



Hurdles and Anxieties among Urdu EFL at Intermediate level in Pakistan

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Abstract

This mini research work is done to know the hurdles and anxieties among Urdu EFL at intermediate level in Pakistan. The study reveals that in a developed country like Pakistan students have to face numerous problems in their way to learn English. Lack of books, internet access, poverty, discouraging society, mother tongue interference are some of the major hurdles which affect students' learning. In addition to this lengthy theoretical syllabus, lack of competent teachers and well-equipped institutions, poor social background and lack of audio and video aids are some other causes which affect students learning. Students also feel anxiety in their way to learn English. Feel shy while speaking, lack of confidence, feel themselves under pressure while speaking, feeling that they will speak wrong sentences are some anxieties which are found in students minds while they speak. Moreover, fear of being insulted by listeners, feel themselves belonging to inferior groups, do not feel well in speaking English as it is the language of elite class, do not have a proper chance to speak in the class, discourage them while they try to speak and very much strict and rude behavior of teachers are some other hindrance in their way to learn English. The population of the study was three district of Punjab (Pakpattan, Bahawalnagar & Okara) Pakistan. The results of the study can be generalized all over the Pakistan. If the above-mentioned hindrances can be removed the learning of English can be much effective in Pakistan.

Keywords: Urdu EFL, English language, Teachers, Punjab

JEL Codes: I20

1. Introduction

With the name of Allah Almighty the most Benevolent and most Gracious. Research is the most useful, effective and supreme tool for the improvement of society, for the development of society and for the betterment of society. It has a great value in each and all spheres of life. Research is a study and an investigation which totally relies on actuality, we get findings and results from practicals. In this way a research has a great and vital purpose because on the base of it there are a lot of positive and favorable changes can be made, and these changes bring the betterment in the whole society. In reviewing the earlier researches following studies explored to find out the research gap. Ahmed et al (2011) made a study on EFL speakers' anxiety, this research was named as: A Study on Sources and Management of High School Principals and Their Views about Anxiety. The aim of this research is to know the reason of stress and anxiety which is found in high school principal's mind always. The population of the study was all the High School principals District Kohat (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). An instrument questionnaire containing 35 items was made for taking data. Researcher collected the data personally, data shows that the principal of different schools feel anxiety due to, due to overload, long working hours, non-cooperative attitude of teachers, concern about education and marriage of their children's. The population of this study was ten principals of randomly selected ten high schools of District of Kohat (KPK). Result of this study showed that 50% principal are feel anxiety due to involvement political leaders in schools matter, 40% due to low income, 50% principals worried about their children education and low income, 70% worried about teacher's non cooperative behave. This study suggested that teacher's pay should must be increase, so that they may build their social status. There should be no political involvement in the schools. All the participants agreed on that thing offering prayers five times a day and sharing personal matters with friends and family they mostly feel satisfaction. A research on motivations, attitude, and anxiety in English learners done by Hashwani (2008) on Students' Attitudes, Motivations and Anxiety towards English Language Learning. This was a mini research and it was done on a private secondary school's students of 8th class at Karachi. This research was quantitative in nature, The Sample of 77 students were taken in them 40 were males and 33 were females students. Questionnaire was adopted a tool for data collection and it was comprises of totally on 35 items. Questionnaire was administered in a relaxed and friendly manner and students were informed about the objective of this study, their anonymity and confidentiality were assured. The study revealed that findings of 77 students (40 males and 37 females) highlight that students have affirmative attitudes and high level of enthusiasm towards English language and its learning. The Research revealed that the students have positive attitudes, high motivational level and moderate responses to their anxiety levels.

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Furthermore, the boys showed a high level of confidence comparable to the girls when classroom anxiety was examined. In contrast, the girls showed a lower level of nervousness and shyness, comparable to their counterparts.

A research work is done by Awan et al (2010) this research work named as An Investigation of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety and Its Relationship with Students' Achievement. In this study researcher demonstrated the impact and effect of classroom anxiety in English language learning. In this study the target population comprises of 149 students of different departments of Sargodha University all of the students were enrolled in 2nd and 6th semester. The questionnaire used in this study is the abbreviated form of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). These students' result were also taken and is found that classroom anxiety and students' result are negatively related to each other, as well as female students were less anxious as compare to male and their learning was more effective. Questionnaire was taken as the tool for data collection. Questionnaire was administered in 176 undergraduate students of almost 25 departments of Sargodha University 26 students did not return the Questionnaire. Of the 149 students, 65 (43%) were male and 85(57%) were female. The result of this study showed that language learning anxiety did not make any hindrance in language learning of English as a foreign language but one thing that is more significant that is addressed by this study is that students should must be provided a friendly environment in which they did not have fear of grammatical mistakes, spontaneity and pronunciation because you can never be ever able to do anything without making mistakes and making mistakes is not the matter of death and life. A research is done by Awan et al (2009) on classroom anxiety and its relationship with student's achievement. Participants of study include one forty nine undergraduate enrolled in second and sixth semester of different departments of university of Sargodha who are learning English as a foreign language. The questionnaire used in the study is the abbreviated form of foreign language classroom anxiety scale (FLCAS). Finally student's GPA in English classes is taken to find its relationship with language anxiety and achievements are negatively related to each other. Undergraduate students registered in 25 departments of university of Sargodha are included in the research. The sample consisted of second and sixth semester students from five randomly selected departments. A group of one forty nine students participated in the study. Sixty five were male and eighty five were female. At the undergraduate level, LA negatively influences student's achievement which means that LA has debilitating effects on learners' achievements. Thus socioeconomic achievements are attached to education (Ali and Naeem, 2017; Ali, 2011; Ali, 2015; Ali, 2018; Ali and Bibi, 2017; Ali and Ahmad, 2014; Ali and Audi, 2016; Ali and Audi, 2018; Ali and Rehman, 2015; Ali and Senturk, 2019; Ali and Zulfiqar, 2018; Ali et al., 2016; Ali et al., 2015; Arshad and Ali, 2016; Ashraf and Ali, 2018; Audi and Ali, 2017; Audi and Ali, 2017; Audi and Ali, 2016; Haider and Ali, 2015; Kaseem et al., 2019; Sajid and Ali, 2018).

A research is done by Cowden (2009) on communication and conflict anxiety and learning. Many educators are unaware of what anxiety is and how it affects their students. Anxiety is when a student experiences excessive and uncontrollable worry about future and past events, excessive concern about performing competently and significant and self-consciousness. Students with anxiety often have negative views about their ability to cope with stressful academic situations. According to Cowden (2009), some students with social anxiety are afraid to speak and interact within an educational setting. Within the classroom students will often day dream and their thoughts will be thoughts filled with anxiousness, concerns and uneasiness. For example these students may have a difficult time to stay focus if they heard about a catastrophic situation in news, these children tend to dwell and focus their concern on these issues. Academic anxiety can negatively affect the achievement and performance as well as social and psychological development among children and adults. The road to recovery is a team effort. Teacher must be aware of academic anxiety and how it may affect their students. Teacher can be part of the healing process and students with academic anxiety cannot only perform better academically but also socially, physically and mentally. A research is done by Chan and Wu (2000) on study of foreign language of EFL elementary school students in Taipei country. Different from previous studies on foreign languages anxiety which focused on either college or high school level, this study investigated foreign language anxiety of EFL elementary school students in Taiwan. The population of this study was all fifth graders in 205 elementary school of Taipei countries. The researchers used stratified purposeful sampling and cluster sampling to select eighteen classes from the total nine educational districts. All the 601 students from the eighteen classes were the participant answering the questionnaires. Foreign language learning can be separated into three stages: input, processing, and output. Anxiety can affect the ability of an individual to process information at each of the three stages. In these studies, many students said that they got nervous when they did not understand what their teachers said. Just as we have mentioned previously, using too much English as the instructional language could be one of the research that caused in comprehensible input. While other study of foreign language of anxiety focused on either college or high school level, this study focused on primary school level and found obvious tendency of language anxiety in EFL primary school learners. The anxiety – provoking situations we found in this study are the most direct factor that provokes students anxiety. In this study, great differences among students in English proficiency and the limitation of English teaching time were two problems that most teachers confronted. To find out hurdles faced by the EFL students in the province of Punjab in Pakistan To find out Urdu EFL students' anxiety in the

province of Punjab in Pakistan

2. Research Methodology

The study was descriptive in nature which demands qualitative & quantitative paradigms of research through survey study. For survey commonly a questionnaire is required which the researchers constructed with the help of hurdles and anxieties generally found among Urdu EFL students across Punjab. The questionnaire was constructed on five likert scale and data were collected from all the students of Punjab at secondary and higher secondary level. The data were collected by adopting stratified random sampling and collected data were put into SPSS version 21 to analyze the results. The mean and Standard deviation were obtained to measures output displayed through tables.

Table 1 showing Results about Hurdles among Urdu EFL Learners

| Statements | N | Mean | SD |
|--|----|------|-----|
| Lack of educational environment, books, internet access are root causes of weak performance among Urdu EFL learners at intermediate level. | 50 | 1.52 | .76 |
| Poverty is also a problem that affects efficient learning among Urdu EFL learner at intermediate level. | | 1.58 | .57 |
| Society also discourages to English learners at intermediate level. | | 2.16 | .68 |
| Mother-tongue interference is also a problem among Urdu EFL learners at intermediate level | | 2.48 | .97 |
| Studying English as subject to pass the examination is also a hurdle for Urdu EFL learner at intermediate level | | 2.34 | .89 |
| Lack of competent teacher is also a great problem in for English language learners at intermediate level. | | 2.08 | 1.0 |
| Poor social background is also a cause of Urdu EFL students' poor competency. | | 2.02 | .82 |
| Lack of Audio & video in English is great problem for Learning English for the students | | 2.44 | .99 |
| Syllabus is theoretical that is why students cannot learn English easily | | 2.46 | .88 |
| Poor social background is also a cause of Urdu EFL students' poor competency. | | 2.42 | 1.1 |

In the above table 1 mean score about statement 1 is 1.52 with standard deviation .76 which reveals that students agree upon the point that lack of educational facilities, e.g. educational environment, books, internet access is a root cause of weak performance in Urdu EFL learner at intermediate level. Mean score about statement 2 is 1.58 with standard deviation .57 which reveals that students agree upon the point that Poverty is also a problem that affects efficient learning among Urdu EFL learner at intermediate level. Mean score about statement 3 is 2.16 with standard deviation .68 which reveals that students agree upon the point that Society also discourages to English learners at intermediate level. Mean score about statement 4 is 2.48 with standard deviation .97 which reveals that students agree upon the point that Mother-tongue interference is also a problem in Urdu EFL learner at intermediate level. Mean score about statement 5 is 2.34 with standard deviation .89 which reveals that students agree upon the point that studying English as subject to pass the examination is also a hurdle for Urdu EFL learner at intermediate level. Mean score about statement 6 is 2 with standard deviation 1 which reveals that students agree upon the point that lack of competent teachers is also a great problem in Urdu EFL learner at intermediate level. Mean score about statement 7 is 2 with standard deviation .82 which reveals that students agree upon the point that lack of good institutions is also a root cause of ineffective learning in Urdu EFL learner at intermediate level. Mean score about statement 8 is 2.44 with standard deviation .99 which reveals that students agree upon the point poor social background is also a cause of Urdu EFL students' poor competency at intermediate level. Mean score about statement 9 is 2.46 with standard deviation .88 which reveals that students agree upon the point that Lack of Audio & video in English is great problem for Learning English for the students. Mean score about statement 10 is 2.42 with standard deviation 1.1 which reveals that students agree upon the point that Syllabus is theoretical that is why students cannot learn English easily.

Table 2 Showing Anxieties among Urdu EFL learner at intermediate level

| Statements | N | Mean | SD |
|---|----|------|-----|
| Students feel shy while speaking in the class | 50 | 1.56 | .76 |
| There is lack of confidence among students in the class | | 1.94 | .89 |
| Students feel themselves under pressure while learning English. | | 2.00 | .78 |
| Students feel that they will speak wrong sentences. | | 2.10 | .78 |
| Students feel fear of being insulted by the listeners. | | 2.26 | 1.0 |
| Students feel themselves belonging to inferior groups. | | 2.40 | .90 |
| Students do not feel well in speaking English as it is the language of elite class. | | 2.44 | 1.0 |
| Students are not given proper chance to speak in the class. | | 2.66 | .98 |
| Students are always discouraged when they try to speak. | | 2.74 | .89 |
| Students are not treated in friendly manner in the class room by teachers. | | 2.76 | .91 |

In the above table 2 mean score about statement 1 is 1.56 with standard deviation .76 which reveals that students agree upon the point that they feel shy while speaking English in the class. Mean score about statement 2 is 1.94 with standard deviation .89 which reveals that students agree upon the point that there is lack of confidence among students in the class. Mean score about statement 3 is 2 with standard deviation .78 which reveals that students agree upon the point that they feel themselves under pressure while learning English. Mean score about statement 4 is 2.10 is with .78 standard deviation which shows that students feel that they will speak wrong sentences. Mean score about statement 5 is 2.26 with 1 standard deviation which clearly shows that students feel fear of being insulted by the listeners. Mean score about statement 6 is 2.40 with standard deviation .90 which reveals that students agree upon the point that they feel themselves belonging to inferior groups. Mean score about statement 7 is 2.44 with standard deviation 1 which reveals that students agree upon the point that they do not feel well in speaking English as it is the language of elite class. Mean score about statement 8 is 2.66 with standard deviation .98 which reveals that students agree upon the point that they are not given proper chance to speak in the class. Mean score about statement 9 is 2.74 with standard deviation .89 which reveals that students are always discouraged when they try to speak. Mean score about statement 10 is 2.76 with standard deviation .91 which reveals that students are not treated in friendly manner in the class room by teachers.

3. Discussion

This study explored Urdu EFL students hurdles, the analysis of the data revealed that lack of educational facilities, suitable books, and internet access are root cause which create difficulty in learning English. In addition to that poverty discouraging society, mother tongue interference are the problems for students learning English at well reputed institutions. The English ruled over India before the partition. That is why people in Pakistan have natural grudge against English language, due to which people discourage the students for learning English. Moreover studying English as a compulsory subject, lack of competent teachers and language institutions, poor social background, lack of audio and video aids and theoretical syllabus are some other hurdles for the students in learning English. Government of Punjab has taken steps to set up English language new institutions and new teachers are being employed to make up this deficiency. Urdu EFL students also feel anxiety because of anti-English social set up the students with poor social background think that it is the language of elite class that is why they avoid speaking English. Moreover they are not provided opportunity in the class to speak English. They feel themselves under pressure because of having doubt speaking incorrect sentences lest they should be insulted by their teachers because of making errors. Student's anxiety is also increased when teacher is very much strict in the class with the students and this situation leads to a considerable gap between the students and teachers

4. Conclusion

The study concludes that Urdu EFL students have a lot of problems and hurdles in their way to learning English. They also feel anxiety due to numerous causes and effects. If the students hurdles and anxieties are controlled by the teachers by providing them advance material of language learning and friendly social environment for learning English they will be learn and speak English confidently.

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