



## Factors Influencing Speaking and Listening Skills of ESL Learners at University Level in Sindh

Zaheer Ahmed Bango<sup>1</sup>, Saleemullah Channa<sup>2</sup>, Paras Niaz<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Department English, Government of Atta Hussain Shah Degree College Rohri, Pakistan.  
Email: zaheer.lec@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup> Ph.D. Scholar/ Assistant Professor, GC University Hyderabad/College Education Department Government of Sindh, Pakistan. Email: saleemchanna2222@gmail.com

<sup>3</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of English Language & Literature, Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur Mir's Sindh, Pakistan. Email: parasniazz@gmail.com

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present research was to investigate the factors impacting the speaking and listening of ESL learners at the university level in Sindh, Pakistan. The study utilized both qualitative and quantitative research methods, targeting ESL learners from twenty universities across various districts in Sindh, including Larkana, Khairpur, Jamshoro, and Karachi. Through the survey technique, the researchers distributed an online questionnaire with seven closed-ended and two open-ended questions to 360 research participants of both genders via Email and WhatsApp for data collection. The data was then analyzed using frequency and thematic approaches and presented in tables and respectively appendices A, B, and C, which cover demography, quantitative questions, and qualitative results. The results indicate that vocabulary, class environment, cultural influence, motivation and confidence, and cognitive processing are significant factors influencing speaking and listening skills of ESL learners. Additionally, the research proposes practical and dynamic solutions to address the challenges affecting the speaking and listening skills of ESL learners which are valuable for decision-makers in the academic sector, individuals, teachers, and other stakeholders.

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Corresponding Author's Email: zaheer.lec@gmail.com

## 1. Introduction

The English language, spoken and written globally, serves as an international medium of communication. In the modern era, proficiency in English is central for accessing best opportunities for success. Consequently, numerous individuals strive to acquire proficiency in English to ensure promising prospects in their future careers. English is taught worldwide, and individuals in non-English-speaking countries, particularly EFL/ESL students, are engaged in learning English as a non-native language. Some hypotheses related to active consolidative listening's learnings propose that speaking and listening skills hold an equal level of importance in communication. Listening becomes a feasible mode of action during ordinary communication between individuals. The feasibility of speaking is evaluated based on the listening model, emphasizing the effectiveness of listening (S. Maitlo, Soomro, & Lashari, 2023). According to Alam and Bashir Uddin (2013), communication is about sharing ideas through speaking or writing. It's like a 'learning by doing' approach where both teachers and students are active. Speaking is about expressing you, and it's crucial for daily life and learning. Kurita (2012) says students from different backgrounds are learning English at school, but they mostly speak their native language in their daily lives. They don't use English much, which makes it hard for them to get better at speaking and listening. Asmari (2015) found that many students struggle with speaking and listening in English because of problems like not having good study plans, using ineffective learning strategies, having not-so-good

learning environments, and lacking motivation. All these things make it tough for students to become good at English. The essential skills of speaking and listening take precedence in the process of learning the English language. Unfortunately, in the Pakistani context, these foundational skills are frequently overlooked by students and receive less emphasis from teachers (S. Maitlo, Soomro, et al., 2023).

### **1.1. Speaking & listening skills**

Speaking skill is the ability to express thoughts and information clearly using spoken words. It includes using the right words, pronunciation, and tone to communicate effectively in conversations and convey messages. Proficient speaking involves expressing oneself smoothly, persuasively, and with awareness of cultural differences. This skill is crucial for effective communication in both social and professional situations (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017; Maryanti, Gani, & Marhaban, 2021). The listening skill is a mental process shaped by one's environment, developing through communication with others in society. It goes beyond just hearing words and includes understanding images and emotions connected to those words, especially in activities related to speaking and listening in English. This is described as a natural process involving two communication roles, the Sender (S) and Receiver (R) (Hussain, Khan, & Yousafzai, 2022; Sonmez, 2019; Zhang, 2015).

### **1.2. Significance**

This study holds importance for English Language Learners (ESL) as it helps them understand the widespread use of English as a global language, employed universally and mandated in Pakistan's educational institutions. The significance of English as a means of communication is undeniable. Despite its importance, many students struggle with learning English. This research seeks to support university students who face challenges in acquiring English speaking and listening skills by identifying the factors that hinder their progress. To overcome these challenges, many students enroll in different institutions providing English language education. The present study aims to guide individuals in choosing the most suitable institution for ESL learning, helping them achieve their educational goals (S. Maitlo, Tumrani, & Farhat, 2023).

### **1.3. Problem Statement**

S. Maitlo, Tumrani, et al. (2023) the challenges and intricacies within the educational sector in Pakistan have longstanding roots, dating back to the country's establishment in 1947. The nation inherited a deficient education system at its inception, and regrettably, these issues persist even 75 years later. Previous administrations have not adequately addressed the concerns within the education sector. However, there have been some recent developments and researches conducted in the current era. Researchers have actively conducted studies in this domain, shedding light on the existing problems. This study addresses a critical problem concerning the speaking and listening skills of ESL learners at university level in Sindh province. Despite English being a significant component of the academic curriculum, learners face substantial challenges in developing proficient speaking and listening abilities. This research aims to identify, analyze, and provide insights into these factors to offer targeted recommendations for enhancing the speaking and listening skills of English language learners in the university setting in Sindh.

### **1.4. Objectives**

- To investigate the impact of deficient listening skill on English language learners at university level in Sindh, Pakistan.
- To examine the consequences of inadequate speaking skills on ESL learners at university level in Sindh, Pakistan.

### **1.5. Delimitation**

This study is limited to ESL learners at the university level in Sindh, excluding learners at other educational levels. The geographic scope is confined to institutions within the universities. The study focuses specifically on the speaking and listening skills of English language learners and do not touch reading and writing skills. The sample size is restricted, and the findings may not be representative of the entire population of English language learners in Sindh's university settings. The researcher has involved only 200 participants to move in-depth to receive reliable results. Additionally, this study does not comprehensively

cover all possible pedagogical approaches used in English language teaching at the university level but explores only speaking and listening skills comprehensively.

## **2. Literature Review**

"Review of the literature summarize and evaluate the text of writing of the definite theme, and provide frame work to think about the possible consequence of innovative study" (Ahmad, Rao, & Rao, 2023). The primary aim of reviewing the literature is not only to present available evidence pertaining to a specific topic but also to present insights from prior studies related to the current research. It emphasizes the significance of the current research in relation to previous studies (Cheema, Maitlo, Ahmad, & Jalbani, 2023; Jeevan, Maitlo, & Jalbani, 2023; S. Maitlo, Soomro, et al., 2023). Several hypotheses on active speaking and listening learning emphasize the equilibrium of speaking and listening in communication. In the ordinary exchange of ideas between individuals, listening becomes a viable means of action. The speaking aspect is evaluated by applying a listening model, valuing listening's effectiveness, and implementing advanced goals in listening actions for comprehend capability of listener in relation to speaker. Liu, (2015) identifies 3 points in listening-comprehension as "perceptual processing", analysis, and utilization. Initially, listener utilize his linguistic information to grasp the meanings of new words, storing these temporarily in their short terms' memories. Subsequently, he compares these words with his existing contextual facts to solidify of the listening's procedure. For novice learner, a heightened focus on language details is evident, whereas listeners with advanced language proficiency may seamlessly integrate these processes and channel their efforts into understanding the pertinent situations.

Gu (2018) has explored theories related to teaching and learning listening skills. Gu emphasizes that "Listening comprehension is not a passive process of simply receiving incoming data. It creates meaning in a multilevel and collaborative way." Weimer's (2013) learner-centered teaching (LCT) theory promotes an approach where learners tackle challenging tasks. LCT involves explicit instruction in learning skills and utilizes collaboration to engage students in the learning process. In the LCT classroom, students are empowered with some control over their learning, fostering reflection and addressing what they are learning. This approach creates a learning community where both students and the teachers share their agendas of learning. Those learners showing cognition, metacognitive, and communal approaches for listening's performs better. The LCT theory aligns with the current research, suggesting that when learner is trained in a collaborative and low-pressure learnings atmosphere, they are more likely to enhance these fundamental skills. In this context, the role of the teachers is as facilitators. Therefore, this study was formed to discuss the illustrations regarding speaking and listening skills of ESL learner.

### **2.1. English Speaking Ability and Issues**

According to Derakhshan and Arabmofrad (2018) numerous language practices encompass not only one but multiple language skills. Language skills are regarded as fundamental in learning second language (L2) classes. Consequently, experts should establish a clear approach that delineates specific aspects of each language skill in their teaching methods. Manurung (2020), highlighted that speaking is a crucial skill that requires continuous improvement for effective communication. Mastering speaking is often considered a challenging aspect of language learning, with many learners struggling to convey messages in the target language. They frequently encounter difficulties expressing themselves clearly for communicative purposes, leading some to refrain from speaking due to mental blocks or difficulties finding the right words and expressions (S. Maitlo, Tumrani, et al., 2023). In today's media and mass communication-driven world, individuals with a strong command of the English language are in demand. This emphasizes the necessity of focusing on key components of the target language, particularly speaking and listening skills (Lashari & Umrani, 2023).

### **2.2. Speaking & Listening Barriers**

Bidelman and Howell (2016) pointed out factors like inhibition, lack of information, and reliance on the primary language that can contribute to poor speaking skills. Additionally, students express concerns about being unable to come up with ideas and a lack of motivation to communicate. Some students admit they feel they have nothing to convey, possibly because the teacher chose a topic that is not suitable or about which they know very little. They may have limited thoughts about what to say, which language to use, or how to use

grammar correctly. Consequently, a few challenges arise, including frustration, as discussed by (Kim, 2016). Frustration is a common and temporary emotion in the learning process, and overcoming it is a normal part of the learning journey. Lack of Interest: suggests that while most issues can be effectively addressed through simple solutions, a genuine lack of direction or interest stems from within the learner. Whether a learner eventually moves to an English-speaking nation or travels globally, establishing meaningful connections with new people becomes easier, fostering deep relationships.

**Listening Aptitude:** According to Leong and Ahmadi (2017), listening plays a crucial role in everyday communication and educational processes. Their study focuses on six key aspects: firstly, the significance of meaning during conversation; secondly, an evaluation of the process of listening knowledge and techniques of listening perception; thirdly, an assessment of issues related to understanding during listening; fourthly, demonstrating strategies for improvement and advancement in the study; fifthly, presenting findings from the researcher's analysis of listening exercises; and sixthly, discussing general principles in teaching listening perception. In this context, English speaking and listening hold significant importance in the factors influencing the acquisition of a second language (L2) (Lashari, Mashori, Abbasi, & Talpur, 2018). It is crucial to identify obstacles and establish effective measures for learning and comprehending the fundamental elements of language. Specifically, practicing listening is vital and contributes to achieving the primary goal of effective communication in open and live discussions. This practice enhances confidence and facilitates a deeper and broader understanding of the language. According to Frank (2000), listeners face various barriers and shifts in the act of listening. They analyze speakers and identify obstacles in the context of speaking and listening, such as selective listening. Selective listening can be influenced by two factors: notions about different speakers and preconceptions about what has been said.

### **3. Methodology**

"Research methodology is the part of the research study in which researchers give an account of the research methods, which they have used to conduct their research" (Ahmad et al., 2023). Research investigations can serve various purposes, and researchers have the flexibility of conducting these by using diverse procedures based on chosen method. One approach to research is the qualitative method, wherein the participants respond the questionnaire to the interviewer. This procedure is particularly geared towards exploring specific populations, namely those individuals who are the central focus of the research (S. Maitlo, Soomro, et al., 2023). The current research investigation, a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches was used by the researchers to gather data from the selected sample and avoid to get categorical results. "The population is defined as a set of individuals, data, or items from which a statistical sample is taken" (Younus, Farhat, & Ahmad, 2023). This study took place in twenty universities of different districts and divisions in Sindh, Pakistan. The researcher engaged with 360 students of different universities, posing questions through email and watsapp. The questionnaire comprises of seven closed ended 5-point Likert scale agree, strongly agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree and two open-ended questions served as the primary research tool and was structured into three sections. Part A captured demographic details of participants, including gender, and location, analyzed through frequency analysis in tables. Part B comprised seven closed-ended questions, while Part C featured two open-ended questions. S. K. Maitlo, Ahmad, Ali, and Soomro utilized a similar questionnaire format in their study. The present data was collected from 360 participants. Present study was conducted at Shah Abdul Latif University, Mehran University Campus, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Technical University, Agriculture University Campus in Khairpur, ZABIST, Sindh University Campus Larkana, DHA Suffa University, Greenwich University, University of Karachi, Sindh Madressatul Islam University, Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology, Ziauddin University, Benazir Bhutto Shaheed University, Nazeer Hussain University, Bahria University Karachi campus, Iqra University, Mohammad Ali Jinnah University, National Textile University Karachi Campus, Institute of Business Management, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi.

### **4. Results**

Ahmad et al. (2023) for their research used sample size of 360 participants, similarly in the present study sample size is selected to get better results. Seven closed ended questions were served to collect quantitative data and for qualitative data, interviews served as the

primary method for gathering data, focusing on understanding the factors influencing the speaking and listening skills of ESL learners at the university level in Sindh, Pakistan. The researchers conducted interviews with various students from different universities to collect relevant data. Specifically tailored for second language speakers, these open-ended interviews were designed to elicit in-depth responses. The collected data experienced analysis and presentation using tables. The interviews, which included two open-ended questions, were managed to individuals with English as their second language (L2 speakers).

#### 4.1. Appendix-A Demographic Information

The demographic particulars of the study participants, including their gender and location, are portrayed in Table One below.

**Table 1: Gender and Location of the Participants**

Gender/Locality	Participants/Area	Numbers	Percentage	Total
<b>Gender</b>	Male	180	50%	Total 360/ (100%) students participated in research.
	Female	180	50%	
<b>Location</b>	Urban	210	58%	
	Rural	150	42%	

Table one above illustrates that the research study involved a total of 360 selected ESL university students, constituting 100%. Among these participants, 180 (50%) were male, and 180 (50%) were female. These research providers originated from various locations across Sindh, Pakistan, with 210 (58%) belonging to urban areas and 150 (42%) to rural areas.

#### 4.2. Appendix-B Quantitative Results

The abstracts were extracted from the feedback provided by participants in the research, specifically university students in Sindh, Pakistan. Both the favorable and unfavorable aspects of both categories of institutions are emphasized the responses of the students regarding speaking and listening skill of ESL learners through 5-point Likert scale.

**Table 2: What do you think cultural differences significantly impact the speaking and listening skills of ESL learners?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	90	105.9%	105.9%	105.9%
	Agree	210	247.1%	247.1%	352.9%
	Neutral	30	35.3%	35.3%	388.2%
	Disagree	20	23.5%	23.5%	411.8%
	Strongly disagree	10	11.8%	11.8%	424%
	Total	360	424%	100%	100%

The table shows that student' responses regarding the cultural differences impacting the speaking and listening skills of ESL learners. 105.9% strongly agree, 247.1% agree, 35.3% remain neutral, 23.5% disagree with the statement, and 11.8% express strong disagreement.

**Table 2: To what extent do classroom environments contribute to the development of speaking and listening skills among ESL learners?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	110	129.4%	129.4%	129.4%
	Agree	225	264.7%	264.7%	394.1%
	Neutral	15	17.6%	17.6%	411.8%
	Disagree	7	8.2%	8.2%	420.0%
	Strongly disagree	3	3.5%	3.5%	424%
	Total	360	424%	100%	100%

The table shows that student' responses regarding classroom environments contribute to the development of speaking and listening skills among ESL learners. 129.4% strongly agree, 264.7% agrees, 17.6% remain neutral, 8.2% disagree with the statement, and 3.5% express strong disagreement.

**Table 3: Are ESL learners more influenced by peer interactions or teacher feedback when it comes to improving their speaking and listening abilities at the university level?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	130	152.9%	152.9%	152.9%
	Agree	200	235.3%	235.3%	388.2%
	Neutral	5	5.9%	5.9%	394.1%
	Disagree	15	17.6%	17.6%	411.8%
	Strongly disagree	10	11.8%	11.8%	424%
	Total	360	424%	100%	100%

The table shows that student' responses regarding ESL learners more influenced by peer interactions or teacher feedback when it comes to improving their speaking and listening abilities at the university level. 152.9% strongly agree 235.3% agrees, 5.9% remain neutral, 17.6% disagree with the statement, and 11.8% express strong disagreement.

**Table 4: Are there specific teaching methodologies that prove more effective in fostering speaking and listening skills in ESL learners?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	70	82.4%	82.4%	82.4%
	Agree	230	270.6%	270.6%	352.9%
	Neutral	23	27.1%	27.1%	380.0%
	Disagree	22	25.9%	25.9%	405.9%
	Strongly disagree	15	17.6%	17.6%	424%
	Total	360	424%	100%	100%

The table shows that student' responses regarding specific teaching methodologies that prove more effective in fostering speaking and listening skills in ESL learners. 82.4% strongly agree 270.6% agrees, 27.1% remain neutral, 25.9% disagree with the statement, and 17.6% express strong disagreement.

**Table 5: Do extracurricular activities, such as language conversation groups, presentations significantly contribute to the development of speaking and listening skills?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	56	65.9%	65.9%	65.9%
	Agree	244	287.1%	287.1%	352.9%
	Neutral	23	27.1%	27.1%	380.0%
	Disagree	30	35.3%	35.3%	415.3%
	Strongly disagree	7	8.2%	8.2%	424%
	Total	360	424%	100%	100%

The table shows that student' responses regarding extracurricular activities, such as language conversation groups, presentations significantly contribute to the development of speaking and listening skills. 65.9% strongly agree 287.1% agrees, 27.1% remain neutral, 35.3% disagree with the statement, and 8.2% express strong disagreement.

**Table 6: Are there any socio-cultural factors that influence the speaking and listening skills of ESL learners?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	88	103.5%	103.5%	103.5%
	Agree	220	258.8%	258.8%	362.4%
	Neutral	32	37.6%	37.6%	400.0%
	Disagree	20	23.5%	23.5%	423.5%
	Strongly disagree	10	11.8%	11.8%	435%
	Total	360	424%	100%	100%

The table shows that student' responses regarding socio-cultural factors that influence the speaking and listening skills of ESL learners. 103.5% strongly agree 258.8% agrees, 37.6% remain neutral, 23.5% disagree with the statement, and 11.8% express strong disagreement.

**Table 7: How do individual motivation and self-confidence impact the speaking and listening proficiency of ESL learners in a university environment?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	110	129.4%	129.4%	129.4%
	Agree	230	270.6%	270.6%	400.0%
	Neutral	3	3.5%	3.5%	403.5%
	Disagree	13	15.3%	15.3%	418.8%
	Strongly disagree	4	4.7%	4.7%	424%
	Total	360	424%	100%	100%

The table shows that student' responses regarding individual motivation and self-confidence impact the speaking and listening proficiency of ESL learners in a university environment. 129.4% strongly agree 270.6% agrees, 3.5% remain neutral, 15.3% disagree with the statement, and 4.7% express strong disagreement.

**4.3. Appendix: C: Qualitative Results**

To address the first research question, participants were provoked to eloquent the difficulties, they encountered in speaking and listening skills through two open-ended questions presented in section C of the questionnaire.

**Table 8: Issues extracted in learning English language speaking and listening skills**

Extracted From Candidates' Responses	Codes	Minor Themes	Major Theme
Deficiency of speaking fluency.	Speaking	First Language	Factors Affecting Speaking & Listening skills
Deficiency of listening effortlessness.	Listening	factor	
Incorrect pronunciation.	Phonological		
Lack of self-confidence. Linguistic matters.	Confidence Practices	Vocabulary factor	
The lack of language classroom atmosphere.	collaborative activities	Environment factor	
Cross-cultural Influence.	Influence of local languages	Cultural factor	
Absence of language repetition.	Discussion	Motivation and Confidence	
Lack of integrating language lab.	Constructive feedback	Cognitive Processing	

The students were asked with discussing their encounters issues and factors. The respondents proposed above common challenges encountered by university students in speaking and listening skills. The table above present's findings indicating that ESL students speaking and listening practice influenced by above deficiencies. It is also crucial to manage errors, foster self-assurance, and the students' responses are summarized in the table above. These responses guide us in identifying key factors, and challenges that hold significance in ESL learning.

**Table 9: Suggestions to improve English language speaking and listening skills**

Extracted from candidates' responses	Theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular speaking and listening practice sessions.</li> <li>Incorporate language learning applications.</li> <li>Interactive Classroom Activities.</li> <li>Group discussions and collaborative projects.</li> <li>Offer constructive feedback on pronunciation, grammar, and communication skills.</li> </ul>	Suggestions for improving Speaking & Listening skills.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate language exchange partnerships.</li> <li>Integrate role-playing exercises to simulate real-life scenarios.</li> <li>Utilize multimedia resources, such as videos, audiobooks.</li> <li>Integrate cultural awareness programs to enhance understanding and appreciation of diverse communication styles.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach and promote active listening strategies.</li> <li>Provide Real-World Contexts.</li> <li>Create opportunities for learners to apply their language skills in real-world contexts, such as community events or service projects, to reinforce practical application.</li> </ul>	

The students were tasked with discussing their encounters and proposing suggestions to common challenges encountered by university students in speaking and listening skills. The table above presents findings indicating that a majority of ESL students endorse that individuals engage in speaking and listening practice. Attending presentations, speeches,

seminars, and communicating in English are essential for building confidence. It is also crucial to manage errors, foster self-assurance, and the students' responses are summarized in the table above. These responses guide us in identifying key factors, solutions, and challenges that hold significance in ESL learning.

## **5. Findings**

The data findings reveal that students are encountering difficulties in acquiring speaking and listening skills and express a need for improvement 2<sup>nd</sup> language, socio-cultural factor, class-room factor, environmental factor, motivation and peer-review feedback factor in these areas. Participants pointed out that overcoming mother tongue influence and the use of regional languages would enhance their speaking and listening skills. The local environment was mentioned as not being supportive of students in this regard. Given that English is not their innate language, these ESL students express curiosity and a desire to speak it fluently but face challenges due to the mentioned issues. Another factor highlighted is the lack of opportunities for students to speak and communicate in English, particularly in the classroom. Additionally, the organization of schools was identified as a barrier, with institutions not actively supporting students in delivering presentations to emphasize the learning of the English language. The researcher concluded that the collected data aligns with the specific requirements and expectations of the study.

## **6. Discussion**

In the education system of Pakistan, particularly in public sectors, there is common tendency to overlook the speaking and listening skills in ESL learning. These learners often engage in monotonous learning methods that prove ineffective. Despite studying English as a mandatory subject for sixteen years, students frequently struggle to speak and comprehend English proficiently. This challenge extends beyond academically weaker students to include high-achieving ones. The teaching-learning process lacks practical application, contrary to the recommended emphasis on both theory and practice in Pakistani educational policies. Consequently, ESL (English as a Second Language) classrooms often lack meaningful activities to reinforce speaking and listening skills of ESL learner. They acknowledge the significance of English as the global official language and recognize its importance for everyone to acquire. However, due to a lack of resources, the education system tends to neglect this aspect. Students are often instructed merely to pass exams and meet minimum qualification standards, whether achieving high or average scores. Unfortunately, educational authorities and stakeholders prioritize the reputation of institutions over ensuring that students genuinely grasp subjects and relevant skills.

A well-organized team of educators could redirect students' focus towards learning for a brighter future, emphasizing English speaking and listening skills. The pivotal factor hindering students progress in speaking is the insufficient improvement of speaking and listening skills, crucial for pursuing job opportunities abroad. The root causes of these issues include under qualified teachers, a flawed preparation system and evaluation structure, inadequate feedback, classroom environment, less qualified instructors, the use of Urdu and Sindhi languages alongside English, and a lack of emphasis on grammar. To cope with these challenges, students are compelled to enroll in costly language proficiency tests like IELTS and TOEFL. This study concludes that students' speaking and listening skill suffer at university levels, posing a significant obstacle to securing good job opportunities. A recommended solution involves collaborative efforts between the government and institutions to implement policies that establish language labs within educational institutions. These labs would provide specialized classes where students can focus on enhancing their speaking and listening skills. Additionally, language specialists, similar to those for other subjects, should be appointed to ensure proper instruction and monitor student performance. This approach offers a practical means to instill confidence and intellectual acumen in students striving to improve their English speaking and listening skills.

## **7. Conclusion**

The current study focused on investigating the factors contributing to the less-than-ideal speaking and listening skills of university learners in Sindh, Pakistan. The study concludes that the proficiency of speaking and listening in a ESL learnings situation is significantly influenced by various highlighted factors, posing challenges for learners. The



gathered data indicates that comprehension of listening skills relies on the speaker's ability to infer meaning from the communication. Firstly, possessing prior knowledge about the context of the communication is crucial for understanding listening skills. Secondly, speaking proficiency is positively correlated with effective communication. In this study, when affective factors were examined in relation to speaking and listening, first language factor, socio-cultural factor, class-room factor, environmental factor, motivation and peer-review feedback factor emerged as the most critical aspects. Furthermore, equally extrinsic learning factors and habit of study demonstrated substantial relationship with speaking and listening skills.

### 7.1. Recommendations

- The communication plays a crucial role in effectively engaging with and understanding a second language. Students have the opportunity to enhance their second language vocabulary and pronunciation skills through structured guidance and they can refine their listening abilities by immersing themselves in various media talk shows, and speeches.
- Implement regular and comprehensive assessments specifically focused on speaking and listening skills to measure individual progress.
- Provide constructive and detailed feedback to students, highlighting areas of improvement and offering tailored suggestions for enhancing their language proficiency.
- It is recommended that students regularly practice both speaking and listening skills. Guidance should be provided on understanding how communication is constructed at the sentence level, aiding in comprehending passages and entire conversations.
- Encourage ongoing research on effective pedagogical approaches for improving speaking and listening skills among ESL learners, and use the findings to continuously refine language education programs
- Students should be encouraged to cultivate their knowledge through discussions. Teachers can leverage life experiences and organized speaking and listening activities.
- The inclusion of language laboratories, dedicated teachers, a well-structured curriculum, and audio-video tablets can create an environment conducive to improving students' proficiency in spoken and listened English. These resources allow students to refine their language skills, grasp the nuances of accent, and enhance pronunciation based on native speaker models.

By implementing these recommendations, universities in Sindh can contribute significantly to the enhancement of speaking and listening skills among ESL learners, preparing them for effective communication in both academic and real-world contexts.

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