may develop learner’s interest and reduce tension.

There are no statistically significant relationships between the respondent’s opinions about the statement: Group work and pair work may develop learner’s interest and reduce tension.

Table (2) illustrates the result of the chi square test for statements of first hypothesis:

Table 2

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Chi-square	Sig	Median
1.It is so difficult to do confer exercise speaking outside the classroom.	28 42.4%	30 45.5%	3 4.5%	5 7.6%	0 0.0%	38.121	0.000	4
2. The role of families to enhance their children confidence to speak English.	20 30.3%	24 36.4%	9 13.6%	7 10.6%	6 9.1%	20.515	0.000	4
3. Absence of students strategic plans about learning English language.	31 47%	29 43.9%	3 4.5%	3 4.5%	0 0.0%	44.303	0.000	4
4. The qualifications and training of English teachers are essential in developing teaching process.	22 33.3%	27 40.9%	9 13.6%	7 10.6%	1 1.5%	35.818	0.000	4
5.Pair and group work can help students to perform well in classroom.	36 54.5%	27 40.9%	1 1.5%	1 1.5%	1 1.5%	87.636	0.000	5

1- The above five statements calculated P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%). This refers to the existence of differences statistically significant between the responses of individuals in study and for those who agreed.

Second hypothesis: Syllabus activities may help to focus on producing the language

There are no statistically significant relationships between the respondent's opinions about the statement: Syllabus activities may help to focus on producing the language

Table (3) illustrates the result of the chi square test for statements of second hypothesis:

Table 3

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Chi-square	Sig	Median
1. Restriction of curriculum prevents a teacher to be creative	21 31.8%	26 39.4%	8 12.1%	10 15.2%	1 1.5%	31.121	0.000	4
2. Insufficient practice of aloud reading.	29 43.9%	27 40.9%	4 6.1%	6 9.1%	0 0.0%	32.303	0.000	4
3. Teaching grammar is an old. Students should learn it implicitly.	31 47%	19 28.8%	6 9.1%	4 6.1%	6 9.1%	40.818	0.000	4

1- The above three statements calculated P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%). This refers to the existence of differences statistically significant between the responses of individuals in study and for those who agreed.

Third hypothesis: Lack of listening may impede learning correct pronunciation.

There are no statistically significant relationships between the respondent's opinions about the statement: lack of listening may impede learning correct pronunciation.

Table (4) illustrates the result of the chi square test for statements of third hypothesis:

Table 4

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Chi-square	Sig	Median
1. The technical methods of schools that their major aim is how to pass exams and gain high degrees.	35 53%	23 34.8%	5 7.6%	2 3%	1 1.5%	69.152	0.000	5
2. Insufficient using of speaking techniques.	27 40.9%	31 47%	3 4.5%	3 4.5%	2 3%	63.697	0.000	4
3. Absence of language labs and its role in reducing speaking skill.	39 59.1%	17 25.8%	4 6.1%	5 7.6%	1 1.5%	74.303	0.000	5

The first and second statements calculated P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%). This refers to the existence of differences statistically significant between the responses of individuals in study and for those who strongly agreed.

The third statement calculated P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%). This refers to the existence of differences statistically significant between the responses of individuals in study and for those who strongly agreed.

Fourth hypothesis: Correcting all pronunciation mistakes discourages students and minimizes their participation.

There are no statistically significant relationships between the respondent's opinions about the statement: correcting all pronunciation mistakes discourages students and minimizes their participation

Table (5) illustrates the result of the chi square test for statements of fourth hypothesis:

Table 5

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Chi-square	Sig	Median
1. The fear of students from speaking English before their peers.	38 57.6%	20 30.3%	6 9.1%	1 1.5%	1 1.5%	76.576	0.000	5
2. Personality of English teacher and its influence on students' learning and performance.	44 66.7%	19 28.8%	0 0.0%	2 3%	1 1.5%	73.515	0.000	5
3. Correcting pronunciation mistakes by teacher	24 36.4%	30 45.5%	5 7.6%	5 7.6%	2 3%	49.909	0.000	4

The above three statements calculated P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%). This refers to the existence of differences statistically significant between the responses of individuals in study and for those who strongly agreed.

Findings

Based on the results of statistical analysis, this study concludes with the following findings:

1. Imperfect using of speaking techniques and activities reduces the performance of students for speaking skill.
2. Most schools follow technical methods in teaching. Their aim is how students pass and gain high degree in exams. They don't

concern enough by promoting language skills, particularly speaking.

3. Curriculum materials are not rich of lessons that support and encourage students to speak.
4. Some English teachers are not perfectly qualified and trained. Their interest in teaching process is not proper to encourage students to concern more in language acquisition.
5. Classroom interaction encourages students to promote their speaking skills and enlarges their horizons. Also it makes them feel they are actually begin to learn English as they also exchange information and there is atmosphere of competition.
6. Loud reading helps and encourages students to speak. So, insufficiency makes students being less improved in speaking skill.
7. Language laboratory has essential role in promoting speaking skill. Its absence decreases the ability of students.

Conclusion

Speaking is essential skill and it helps students to communicate easily. Also it raises the interest of students towards English language. The study came out that there are obstacles and factors hinder students from promoting their speaking skill. The study presents some recommendations for developing speaking skill as using of speaking techniques in classroom, and schools should arrange periodical oral exams in order to make students be more serious about speaking. Curriculum should be revised, and supported with rich lessons and dialogues that stimulate and motivate students to practice speaking.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

- 1- More time and care should be given to speaking skill in the process of teaching.
- 2- Speaking activities should be used to encourage students.
- 3- Curriculum should contain lessons that support and stimulate speaking skill.
- 4- More listening should be given to students

5- Students should practice sufficient reading aloud.

6- Oral periodical exams should be arranged to raise the seriousness of students towards speaking skill.

Suggestions for Further Studies

The researcher suggests the following topics should be investigated for further studies in the future.

- 1- The role of listening as a receptive skill on developing language acquisition among secondary schools students.
- 2- The role of syllabus designers in the development of oral communication at secondary schools.
- 3- The impact of motivation and other psychological conditions in learning oral communication at secondary schools.

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