

Why Do University Students in Pakistan Confront Problems In Spoken English?

ABSTRACT

Aims: Language is a mode of communication between individuals. In Pakistan, English is learned as a second language. The main objective of this study is to identify the problems faced by university students in spoken English.

Study design: This study was design to evaluate the 9 factors confronted by university students in their spoken English. Total 9 factors discussed are lack of confidence in speaking the English language, non-availability of words to express feelings, fear of making mistakes when speaking the English language, lack of motivation in students speaking English language, nervous in speaking the English language in public, shyness in speaking English language, common grammar mistakes while speaking English language, difference of syntax, and lack of English teachers.

Place and Duration of Study: This study was conducted at NUST Balochistan Campus in a time frame of three months.

Methodology: A survey was conducted among different university students by distributing questionnaires among them. This is a quantitative research method. A total of nine problems were identified, and questionnaires were circulated among seven hundred (700) university students in which 500 submitted their complete response. Their responses were analytically analyzed.

Results: After analysis of data, this study revealed that the problem faced by university students are Lack of Confidence in Speaking the English Language with a score of 3.731 and was ranked on the top, followed by Lack of Vocabulary with score of 3.692, Fear of Making Mistakes When Speaking English Language with a score of 3.654, Lack of Motivation in Students in Speaking English Language with a score of 3.50, Nervous in Speaking English Language in Public with a score of 3.462, Shyness in Speaking English Language with a score of 3.269, Common Grammar Mistakes While Speaking English Language with a score of 3.231, Difference of Syntax with a score of 2.923 and Lack of English Teachers with a score of 2.923

Conclusion: The university students in Pakistan confronts serious problems in spoken English, thus these problems should be overcome by acting effectively.

Keywords: Speaking skills; problem; factors; Universities; Pakistan

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the English language is the most spoken means of communication in the whole world. That's why it is given very much importance by professional readers and writers. The most important skill of the English language is speaking skill. Speaking skills are considered the most important for job interviews etc. Most of the students don't take it seriously and then suffer in further practical life.

Bygate [1] says "Speaking skill is the ability in using oral language to explore ideas, intentions, thoughts, and feelings to other people to make the message clearly delivered and well understood by the listeners. He also believed that speaking skills can be trained and it does not depend on the talent. Ur [2] said "Speaking is one of the most important skills of all the four language skills because individuals who learn a language are referred to as the speakers of that language. "Several studies said there are several factors which affect students' performance in speaking English fluently, such as lack of adequate and appropriate vocabulary, shyness, nervous, fearful to speak, and lack of confidence."

Ayers and Gray [3] stated that "Anxiety and depression are just two effective factors that contribute to learning difficulties or are the result of learning difficulties. The impact of persistent failure can adversely affect a pupil's self-esteem, confidence, perceived self-efficacy, attitude, and motivation. When confronted by certain tasks pupils may develop anxious feelings, fearing they will fail." Biber [4] believed: That some academic speaking skills such as giving an oral presentation or participating in classroom discussion require a much broader range of vocabulary knowledge, grammatical sophistication, and discourse competence than is the case with typical daily life conversation.

Brown [5], human communication is a complex process. Persons need communication when they want to say something and transmit information. Speakers use communication when they are going to inform someone about something. Speakers apply language according to their own goals. So, speakers should be both listeners and speakers at the same time for effective communication.

This study aims at finding out the problems and issues faced by students in speaking the English language.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many types of research, articles, books, and studies have been published by many researchers and writers about identifying problems faced by students in spoken English. According to Afebri and Muhsin [6], Speaking is the most difficult skill in learning English as a second language.

Al-Roud [7] conducted a study to identify the problems faced by students of southern universities of Jordan, including Mukta university students, Al-Husein Bin Talal University, and Tafila Technical University. In the sample, he included a total of 239 male and female students and asked them their problems. Finally, he revealed that Female students were mostly affected by those problems.

Tok [8] studied to identify the communication obstacles in classrooms during the spring term of the 2007-2008 education year in the Education Faculty of Adiyaman University in Turkey. This study revealed that the main obstacles in communication and speaking English are "Anxiety and Unwillingness". And revealed that most students were willing to participate, half of the students were anxious, and most willing students were females.

Sudirman [9] also studied to identify the problems and influencing factors faced by students of High School in speaking English at the University of Palopo in the academic year 2018/2019. He used the qualitative method for evaluation. He scored the data from the spoken test and categorized it as samples of research. This study revealed that problems faced by students were accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and fluency meanwhile from the result of the interview the factors were performance condition, affective factors, listening ability, and topical knowledge.

According to Chand [10], speaking indicates language proficiency. He studied to identify Challenges and problems faced by Bachelor Level Students while speaking English at Far-Western University, Nepal.

This was an empirical qualitative study in which he made a questionnaire and semi-structured interview. He categorized the problems into four major categories and identified some problems. To eliminate these problems, this study has provided some recommendations for creating a favorable English-speaking environment in the classroom, modifying existing English courses, and changing the teaching pedagogy and role of the teacher in the classroom.

Huwari [11] studied the problems faced by undergraduate students while speaking English inside the classroom of Zarqa University of Jordan. The researcher included twelve students for data analysis and interviewed them. The findings were divided into four main categories linguistic matters, psychological factors, learning environment, and lack of practice. This study revealed that the main problems are linguistic matters which included pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As the world is advancing, the need of using the English language has increased very much in different sectors of life. Every university student needs to be able to communicate with foreigners using English Language. Through analysis and reports, it has been found that students suffer from using the language smoothly and accurately which shows that there are problems that keep them away from English language speaking skills.

4. THE RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The results of the study can be helpful for the teachers of universities, colleges, and schools. This will also be beneficial for parents and locals to discover the solutions to the problems that students face while speaking English.

5. METHODOLOGY

To get a result that is more accurate certain and reliable, we collected data directly from students and then analyzed the data. Those who are most affected and are the main concerns of the study, are students [12].

We prepared a questionnaire composed of nine highly important questions collected from various research papers. The analysis was based on two factors:

- Level of Impact.
- Level of Occurrence

This helps us to visualize the collected data and act upon it as a solution.

5.1 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

For a collection of data, a questionnaire was circulated among students of different universities in different provinces. This questionnaire consists of nine problems faced by students. All the problems were identified through the literature. The following nine factors were identified. All the collected data were analyzed by using equations 1 and equation 2. After analyzing all of them were ranked.

Table 1. All identified Problems

ID	Problem
Q1	Fear of Making Mistakes When Speaking English Language
Q2	Lack of Vocabulary
Q3	Difference of Syntax
Q4	Lack of Confidence in Speaking English Language

- Q5 Shyness in Speaking English Language
- Q6 Common Grammar Mistakes While Speaking English Language
- Q7 Lack of Motivation in Students in Speaking English Language
- Q8 Nervous in Speaking English Language in Public
- Q9 Lack of English Teachers

5.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

The population chosen for this survey were students of Pakistan. Talking about Topographic distribution. Fig 1 shows the respondent distribution based upon the topography of Pakistan i.e. Provinces



Fig 1. Respondents' distribution based on provinces

5.3 INSTRUMENT

After reviewing the related literature and designing a questionnaire the researcher adopted an instrument consisting of five values ranging from very low to very high. After doing that we gave these values specified numeric numbers which will help in the calculation process of the data that has been collected from the students. This calculation will help in the assessment of the major concerns problems. Table 2 indicates the ranging values from 1 to 5 based on their degree of severeness. This data was implemented by using the software as it helps in making a result more reliable, less uncertain, and more accurate [13].

Table 2. Likert Scale

Very Low	1
Low	2
Medium	3
High	4
Very High	5

5.4 ANALYSIS OF DATA

This data is analyzed by using the following works. A total of 500 responses were submitted from which we have used all the responses to calculate our results

5.5 MATHEMATICAL WORK

Formulas were applied to the collected data for results. We applied the average formula to all the respondent responses and converted it into a single value.

$$\text{Avg factored value} = \frac{n_1+n_2+n_3+n_4+\dots+n_{500}}{N} \quad (1)$$

$$\text{Avg factored value} = \frac{\sum_{n=1}^{n=500} n}{N} \quad (2)$$

Where,

N = Value of the respondent.

n = Sum of all respondents.

Table 3. Overall score of problems

ID	Problem	score
Q1	Fear of Making Mistakes When Speaking the English Language	3.654
Q2	Lack of Vocabulary	3.692
Q3	Difference of Syntax	2.923
Q4	Lack of Confidence in Speaking the English Language	3.731
Q5	Shyness in Speaking the English Language	3.269
Q6	Common Grammar Mistakes While Speaking English Language	3.231
Q7	Lack of Motivation in Students in Speaking the English Language	3.5
Q8	Nervous in Speaking the English Language in Public	3.462
Q9	Lack of English Teachers	2.923

5.6 RANKING OF ALL PROBLEMS

All the problems are ranked based on their scores shown in [table 3](#). Top-ranked factor after analysis is **“Lack of Confidence in Speaking the English Language”** with a score of **3.731**. The top five factors lie above the average of all the problems these are the most critical issues faced by university students. Those critical factors need more attention to be resolved. Those critical problems are Lack of Confidence in Speaking English Language, Non-availability of Words to express Feelings, Fear of Making Mistakes When Speaking English Language, Lack of Motivation in Students, Speaking English Language, and Nervous in Speaking English Language in Public. These problems need more attention. As the top-ranked is lack of confidence, so it is the main problem faced by university students. It is due to a lack of chances provided to the students and a lack of competition.

Table 4. Overall score and ranking of problems

ID	Problem	score	Ranking
Q4	Lack of Confidence in Speaking English Language	3.731	1

Q2	Lack of Vocabulary	3.692	2
Q1	Fear of Making Mistakes When Speaking English Language	3.654	3
Q7	Lack of Motivation in Students in Speaking English Language	3.50	4
Q8	Nervous in Speaking English Language in Public	3.462	5
Q5	Shyness in Speaking English Language	3.269	6
Q6	Common Grammar Mistakes While Speaking English Language	3.231	7
Q3	Difference of Syntax	2.923	8
Q9	Lack of English Teachers	2.923	8

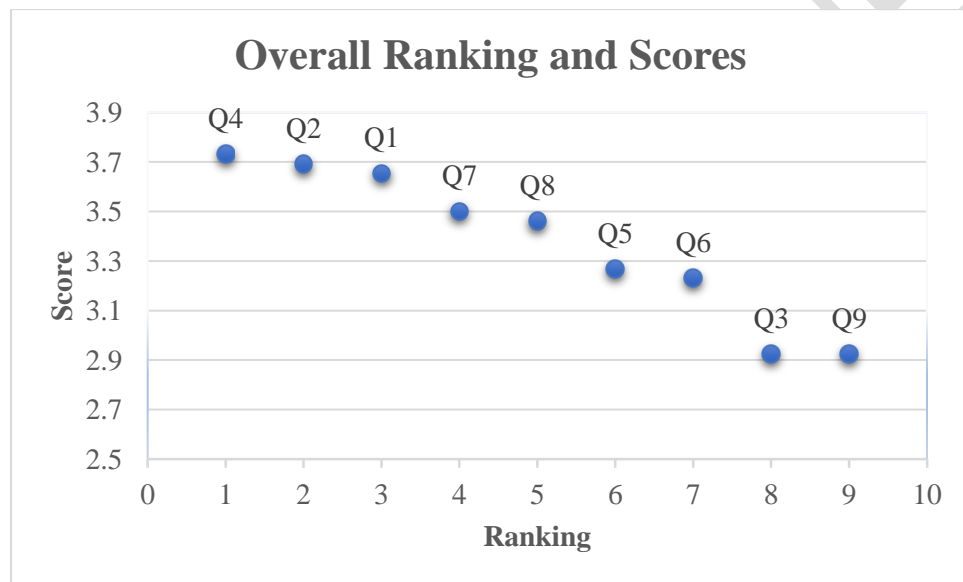


Fig 2. Overall ranking chart

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 4 indicates the average values and ranking of the question asked by the respondents. From the result accumulated from respondents' responses, we conclude the following results:

$$Q4 > Q2 > Q1 > Q7 > Q8 > Q5 > Q6 > Q3 = Q9$$

The result indicates that the **Q4** which was '**lack of Confidence in Speaking the English Language**'. If we talk about the country, it has an English education system at almost every level of education starting from elementary school to college-level but still, the problem of spoken English arises. Other than the education system of Pakistan, there must be another factor that is contributing to the cause of confronting the problem in spoken English. And as the results show a valid factor contributing to this cause. Ayers and Gray [3] stated that lack of confidence is contributing factor depriving of speaking English. Lack of motivation is a major factor that keeps us back from learning new things going to a high level. Lack of confidence leads to a lack of motivation in that area which is our focus. Lack of confidence makes a student coward, introvert, less motivated, and less bold. It is like a parasite that is affecting the person internally and like bad weather that is impacting his external atmosphere.

Talking about the problem that is our second concern is the **Non-availability of Words to Express Feelings (Q2)**. This statement emphasizes the lack of a word bank to express what we want to say. The

other reason is we face grammatical problems, in most cases, we cannot simply speak a sentence in the correct grammatical order. If we compare the English language problem in writing and speaking, we will easily find out that speaking English is more than worst if compared to English writing.

Fig 2 and fig 3 indicate the severity of the top 2 factors based on the respondent responses.

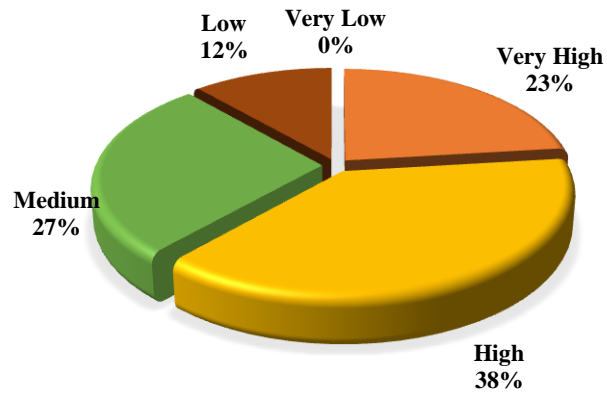


Fig 3. Severity responses of Fear of Making Mistakes When Speaking English Language

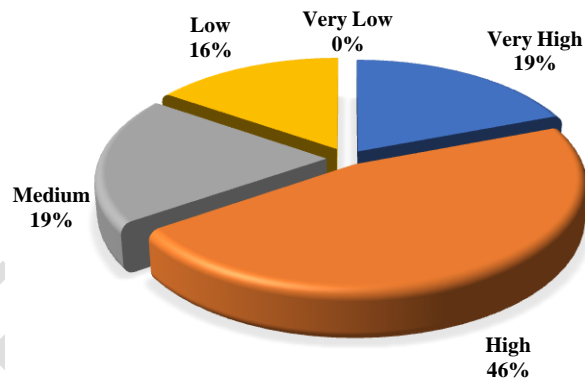


Fig 4. Severity responses of Lack of Vocabulary

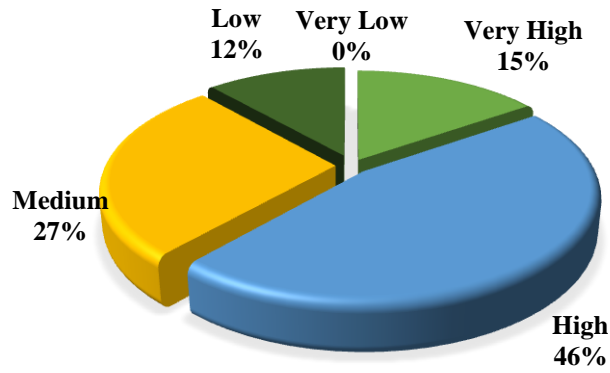


Fig 5. Severity responses of Fear of Making Mistakes When Speaking English Language

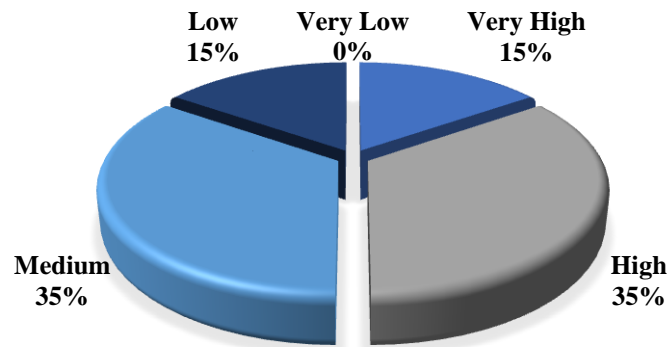


Fig 6. Severity of responses of Lack of Motivation in Students in Speaking English Language

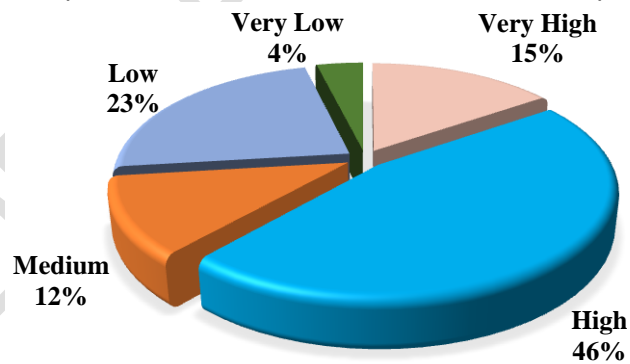


Fig 7. Severity responses of Nervous in Speaking English Language in Public

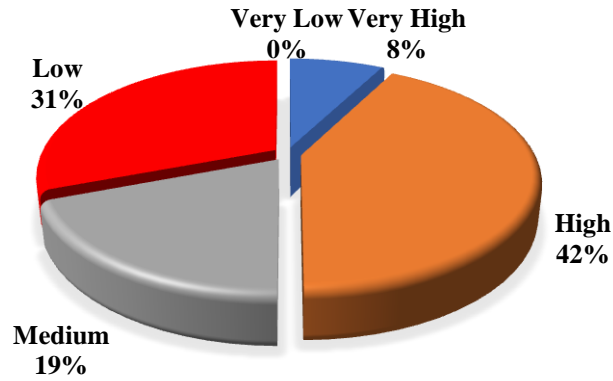


Fig 8. The severity of responses to Shyness in Speaking the English Language

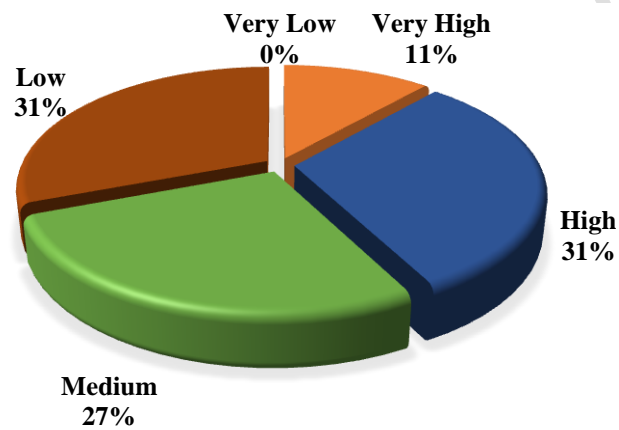


Fig 9. The severity of responses to Common Grammar Mistakes While Speaking the English Language

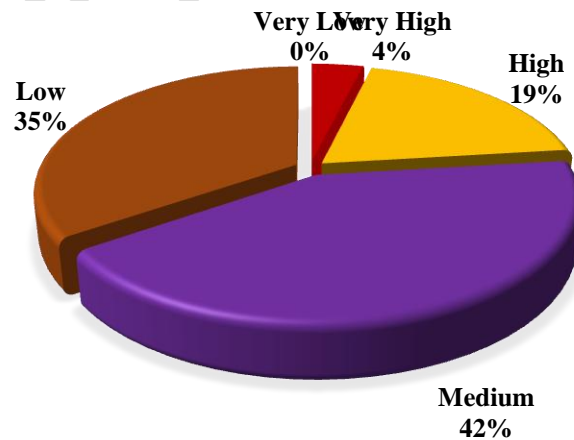


Fig 10. Severity responses of Difference of Syntax

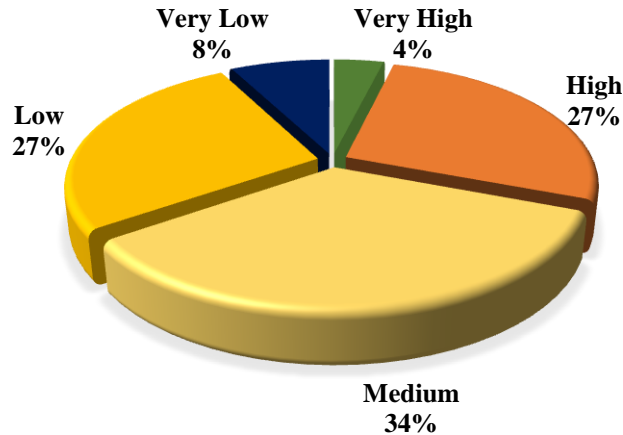


Fig 11. Severity responses of Lack of English Teachers

7. CONCLUSION

The results of the study indicated that students all over Pakistan base serious problems with spoken English. Among all the nine main reasons Lack of Confidence in Speaking the English Language was on the top of the list and is the main reason why student confronts the problem in spoken English.

It also concluded that the student, teacher and instructor, parents, and the community are responsible for the weakness of students in English speaking skills, and they must work together to solve the problems that students encounter Al-Roud [7]. However, attention should be given to students' confidence boosts since they face many obstacles in possessing speaking skills. By encouraging and motivating them to participate in learning English speaking skills, they can overcome these factors.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE

Why Do University Students in Pakistan Confront Problems In Spoken English?

A group of researchers from the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) Pakistan have designed this questionnaire (estimated in 10 minutes) to access why University Students Confronts Problem In Spoken English?

This anonymous questionnaire is ONLY aimed at people who are university students.

Major:	
University:	
Semester	
Age (years)	

Risk	Probability					Impact				
	Very low	Low	Average	High	Very High	Very low	Low	Average	High	Very High
Fear of Making Mistakes When Speaking English Language	VL	L	A	H	VH	VL	L	A	H	VH
Lack of Vocabulary	VL	L	A	H	VH	VL	L	A	H	VH
Difference of Syntax	VL	L	A	H	VH	VL	L	A	H	VH
Lack of Confidence in Speaking English Language	VL	L	A	H	VH	VL	L	A	H	VH
Shyness in Speaking English Language	VL	L	A	H	VH	VL	L	A	H	VH
Common Grammar Mistakes While Speaking English Language	VL	L	A	H	VH	VL	L	A	H	VH
Lack of Motivation in Students in Speaking English Language	VL	L	A	H	VH	VL	L	A	H	VH
Nervous in Speaking English Language in Public	VL	L	A	H	VH	VL	L	A	H	VH
Lack of English Teachers	VL	L	A	H	VH	VL	L	A	H	VH