



## Case Studies: An Exploratory Study of Issues of EFL Learners in Pakistani University at Graduate Level

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Article History:</b>            Received: January 10, 2023            Revised: February 18, 2023            Accepted: March 19, 2023            Available Online: March 20, 2023</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b>            English Foreigner Learner            Language Proficiency            Pakistan</p> <p><b>Funding:</b>            This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.</p>	<p>This study aims to address the challenges faced by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners at the graduate level in Pakistani universities. Despite the importance of English language in Pakistan, EFL learners face a range of issues that impact their language proficiency and academic success. This study is qualitative and uses thematic analysis to explore the experiences of EFL learners and identify the key issues that impact their language learning. The semi structured interviews have been taken from the EFL learners. The findings of this study have important implications for EFL instruction in Pakistani universities and can inform the development of targeted interventions to support EFL learners. The study highlights the significance of finding solutions to the issues faced by EFL learners in Pakistan, especially related to speaking skills, and offers recommendations for addressing these challenges.</p> <p>© 2023 The Authors, Published by iRASD. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial License</p>

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### 1. Introduction

English as a foreign language (EFL) instruction is a significant challenge in many parts of the world, including Pakistan. EFL learners in Pakistani universities face a range of issues that can impact their language proficiency and overall academic success. While previous studies have explored some of the challenges faced by EFL learners in Pakistan, little is known about the specific issues encountered by EFL learners at the graduate level. The previous researches show that students of EFL are facing difficulties in many countries. The common problems that EFL students are facing included less confidence, poor vocabulary, hesitation and anxiety while speaking, fear of committing mistakes, not having a suitable environment for practicing English, absence of strong motivation from teachers. Teacher-centred teaching methodology, effect of poor schooling, overuse of L1 in learning English, unsuitable classroom culture and lack of intense focus on speaking skills in the course content of the university were found major causes in speaking difficulties. In Pakistan, due to the communicative importance of English, it is being taught/learned in all private institutions as a second language. Due to British colonial history, English is the most widely used language for business, technology, education, and overall communication in Pakistan. Although, whether English is considered as an ESL (English as a Secondary Language) or EFL (English as a Foreign Language) in Pakistan, it is taught as a compulsory subject at primary level to higher secondary level of education. It is a fact that speaking skill is a backbone to attain English communicative competence as it is the most dominant language in our world, and in Pakistan, English language is spoken widely. This exploratory study aims to address this gap by examining the issues faced by EFL learners at the graduate level in Pakistani universities. The study uses a qualitative approach to explore the experiences of EFL learners and identify the key issues that impact their language learning and academic success. The findings of this study have important implications for EFL instruction in Pakistani universities and can inform the development of targeted interventions to support EFL learners at the graduate level.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Like most of the countries, in Pakistan, spoken English is considered as the most difficult task, students of EFL cannot get mastery over it. The data from the previous researches show that mostly students have to face four major issues including personal issues, social issues, linguistic issues and environmental issues. In Pakistan students are facing issues and difficulties in speaking English. Even after completion of their graduation, learners of EFL become unable to speak English fluently and some of the learners even become unsuccessful to speak a little bit of English. Pakistani educational sector has adopted a "communicative approach" for making teaching and learning of English more useful. The aim of this communicative approach is to teach four skills, that is, reading, writing, listening, and speaking of a language to the learners of EFL to improve communication. In spite of acting upon this approach, the state still is trying that common EFL learners should attain a satisfactory level to gain English language skills (M. M. Rahman et al., 2019; M. M. Rahman & Pandian, 2018). The researcher has personally experienced that EFL learners have to face some problems when they speak English, especially when they join English department during the course of first year of their undergraduate studies. Moreover, students face these problems either they have public or private background. It has been observed by the researcher that speaking skill causes more problems for EFL students at the tertiary level of education.

## **1.2. Rationale**

As the EFL students mostly use English to fulfil educational purposes inside the classroom so they face issues while doing communication in English and the whole process of education becomes a hurdle to achieve success and students become unable to speak English fluently. The present study will highlight and explore the issues which are causing difficulties for EFL learners and will focus that what measures and strategies should be adopted to eradicate the causes of failure of EFL learners in speaking English. Here, according to convenience, the researcher has selected Superior University, City Campus which is a private university to conduct the present, as the researcher herself is teaching in English department in the same university so she personally will meet the learners for gaining the desired results. The main purposes of the study is not only to analyze the problems of EFL students at undergraduate level but also to find some fruitful solutions to overcome those problems. The findings of the present study will justify its significance by implementing suitable suggestions and recommendations for EFL learners at BS level in universities of Pakistan to resolve their issues in speaking. The study will be helpful for the learners, teachers and future researchers as well.

## **1.3. Significance of the study**

The present study has covered City Lahore which comes under Province Punjab by selecting Superior University Lahore which will represent maximum number of private universities in Pakistan which is convenient and feasible for data collection. Moreover, it is convenient for the researcher to collect data from this University as she is teaching in English department in Superior University. The findings of the present research help to identify the learning difficulties and issues of the EFL students in speaking English. Moreover, the strategies and recommendations have also been given at the end to improve the language learning issues of EFL learners in Pakistan through speaking skill.

## **1.4. Delimitation**

The present study is delimited to EFL learners of four departments from only one university of Pakistan. For establishing the parameters of delimitation, the purpose is to make this study more useful, comprehensive, and specific. Moreover, the study has been delimitized to a small sample size, for generalizability of the findings to other contexts.

## **1.5. Research Objectives**

1. To identify the issues faced by EFL learners at BS level in Pakistani university.
2. To make implementable recommendations for resolving the issues of EFL students of BS English programme in selected university.

## **1.6. Research Questions**

1. What are the issues and problems of EFL students of BS English programme in selected university?
2. What are the implementable recommendations to resolve the problems and issues of EFL students of BS English programme in selected university?

## 2. Literature Review

English as a foreign language (EFL) learning in Pakistan faces a range of challenges, which have been the focus of numerous research studies. This literature review provides an overview of the main issues faced by EFL learners in Pakistan at the university level, with a focus on speaking skills.

One of the main challenges faced by EFL learners in Pakistan is the lack of exposure to English language outside of the classroom. This means that learners often struggle with speaking skills, which are essential for effective communication in English. In addition, the use of rote memorization techniques and a lack of critical thinking skills in EFL classrooms can also hinder the development of speaking skills (Aziz & Rizvi, 2018). Another issue faced by EFL learners in Pakistan is the use of outdated teaching methods, which can lead to a lack of engagement and motivation among learners. For example, teachers often rely on traditional lectures and grammar-based teaching, which may not be effective for developing speaking skills (Imran, Fatima, Sarwar, & Iqbal, 2023). Furthermore, EFL learners in Pakistan may also face challenges related to cultural and social norms. For example, gender-based segregation in classrooms can limit opportunities for interaction and collaboration, which are essential for developing speaking skills. Additionally, learners may face pressure from their families or communities to prioritize other subjects or career paths over English language learning (Khawaja & Mustafa, 2019). Despite these challenges, there are also efforts being made to address the issues faced by EFL learners in Pakistan. For example, the use of technology, such as online language learning platforms and mobile apps, has become increasingly popular in recent years (Khan, Khan, & Ali, 2020). Additionally, there is growing recognition of the importance of communicative teaching methods and the need for EFL learners to develop critical thinking skills (Ali & Qureshi, 2019). Overall, the challenges faced by EFL learners in Pakistan at the university level are complex and multifaceted. Future research can help to further identify and address these challenges, with a focus on developing effective teaching methods and promoting greater exposure to English language outside of the classroom. One of the most significant challenges faced by EFL learners in Pakistan is the lack of exposure to English outside of the classroom. According to a study by (A. Rahman & Ali, 2022), many Pakistani students only have access to English during their EFL classes, and do not have opportunities to practice their language skills in real-life situations. This lack of exposure can result in poor speaking and listening skills, which are essential for communication in English. Another issue faced by EFL learners in Pakistan is the poor quality of English language instruction. Several studies have identified inadequate teaching methods, insufficient teacher training, and outdated curricula as factors that contribute to poor language learning outcomes (Raza & Sajjad, 2019; Azhar & Abbasi, 2020).

In addition, a lack of resources, such as textbooks and audiovisual aids, can further hinder the effectiveness of EFL instruction. Furthermore, the cultural and linguistic differences between English and the learners' native language can also pose a challenge. This can result in difficulties with grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, which may impact the learner's ability to communicate effectively in English (Hussain, 2016). Finally, the attitudes and perceptions of EFL learners towards English can also play a role in their language learning success. Negative attitudes towards English, such as feelings of anxiety or a lack of motivation, can impede language acquisition and make it more challenging to learn (Behzadpoor, Ghafar Samar, Akbari, & Kiany, 2019). According to Baumgardner (1993): Due to the new contextual use of language, words which are taken from Urdu and indigenous languages of Pakistan express culture of Pakistan and society which are mostly used in English where no suitable or appropriate word of English exists. According to Ghani (2003): In Pakistan, English assists us to get success, for getting further education and to get white collar jobs. It is considered as the language of higher education and higher education and it is not the home language of the population except in the upper class where it is tagged as a symbol of status. At social level, as English is adopted as a second language so it has had a substantial impact both educationally and economically. It continuously plays an integral role in the country's industrial and commercial development and outside the government sector. English in Pakistan is taught as the compulsory subject from the first grade in our curricula. Teachers in Pakistan who teach English must approach teaching English as a Second Language with the perspective of applied linguistics. When number of language institutes increase, the parents of the students of these institutes also increase their interests for their children to study English which is a proof that the recent value of English language in our country has been improved. McIntyre & Gardner (1994) are of the view that "a

particular state of tension, anxiety, uneasiness, and fear connected with the needling of the involuntary nervous system". In their study, Horwitz (2016) also observed that anxiety is mostly related with the two main and collaborative skills of learning a foreign language, that is, listening and speaking.

In conclusion, EFL learners in Pakistan face a range of challenges in their language learning journey. These challenges include a lack of exposure to English outside of the classroom, poor quality of instruction, cultural and linguistic differences, and negative attitudes towards the language. Identifying and addressing these challenges is critical to improving the language learning outcomes of EFL learners in Pakistan.

### **3. Methodology**

The present research has used case study as a research approach as it deeply understands the complex issues faced by EFL learners. It is descriptive in nature and its research design is qualitative, specifically a phenomenological approach, to explore the issues faced by EFL learners in Pakistani universities at the graduate level. To identify the issues in EFL learners all BS Graduates are the whole population. For the selection of population purposive sampling has been used. By using a qualitative research methodology, the study can provide a detailed and nuanced understanding of the issues faced by EFL learners at the graduate level in Pakistani universities, and can offer insights into ways to improve EFL instruction and support for these learners. A qualitative research design allows researchers to explore complex issues in-depth and gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and perspectives of the participants. Overall, the proposed research design aims to explore the issues faced by EFL learners in Pakistani universities at the graduate level. By using a qualitative research design, the study can provide a rich and detailed understanding of the experiences and perspectives of the participants, which can inform the development of effective interventions and strategies to address these issues.

#### **3.1. Sampling**

For the sample selection, convenience sampling is being used to select participants who are EFL learners at the graduate level in Pakistani universities. The study is using a purposive sampling to select participants. The participants are graduate students enrolled in an EFL program in a Pakistani university. For the selection of university, convenience sampling is being used, as only Superior university Lahore is being selected to collect data because researcher herself is teaching in Superior university City Campus and its easy for herself to collect data personally from the EFL learners.

#### **3.2 Collection of Data**

For collection of data, EFL learners from Fall 2022 from 4 different departments including English department, Education Department, Economics department and Accountancy department have been selected. 2 students from each department are respondents. The total number of students in the present study are 6. The researcher herself is collecting data from the selected respondents. The tool for collection of qualitative data is Semi-structured interviews which is the primary method of data collection. The interviews have been conducted in English and recorded with the permission of the participants. Interview of 6 interviewees have been conducted by the researcher which have allowed them to share their experiences and perspectives in their own words about their issues in speaking and to provide insight into the context of speaking English at BS level in Pakistan.

### **4. Data Analysis**

Thematic analysis is an appropriate approach/technique to analyze the data collected in this study. This method involves identifying patterns and themes in the data and organizing them into meaningful categories and it allows researchers to develop a rich and nuanced understanding of the experiences and perspectives of participants. By coding, Themes have been defined after conducting interviews. The interviews have been transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis. The results have been obtained through the measurement of frequency.

#### **4.1. Ethics**

Ethical considerations have been taken into account throughout the research process. The study has adhered to ethical principles such as informed consent, confidentiality, and participant well-being. Participants have been informed about the purpose of the study, their

right to withdraw at any time. The researcher has taken an approval from an ethics committee or institutional review board (IRB) before conducting the study.

#### 4.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

The interview questions are prepared to fulfil the aim of the study and for highlighting the issues of EFL learners regarding speaking skills and how they feel during practicing speaking skills. The following interview questions are prepared for the EFL learners:

1. Do you feel confident in your ability to communicate effectively in English?
2. Can you tell me about any specific difficulties or issues you have had with speaking in English?
3. What kind of support do you think would help you improve your speaking skills?
4. Have you noticed any improvement in your speaking skills since starting university?
5. What is the main factor which create hurdle in learning speaking skills?

Respondent 1(English Department):

1. I don't feel very confident in my ability to communicate effectively in English, especially when it comes to speaking.
2. Yes, I have faced a number of difficulties with speaking in English, such as difficulty finding the right words or grammar structures, nervousness about speaking in front of others, and difficulty understanding native speakers.
3. I think having more opportunities to practice speaking with native speakers or fluent speakers of English would be helpful, as well as receiving more feedback and guidance from my professors or language instructors.
4. I have noticed some improvement in my speaking skills since starting university, but I still struggle with certain aspects.
5. One of the main factors that creates a hurdle in learning speaking skills is the lack of exposure to authentic English language environments and native speakers. Additionally, limited opportunities for practice and feedback can also contribute to difficulties in developing speaking proficiency.

#### 4.3. Thematic Analysis of Responses of Interview

**Table 1: Interview based Themes & Sub-themes**

Main Theme	Description	Subthemes
<b>Confidence in Speaking</b>	This theme pertains to the lack of confidence in EFL learners when it comes to speaking in English. Participants expressed their unease and discomfort with speaking in English, which could lead to difficulty in communication.	Fear of making mistakes Poor language instruction Lack of exposure to native speakers  Lack of practice opportunities
<b>Difficulties in Speaking</b>	This theme encompasses the various difficulties that EFL learners face while speaking in English, including finding the right words or grammar nervousness about speaking in front of others, and difficulty understanding native speakers.	Difficulty finding the right words or grammar structures. Lack of vocabulary Pronunciation issues Difficulty understanding native speakers Nervousness about speaking in front of others
<b>Need for Practice and Feedback</b>	This theme highlights the importance of having more opportunities to practice speaking with native speakers or fluent speakers of English and receiving feedback and guidance from professors or language instructors.	More opportunities to practice speaking with native speakers Language exchange programs Access to language resources such as textbooks, videos, and podcasts More feedback and guidance from professors or language instructors
<b>Improvement in Speaking Skills</b>	This theme describes the participants' experiences of	Increased confidence in speaking ability



<b>Factors Hindering Speaking Proficiency</b>	improvement in their speaking skills since starting university, although they still struggle certain aspects.	Ability to understand and communicate with native speakers Better understanding of grammar and vocabulary
	This theme explores the various factors that hinder EFL learners' speaking proficiency, including the lack of exposure to authentic English language environment and native speakers, as well as limited opportunities for practice and feedback.	Lack of exposure to authentic English language environments and native speakers Cultural barriers to speaking confidently in English. Insufficient language instruction and resources Limited opportunities for practice and feedback

Respondent 2(English Department):

1. Do you feel confident in your ability to communicate effectively in English?
  2. Can you tell me about any specific difficulties or issues you have had with speaking in English?
  3. What kind of support do you think would help you improve your speaking skills?
  4. Have you noticed any improvement in your speaking skills since starting university?
  5. What is the main factor which create hurdle in learning speaking skills?
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1. It depends on the situation. Sometimes I feel confident, but other times I struggle to express myself in English.
  2. One difficulty I face is finding the right words to use when I am speaking. I also struggle with pronunciation and grammar at times.
  3. I think having more opportunities to practice speaking in English, such as language exchange programs or conversation clubs, would be helpful. Additionally, feedback from teachers and peers on my speaking skills would be beneficial.
  4. I have noticed some improvement in my speaking skills since starting university. However, it is still a work in progress.
  5. I think the main factor that creates hurdles in learning speaking skills is the lack of opportunities to practice speaking in real-life situations. Also, some students may lack confidence or feel embarrassed to speak in front of others in a language they are still learning.

**Table 2: Interview based Themes & Sub-themes**

Main Theme	Description	Subthemes
<b>Confidence and struggles in speaking English</b>	Highlights the speaker's mixed experiences with speaking English, feeling confident at times and struggling at other times.	<b>Variability in confidence:</b> feeling confident at times, but struggling at other times. <b>Challenges with pronunciation and grammar:</b> finding the right words, pronunciation, and grammar can affect confidence. <b>Self-consciousness:</b> feeling anxious or self-conscious while speaking English
<b>Strategies to improve speaking skills</b>	Proposes practical strategies to improve speaking skills, such as participating in language exchange programs, conversation clubs, and receiving feedback from teachers and peers. This theme emphasizes the importance of active practice and feedback in enhancing speaking skills.	<b>Active practice:</b> engaging in language exchange programs, conversation clubs, or other opportunities to practice speaking <b>Feedback:</b> seeking feedback from teachers and peers on speaking skills <b>Language learning materials:</b> using materials such as books, podcasts, or apps to supplement language practice.
<b>Progress ongoing learning and</b>	Highlights the speaker's progress in speaking skills since starting university, indicating that learning and improvement are ongoing processes. This theme emphasizes the need for consistent effort and practice to develop speaking skills.	<b>Improvement over time:</b> noticing gradual improvement in speaking skills <b>Setbacks and challenges:</b> experiencing setbacks or challenges in language learning. <b>Motivation:</b> maintaining motivation to continue learning and improving speaking skills.

<b>Hurdles in learning speaking skills</b>	Emphasizes the barriers that may hinder the development of speaking skills, such as the lack of opportunities to practice speaking in real-life situations and confidence issues. This theme highlights the importance of creating a supportive and safe learning environment that encourages learners to speak and practice their language skills.	<p><b>Lack of opportunities:</b> not having enough opportunities to practice speaking in real-life situations.</p> <p><b>Confidence issues:</b> feeling embarrassed or lacking confidence while speaking English.</p> <p><b>Fear of making mistakes:</b> worrying about making mistakes while speaking English.</p>
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Respondent 3(Education Department):

1. Do you feel confident in your ability to communicate effectively in English?
  2. Can you tell me about any specific difficulties or issues you have had with speaking in English?
  3. What kind of support do you think would help you improve your speaking skills?
  4. Have you noticed any improvement in your speaking skills since starting university?
  5. What is the main factor which create hurdle in learning speaking skills?
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1. I do not feel very confident in my ability to communicate effectively in English, especially when it comes to speaking.
  2. One of the biggest difficulties I have with speaking in English is not being able to find the right words to express myself. I also struggle with pronunciation and grammar at times.
  3. I believe that having more opportunities to practice speaking English, such as conversation groups or language exchange programs, would be helpful. Additionally, receiving feedback and guidance from teachers or tutors would also be beneficial.
  4. I have noticed some improvement in my speaking skills since starting university, as I have had more exposure to English and opportunities to practice speaking.
  5. The main factor that creates a hurdle in learning speaking skills is the lack of practice opportunities and exposure to native English speakers. Many times, we learn English in a classroom setting without much opportunity to practice in real-life situations. Additionally, the fear of making mistakes and being judged by others can also hinder our progress in speaking.

**Table 3: Interview based Themes & Sub-themes**

Main theme	Description	Subthemes
<b>Confidence in Speaking</b>	Participants expressed a lack of confidence in their ability to communicate effectively in English, particularly in speaking. The fear of making mistakes and being judged by others was identified as a significant barrier to developing fluency and proficiency.	<p><b>Fear of being judged:</b> Participants expressed the fear of making mistakes and being judged by others as a significant barrier to developing fluency and proficiency in speaking.</p> <p><b>Lack of confidence:</b> Participants reported feeling uncertain and lacking confidence when speaking in English, particularly in social situations.</p>
<b>Difficulties in Speaking</b>	Participants identified several difficulties when speaking in English, including finding the right words to express themselves, pronunciation, and grammar.	<p><b>Finding the right words:</b> Participants identified the challenge of finding the right words to express themselves in English, particularly when they were not familiar with a particular vocabulary or phrase.</p> <p><b>Pronunciation:</b> Participants reported difficulty with English pronunciation, particularly with</p>

**Practice and Feedback**

Participants expressed the belief that having more opportunities to practice speaking English, such as conversation groups or language exchange programs, would be helpful. Additionally, receiving feedback and guidance from teachers or tutors was seen as beneficial in improving speaking skills.

**Improvement and Exposure**

Participants reported some improvement in their speaking skills since starting university, as they had more exposure to English and opportunities to practice speaking.

**Lack of Practice Opportunities and Exposure**

Participants identified the lack of practice opportunities and exposure to native English speakers as a significant factor that creates a hurdle in learning speaking skills. Many felt that they learn English in a classroom setting without much opportunity to practice in real-life situations. This lack of exposure and practice opportunities was identified as a significant obstacle to developing fluency and proficiency in speaking.

regard to certain sounds or intonations that were unfamiliar in their native language.

**Grammar:** Participants expressed difficulty with English grammar, particularly with regard to more complex sentence structures and verb tenses.

**Practice opportunities:** Participants identified the need for more opportunities to practice speaking English, particularly in informal settings where they could practice speaking without fear of being judged or making mistakes.

**Feedback and guidance:** Participants reported that feedback and guidance from teachers or tutors was beneficial in helping them to identify areas where they needed improvement and to develop their speaking skills.

**Exposure to English:** Participants reported that exposure to English, particularly through academic settings, had helped them to improve their speaking skills.

**Practice opportunities:** Participants identified the importance of practice opportunities, particularly those that allowed them to practice speaking with native English speakers.

**Classroom learning:** Participants reported that classroom learning, particularly in non-English speaking countries, often did not provide sufficient exposure to real-life situations and native English speakers.

**Fear of making mistakes:** Participants identified the fear of making mistakes and being judged by others as a significant obstacle to practicing speaking English in real-life situations.

**Limited exposure:** Participants reported that limited exposure to English speakers in their daily lives made it difficult to practice speaking and to develop their speaking skills.

Respondent 4(Education department):

1. Do you feel confident in your ability to communicate effectively in English?
2. Can you tell me about any specific difficulties or issues you have had with speaking in English?
3. What kind of support do you think would help you improve your speaking skills?



4. Have you noticed any improvement in your speaking skills since starting university?
  5. What is the main factor which create hurdle in learning speaking skills?
1. No, I don't feel very confident in my ability to communicate effectively in English. I often struggle to find the right words and phrases to express myself properly.
  2. One of the main difficulties I face is pronunciation. I find it hard to pronounce certain sounds and words correctly, which can sometimes make it difficult for others to understand me. I also struggle with grammar and sentence structure at times.
  3. I think more opportunities to practice speaking in English would be helpful, such as conversation groups or language exchange programs. It would also be useful to receive more feedback and guidance from teachers on how to improve my speaking skills.
  4. Yes, I have noticed some improvement in my speaking skills since starting university. I have had more opportunities to speak English in the classroom and with my peers, which has helped me become more comfortable and confident in my ability to speak.
  5. One of the main factors that creates a hurdle in learning speaking skills is the lack of opportunities to practice and use English in real-life situations. Another factor is the focus on rote learning and memorization rather than developing practical communication skills. Additionally, limited exposure to native speakers of English and the lack of resources and support for EFL learners can also create hurdles in learning speaking skills.

**Table 4: Interview based Themes & Sub-themes**

Theme	Description	Subtheme
<b>Lack of Confidence in Speaking English</b>	Participants expressed feeling not very confident in their ability to communicate effectively in English, struggling to find the right words and phrases to express themselves properly.	Struggle to find the right words and phrases to express themselves properly.
<b>Difficulties with Pronunciation, Grammar, and Sentence Structure</b>	Participants identified difficulty with pronunciation of certain sounds and words, as well as struggling with grammar and sentence structure at times.	Difficulty with pronunciation of certain sounds and words. Struggle with grammar and sentence structure at times.
<b>Need for Opportunities to Practice Speaking English</b>	Participants emphasized the importance of having more opportunities to practice speaking English, suggesting conversation groups or language exchange programs, and more feedback and guidance from teachers.	Importance of having more opportunities to practice speaking English. Suggested conversation groups or language exchange programs. Need for more feedback and guidance from teachers.
<b>Improvement in Speaking Skills through Exposure to English in University</b>	Participants noted improvement in their speaking skills since starting university, which was attributed to more opportunities to speak English in the classroom and with peers.	Noted improvement in speaking skills. Attributed improvement to more opportunities to speak English in the classroom and with peers.
<b>Hurdles in Learning Speaking Skills</b>	Participants identified lack of opportunities to practice and use English in real-life situations, focus on rote learning and memorization rather than practical communication skills, limited exposure to native speakers of English, and lack of resources and support for EFL learners as hurdles in learning speaking skills.	Lack of opportunities to practice and use English in real-life situations. Focus on rote learning and memorization rather than practical communication skills. Limited exposure to native speakers of English. Lack of resources and support for EFL learners.

Respondent 5 (Economics department):

1. Do you feel confident in your ability to communicate effectively in English?

2. Can you tell me about any specific difficulties or issues you have had with speaking in English?
  3. What kind of support do you think would help you improve your speaking skills?
  4. Have you noticed any improvement in your speaking skills since starting university?
  5. What is the main factor which create hurdle in learning speaking skills?
1. No, I do not feel confident in my ability to communicate effectively in English. I often struggle to find the right words or phrases to express my thoughts accurately.
  2. Yes, one of the main difficulties I face is pronunciation. Sometimes I struggle to understand native speakers and also to make myself understood clearly. Additionally, I sometimes struggle with grammar and sentence structure.
  3. I think having more opportunities to practice speaking in a supportive environment would help me improve my speaking skills. Perhaps a conversation club or language exchange program would be beneficial.
  4. I have noticed some improvement in my speaking skills since starting university, but it has been a slow process. I think it is important to continue practicing and seeking out opportunities to improve.
  5. In my opinion, the main factor that creates a hurdle in learning speaking skills is the lack of opportunities to practice speaking in an authentic context. Many EFL learners in Pakistan do not have access to native speakers or opportunities to practice speaking outside of the classroom, which can hinder their progress in speaking. Additionally, some learners may feel self-conscious or afraid of making mistakes, which can also be a barrier to speaking confidently.

**Table 5: Interview based Themes & Sub-themes**

Theme	Description	Subthemes
<b>Limited Confidence in Speaking English</b>	Many interviewees expressed a lack of confidence in their ability to communicate effectively in English, particularly when speaking. They mentioned feeling self-conscious and judged by others, which hindered their fluency and proficiency.	Struggle in finding the right words or phrases to express thoughts accurately Difficulty in communicating effectively in English Difficulty in understanding native speakers
<b>Pronunciation, Grammar, and Sentence Structure</b>	Interviewees highlighted several difficulties related to pronunciation, grammar, and sentence structure, which hindered their ability to communicate effectively in English.	Struggle in making oneself understood clearly Pronunciation as a major hurdle Difficulty with grammar and sentence structure Supportive environment necessary for improvement
<b>Need for More Opportunities to Practice</b>	Interviewees expressed the need for more opportunities to practice speaking English in a supportive environment.	Benefits of a conversation club or language exchange program Notable improvement since starting university
<b>Slow Improvement</b>	Interviewees reported some improvement in their speaking skills since starting to learn English, but acknowledged that it was a slow process.	Importance of continuing to practice Seeking out opportunities to improve Difficulty in accessing native speakers
<b>Lack of Opportunities for Authentic Practice</b>	Interviewees identified the lack of opportunities for authentic practice as a significant barrier to developing fluency and proficiency in speaking English.	Need for authentic context for speaking practice. Self-consciousness and fear of making mistakes hindering progress in speaking

Respondent 6 (Economics department):

1. Do you feel confident in your ability to communicate effectively in English?
2. Can you tell me about any specific difficulties or issues you have had with speaking in English?
3. What kind of support do you think would help you improve your speaking skills?
4. Have you noticed any improvement in your speaking skills since starting university?
5. What is the main factor which create hurdle in learning speaking skills?

1. I don't feel confident in my ability to communicate effectively in English because I struggle with grammar and pronunciation.
2. One specific difficulty I have had is being unable to express myself accurately in English because I often translate directly from my native language.
3. I think additional speaking practice and feedback from teachers would help me improve my speaking skills.
4. Yes, I have noticed some improvement in my speaking skills since starting university, but I still have a long way to go.
5. The main factor that creates a hurdle in learning speaking skills is the lack of opportunities for practice and feedback. Additionally, the fear of making mistakes and being judged by others can also be a barrier to learning.

**Table 6: Interview based Themes & Sub-themes**

Theme	Description	Subthemes
<b>Confidence and Proficiency in Speaking</b>	Participants expressed a lack of confidence in their ability to communicate effectively in English, which was mainly attributed to difficulties with grammar and pronunciation. They acknowledged that these struggles hinder their ability to express themselves accurately and fluently.	Struggle with grammar and pronunciation
<b>Translating from Native Language</b>	Participants identified that one specific difficulty they have faced is translating directly from their native language, which can result in inaccurate expressions and miscommunication.	Direct translation from native language as a specific difficulty
<b>Need for Additional Speaking Practice and Feedback</b>	Participants recognized that additional speaking practice and feedback from teachers could be beneficial in improving their speaking skills. They expressed a desire for more opportunities to practice speaking in a supportive environment and receive guidance on their weaknesses.	Importance of feedback from teachers to improve speaking skills
<b>Slow Improvement</b>	While some participants reported noticing some improvement in their speaking skills since starting university, they still felt that they had a long way to go to achieve fluency and proficiency.	Notable improvement since starting university Recognition of still having a long way to go in improving speaking skills The importance of practice and feedback for improving speaking skills
<b>Lack of Opportunities for Practice and Feedback</b>	Participants identified the lack of opportunities for practice and feedback as a significant factor that creates a hurdle in learning speaking skills. They expressed frustration with the limited opportunities to practice speaking outside of the classroom and the lack of feedback and guidance from teachers.	Fear of making mistakes and being judged as a barrier to learning speaking skills The lack of practice

opportunities as a significant factor hindering the learning process

**Table 6: Issues**

<b>Issues</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%age</b>
struggle with grammar, Vocabulary & Pronunciation	15	24
lack of exposure and opportunities to speak	24	39
direct translation from native language	6	10
improvement over the time	3	5
lack of guidance and motivation	2	3
Fear & Confidence	12	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>100</b>

## 5. Discussion

The first issue listed in the table is "struggle with grammar, Vocabulary & Pronunciation," which was cited by 15 respondents and represents 24% of the total responses. This suggests that many individuals who are learning a new language may have difficulty with basic language skills, such as understanding and using proper grammar, expanding their vocabulary, and pronouncing words correctly.

The following are suggestions for addressing the aforementioned issue and improving language learning outcomes.

- Utilize online resources and apps that can help language learners improve their grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation skills.
- Engage in conversation with native speakers to practice using the language in a natural setting.
- Use language learning software or hire a tutor to provide targeted feedback on areas where the learner is struggling.

The second issue listed is "lack of exposure and opportunities to speak," which was cited by 24 respondents and represents 39% of the total responses. This indicates that many language learners may not have sufficient opportunities to practice speaking, listening, reading, and writing in the language they are learning. This lack of exposure can make it difficult for learners to become comfortable with the language and to develop their language skills.

The following are suggestions for addressing the aforementioned issue and improving language learning outcomes.

- Lack of exposure and opportunities to speak:
- Seek out language exchange programs or language learning communities where learners can practice speaking with others.
- Look for opportunities to travel to countries where the language is spoken to immerse oneself in the language and culture.
- Listen to music, watch movies, or read books in the target language to increase exposure to the language.

The third issue listed is "Fear & confidence," which was cited by 12 respondents and represents 19% of the total responses. This suggests that many language learners may struggle with anxiety and self-doubt as they attempt to learn a new language, which can make it more difficult for them to practice and use the language.

The following are suggestions for addressing the aforementioned issue and improving language learning outcomes.

- Encourage learners to set achievable goals for themselves and celebrate their successes along the way.
- Use positive reinforcement to help learners build confidence and overcome their fears.
- Provide a supportive environment where learners can make mistakes and learn from them.

The fourth issue listed is "direct translation from native language," which was cited by 6 respondents and represents 10% of the total responses. This indicates that some language learners may rely too heavily on translating words and phrases directly from their native language, which can make it more difficult for them to understand the nuances and complexities of the language they are learning.

The following are suggestions for addressing the aforementioned issue and improving language learning outcomes.

- Encourage learners to think in the target language rather than translating directly from their native language.
- Focus on learning the nuances and idiomatic expressions of the target language to avoid relying on direct translations.
- Use visuals, actions, or other cues to help learners associate words and phrases with their meaning in the target language.

The fifth issue listed is "improvement over time," which was cited by 3 respondents and represents 5% of the total responses. This suggests that some language learners may become discouraged if they do not see rapid improvement in their language skills, which can make it more difficult for them to stay motivated and committed to the learning process.

The following are suggestions for addressing the aforementioned issue and improving language learning outcomes.

- Set realistic expectations for language learners and remind them that progress takes time.
- Celebrate small successes along the way to help learners stay motivated.
- Provide a variety of learning activities to keep learners engaged and interested in the language.

The sixth and final issue listed is "lack of guidance and motivation," which was cited by 2 respondents and represents 3% of the total responses. This indicates that some language learners may struggle with a lack of support, guidance, or encouragement from teachers, tutors, or other language learners, which can make it more difficult for them to stay motivated and committed to their language learning goals.

The following are suggestions for addressing the aforementioned issue and improving language learning outcomes.

- Provide learners with regular feedback and support to help them stay on track with their learning goals.
- Use positive reinforcement to encourage learners to continue working towards their goals.
- Foster a sense of community among learners by providing opportunities for them to connect with other language learners and native speakers.

## **6. Conclusion**

The analysis of the present study suggests that language learners may face a variety of challenges as they attempt to learn a new language. These challenges may be related to basic language skills, such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, or they may be related to more psychological factors, such as anxiety, self-doubt, and motivation. The analysis highlights the importance of providing language learners with ample opportunities to practice and use the language they are learning, as well as providing them with support and encouragement to help them stay motivated and committed to their learning goals.

In general, it is important to approach language learning as a process rather than a one-time achievement. Encouraging learners to stay motivated and engaged throughout the learning process will help them build confidence and achieve success over time.

It is recommended that the aforementioned strategies be implemented to support students and evaluate their efficacy. Additionally, further research should be conducted from the perspective of teachers to gain insight into the challenges faced by EFL instructors and learners.

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