CAUSES AND STRATEGIES TO COPE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SPEAKING ANXIETY IN PAKISTANI UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Syed Qaiser Hussain[1*], Naeem Akhtar[2], Nida Shabbir[3], Nazia Aslam[4], Samra Arshad[5]
[1*,2]Assistant Professor, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology, Karachi, Pakistan; [3]Lecturer, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology, Karachi, Pakistan; [4]Lecturer, Turbat University Baluchistan, Pakistan; [5]Cuuriculum Advisor, Pearson Education Canada, Canada.
Email: [1*]toqaiser@gmail.com, [2]dr.naeem@szabist.edu.pk, [3]ndshabbir@gmail.com, [4]educationalachievement31@gmail.com, [5]symraarshad@hotmail.com

Abstract

Purpose of the study: This study aims to explore the possible causes of speaking anxiety among Pakistani university students in an engineering university in Karachi. Another aim of this study is to find out the strategies used by these students to cope with the anxiety they have while speaking English as a second or foreign language.

Methodology: The research was qualitative and used an open-ended questionnaire to take the detailed responses of the participants. 80 (40 males and 40 females) participants were selected for this study using the purposive sampling technique. The researchers also translated the tool into the Urdu language to make it more intelligible for the participants.

Main Findings: The causes of speaking anxiety were lack of confidence, vocabulary, fear of being ridiculed, peer pressure, facing a lot of people, rules of grammar, lack of preparation, fear of making mistakes, and negative attitude of the teacher and the coping strategies were avoiding the audience, taking help from teacher or peer, preparing well, taking deep breaths, facilitating anxiety, distracting the anxiety, self-talk/praise, restarting, physical movement, using humor and maintaining eye contact with only one person.

Applications of this study: This study is useful for the teachers teaching courses related to speaking English as a second or foreign language. This study will help the teachers in tracing the explored elements of anxiety in a class in general and in a student in particular. They will try to mold their pedagogy to make the learning process more enjoyable and less anxious.

Novelty/Originality of this study: The current study explores the elements of speaking anxiety in the Pakistani context. Earlier studies have implemented pre-invented tools rather than unearthing the anxiety-provoking elements. Hence, this study can be considered as an ice breaker when it comes to exploring the elements of speaking anxiety in the Pakistani context.

Keywords: *Speaking Anxiety, English as a Foreign / Second Language, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, Causes of Anxiety.*

INTRODUCTION

The English language is considered the most widely used language in the world today (Seidlhofer, 2005). However, in the subcontinent, it came as a consequence of the British colonization in the seventeenth and twentieth centuries (Tariq et al. 2013). Despite current cultural and linguistic differences, the English language is generally recognised as the dominant medium in which people all over the world interact (Ahmed et al., 2017; Mehmoodzadeh, 2012; Nazir et al., 2014). Realizing its importance and global acceptability, after the independence, the English language was made the language of public offices of Pakistan (Tariq et al., 2013). Learning a foreign language is difficult (Bhatti et. al., 2018), therefore, the education administration has laid much stress on English language teaching at schools and colleges alike (Tariq et al., 2013; Hussain et al, 2020). The government and private sector, across the country, have taken up the task of educating the masses in the English language (Bashiruddin and Qayyum, 2014). They try their utmost to provide the students with the aptitudes of the English language to make progress in their own and expert lives. In any case, not all the abilities are given equivalent significance since the start of the scholarly vocation.

Many schools in Pakistan focus on the written skill of their students. The verbal skills of the students are not given much importance. This prevents the students from improving their speaking abilities. Many students experience a similar kind of appraisal for about twelve years where the focus of assessment is not the spoken skills, and rather they are graded on their written scripts. During and after a long period of schooling, a student's ability to communicate can be impaired. "a. Defects in stress, intonation, pacing, or pausing, b. Use of the local accent, c. Phonation defects, d. Poor vocabulary skills, e. Use of repetitive body language while speaking," according to the report. (Bozkirli, 2019) The assessment framework utilized at practically all the levels for most of the student's checks and assesses their written content. The space for evaluating the learners on their speaking abilities is exceptionally less even in some cases it is yet to be implemented. Therefore, after

completing the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) Examination when they prepare to step into the professional colleges and universities, they convey this absence of expertise in verbal communication.

To meet the necessities of the corporate world, universities aspire the students to effectively and productively show their presence in their corporate lives. The way to step into corporate life is by taking a job interview. Generally, these interviews are conducted in English. Apart from some exemptions, applicants not communicating their thoughts in English are viewed as less potential employees. The corporate world requests an applicant who is certain about his abilities and information and can communicate suitably in a language that is acknowledged all-inclusive. Speaking anxiety, especially when speaking in front of a small or large group of people, may be the cause of a person's ineffective use of the ability (Bozkirli, 2019). In the present time, the greater part of the corporate individuals has set their norms on the size of how somebody communicates in the English language. Therefore, English is commonly used by professionals around the world in a variety of fields.

Speaking is a language ability that humans learn during infancy and use regularly to express themselves (Temizyurek et al., 2017). The ability to communicate in English has become one of the most important qualifications for a variety of professions, including contractor and supplier work. As Warni et al. (2018) suggest that Employees in this sector may enroll in an English program called English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) to help them improve their communication skills. Keeping the needs of the corporate world, the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan requires each university to instruct sufficient courses of English comprising the contents of Functional English, General and Business Communication Skills, and General English Writing Skills. These courses must be designed to teach the learners the required expertise in the English language. This expertise should encompass the whole set of language skills from speaking and listening to reading and writing. HEC has likewise recommended some course guidelines to support these universities.

Instructors of English as a second language (ESL) anticipate the learners to have ESL speaking anxiety in their university classrooms (Zhiping and Paramasivam, 2013). Hussain et al. (2020) explored the factors in Pakistani university students which are major reasons to inculcate anxiety among ESL students. A teacher's ability to use the speaking skill accurately and effectively is a natural characteristic of a language teacher. So, to be a successful teacher, one must have a language free of grammatical errors, as well as a psychological condition free of factors such as anxiety, which can negatively affect speaking (Bozkirli, 2019). The presence of students in ESL learning classrooms with the propensity for taking back benches or evading their interest or being least propelled in ESL speaking exercises is an unmistakable sign for the educators. One can very possibly point out that the students are confronting ESL speaking anxiety. Such ESL students are in dire need of help and the ESL educators must attempt to assist the students with their ESL speaking anxiety. This can be done in several ways like decreasing the circumstances in classrooms that cause ESL speaking anxiety, making the procedure of language learning simpler and less upsetting and rather more interesting for the students. According to Choi (2016), teachers' actions and attitudes play a critical role in reducing students' anxiety. As a result, L2 learners must be provided with a welcoming atmosphere in order to alleviate feelings of nervousness and anxiety.

Since the dawn of time, mankind has had a basic need for communication. Throughout history, people have met this need in a variety of ways, but speaking has always been the simplest and most powerful. Speaking English however, seems to be a major issue for many learners. Speaking anxiety, with regards to English as a second language or foreign language, is a worldwide element nearly for everyone. Investigations prove that students all over the world encounter ESL / EFL speaking anxiety and that is the reason the expanding patterns in figuring out how to communicate in this language have unearthed several other components of anxiety among students subsequently. Second / Foreign Language learners can experience anxiety, according to Horwitz (2017), "because of distress at their inability to be themselves and to communicate authentically with other people due to the limitations of the new language". Therefore, one of the most significant obstacles to second language communicative competence is anxiety (Ashraf, 2019).

The role of ESL / EFL anxiety in Learning English has been researched for a long time. The results point out that ESL / EFL anxiety may have an impact on ESL / EFL learning process and performance. ESL / EFL anxiety, in particular, can have negative academic, cognitive, and social consequences for students (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016; MacIntyre, 2017). One of the psychological obstacles that prevent people from communicating effectively is speaking anxiety (Bozkirli, 2019). To enable the students to recognize the components of ESL speaking anxiety, specialists like Horwitz et al. (1986), McCroskey (1970), McCroskey (1992), Clevenger and Halvorson (1992), Woodrow (2006), Yaikhong and Usaha (2012) have appeared in the history and created incredible investigations that have profited several researchers in their quest for recognizing and dispensing with speaking anxiety from English language students. Moreover, an analysis of the literature revealed studies on the speaking fears of teacher applicants in various fields (Ozkan & Kinay, 2015; Deringol, 2018; Kuru, 2018).

In Pakistani schools, English language teachers are more inclined towards assessing writing abilities and ignoring speaking skills (Alam & Bashiruddin, 2013; Khurshid et al., 2013). This absence of consideration towards assessing speaking skills causes anxiety among the students while speaking and they display this anxiety in, especially ESL classrooms where they stay less included or show less enthusiasm towards speaking activities.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

- To explore the causes of speaking anxiety in speaking English as a Second language among public sector university students of Karachi.

- To explore the strategies adopted by the students to cope with the anxiety while speaking English as a second language in an English language speaking classroom.

Research Questions

This research tries to find out the answers to the following questions:

- What are the causes of speaking anxiety among public sector university students of Karachi?

- What strategies do the university students of Karachi adopt to cope with speaking anxiety?

LITERATURE REVIEW

From the beginning of English language learning and language teaching, the discussion over the impact and handiness of the English language has now taken new plans to research different angles. Learning a second language once in a while ends up being a difficult undertaking for some students as it includes psychological and full of feeling factors and both have an exceptionally solid effect on their endeavors in learning a language. Students learning English as a second language run over obstructions making the errand a perplexing endeavor for both the students and the instructors.

Learning a second/foreign language is unquestionably difficult. There may be difficulties in terms of writing style, grammar, and grammatical laws that are not the same in the native language spoken from birth. Language learners sometimes expressed frustration over their inability to remember new words, to understand the instructor, and their fear of speaking in front of others in the target language. Several studies have been undertaken to look at the challenges that learners face while studying a second/foreign language. English language anxiety is one of the affective factors that has received a lot of attention and has been studied extensively (Hidayati, 2018). Language anxiety has been shown to harm language learners. Language anxiety has the potential to curtail students' success in learning important language skills, as well as their motivation to attend class (Khodaday & Khajavy, 2013).

Given the language's privileged status around the world, the researchers can't afford to ignore those aspects of it. Most of these issues are linked to factors that lead to increased fluency in English speaking and, as a result, improved language efficiency, especially when it comes to the question of learning English as a foreign language. Anxiety to speak English is one of the causes that has been identified as having an effect on language learners' success and, as a result, on language learning (Koka et al., 2019; Hussain et al, 2020).

As indicated by some psychological clinicians, learning is simply a psychological procedure (Chastain, 1975). While, to some, the affectional element is "the emotional side of human behavior in the language learning process" (Brown, 1994). Language phobia is, in reality, a multifaceted psychological construct. Language anxiety was identified as one of the critical factors interfering with learners' achievement in English language learning. When compared to their less anxious peers, highly anxious students were found to have the lower ability (Kao & Craigie, 2010). When it comes to speaking in front of an audience, most people feel some degree of anxiety; in reality, many people's greatest fear is public speaking. Speech anxiety can range from a mild case of the "nerves" to a near-paralyzing panic. Trembling, perspiring, butterflies in the stomach, dizziness, racing heart, and a shrill voice are some of the earliest manifestations of speech anxiety. Stress and anxiousness in language learning have a detrimental impact on students' ability to learn a foreign language (Gopang, 2016; 2017). Jin et al. (2017) pointed to behavioral variations in personality, attitude, mood, and/or language-learning evolving experiences when explaining why students vary in perceived social interactions.

Similarly, when asked to speak in English, the students mentioned became nervous because they were afraid of making mistakes, shy, unfamiliar with the language, and had nothing to say, or a lack of ideas (Anandari, 2015; Sayuri, 2016). Students with higher levels of anxiety develop an uneasy attitude toward speaking and feel awkward speaking in English, which has a major impact on their speaking performance (Sutarsyah, 2017). Fallah (2017) found that coping self-efficacy has a substantial negative impact on FL anxiety levels. In general, Young (1991) established three primary causes of language anxiety: the learner, the teacher, and the learning process. The causes of these sources can be further divided into six categories: 1) psychological and interpersonal fears, 2) learner confidence in language learning, 3) teacher belief in language instruction, 4) instructor-learner relationships, 5) classroom procedures, and 6) language testing. Hashemi (2011), on the other hand, classified the factors that contribute to students' anxiety into two categories: the classroom and the social background. Person sense of self, self-related cognitions, and inadequate commands and instructions are all classroom-

related variables. Cultural discrepancies between the native and target languages, differences in social standing between the speaker and interlocutor, and issues of self-identity are examples of social background factors. Students' impressions of the language learning process are justified in causing fear in a variety of cases. Students find speaking challenging not only due to psychological factors like a lack of self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, nervousness, and shyness in front of others, but also due to the assumption that speaking involves mastery of several linguistic elements like pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and ide (Sayuri, 2016). According to Zheng and Cheng (2018), foreign language classroom anxiety is a form of anxiety that is usually triggered by a specific scenario. Another reason could be the Learners' personality traits such as low trait emotional intelligence and high concentration on perfectionism (Dewaele, 2017).

In the late 1970s, there was a flurry of research on language learning anxiety in SLA. However, since the idea of language anxiety was not yet well known, these early experiments, dubbed the "Confounded Approach" by MacIntyre (2017), yielded mixed results. With Horwitz et al. (1986) defining FLCA as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, values, emotions, and behaviours linked to classroom learning to emerge from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (MacIntyre, 2017), the field moved into a second phase, dubbed the "Specialized Approach". The Positive Psychology (PosPsy) trend has escalated in SLA over the last five years, resulting in an increasing array of articles, research material, books, and seminars (Dewaele & Li, 2018). The trend broadened the emphasis on anxiety in SLA, arguing for a more holistic interpretation of academic emotions in FL/SL learners, covering both pleasant and unpleasant emotions (Jiang & Li, 2017; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Saito, et al. 2018). However, Despite the wealth of studies on FLA/SLA, many researchers believe it is still one of the least known affective variables in FL/SL acquisition (Dörnyei, 2005; Teimouri et al., 2019).

Anxiety

Anxiety seems to be as aged as the individual beings himself, as a result of life's demands and stresses, at the very least to meet his basic needs. It can be effective if it stays within those boundaries, but when it crosses those boundaries, it becomes destructive. In the sense of schooling, students experience anxiety at various stages of their education (Alnuzaili, & Uddin, 2020; Hussain et al, 2020).

Anxiety is characterized as "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system," according to Spielberger (1983). (p. 1). Anxiety is a concept that encompasses all negative feelings that a person may experience in a given situation. Fear, concern, tension, and anger are examples of these emotions. People generally feel anxious when they are placed in unpleasant circumstances because anxiety is a psychological disorder that involves discomfort, but foreign language speaking anxiety is a different type of anxiety. Saranraj and Meenakshi (2016) propose categorizing anxiety into three types: "trait anxiety," "state anxiety," and "situation-specific anxiety." Trait anxiety is an individual's general propensity to be anxious in different situations; condition anxiety is the concern or stress that a person feels in a specific moment while in a specific circumstance, and situation anxiety is the worry or stress that a person feels in a specific situation. -specific anxiety is a stress reaction that occurs only in specific circumstances, such as within or outside the L2 classroom.

Anxiety is regarded as a natural response to a stressful situation. It can assist a person in dealing with a difficult situation by prompting them to deal with it. Anxiety, on the other hand, can be classified as an anxiety disorder when it becomes debilitating (Setiadi, 2020).

Anxiety is a state of emotion brought about by a current or potential danger from which no one can recover. The fear of public speaking is a general phobia in all aspects of people's lives. Many people experience any level of communication apprehension or fear when confronted with a stressful or anxiety-inducing situation. Furthermore, public speaking anxiety encompasses a wide range of emotions related to giving a speech. Another concept of public speaking anxiety given by Jangir and Govinda (2017) is "a state of nervousness, apprehension, or fear triggered by the anticipation of something threatening during an individual's performance."

Anxiety is an aftereffect of a disappointment, anticipated by a speaker of a language who will in general leave from an undermining situation (Sanders and Wills, 2003). It is a fundamental component in the taking in-process and shifts from student to student and for the most part emerges because of different reasons like sentiments of defect or insufficiency, anxiety, self-concern, and so on (Toth, 2008a). Liu (2006), likewise, properties the reasons for anxiety to the unconventionality of an etymological setting particularly when the students are being examined or assessed. As per Tsui (1996) uneasiness assumes a basic job in deciding the degree of scholastic accomplishments of a student and this gives a sound establishment of the investigation, particularly in the Pakistani setting.

Anxiety (also known as angst or worry) is a psychological and physiological state with somatic, physical, cognitive, and behavioral elements, according to Seligman (2001). It is the unpleasant sensation of anxiety and worry. Anxiety's root definition is 'to vex or difficulty,' and it may trigger feelings of fear, concern, uneasiness, and dread in the presence or absence of psychological stress. Anxiety, on the other hand, should not be confused with fear; it is a dreaded feeling about

something that appears intimidating and can overwhelm a person. Anxiety is regarded as a natural response to a stressful situation. It can assist a person in dealing with a difficult situation by prompting them to deal with it. However, the notion that anxiety can also be helpful has been debunked (Horwitz, 2017; MacIntyre, 2017). Therefore, If anxiety becomes debilitating, it can be classified as an anxiety disorder.

Language fear manifests itself in the following ways (Oxford and Shearin, 1994):

1. Avoidance in general, such as "forgetting" responses, being careless, or skipping classes, coming unprepared, resulting in low verbal development, less classroom participation, and demonstrating the inability to respond despite the very simple query.

2. Physical movements like shaking, anxiousness, playing with hair or garments, nervously touching objects, mumbling, unable to produce sound or intonation in the target language, despite being repeated several times.

3. Headaches, aches, unexplained discomfort, or tension are physical symptoms.

4. As a result, anxiety's impact on the learning process becomes one of the performance measures for whether or not anyone will learn a language.

Second Language Anxiety

The idea of globalization regarding business, diverse correspondence, and individuals' relocation for different official, political, social, and individual rationale induces the way toward learning a second or foreign language besides the first language. The students do not get sufficient opportunity to ace a second language for specific purposes like social or scholastic, however, they are required to banter in the objective language fluidly in a brief timeframe. This makes the learning procedure for the students very testing as the students think that it is hard to communicate their thoughts, feeling, convictions, and their insight. Crookal and Oxford (1991, p. 142) name it as "social stuns" since the students wind up being distanced from the remainder of the gathering. In oral communication learning, the students of ESL face numerous problems and academia has also noticed the lack of skills among learners (Akhtar & Hussain, 2019) and one of the major reasons is the presence of second language anxiety among the learners.

Sources of Second Language Anxiety

Horwitz et al. (1986) distinguish three parts being the significant wellsprings of second language anxiety. These are anxiety while taking a test (Test Anxiety), the anxiety of feeling of being unsure while communicating to someone (Communication Apprehension), and the fear of getting low marks or even getting an F grade in a test (Fear of Negative Evaluation). This research is regarded as a reliable one in the Psycholinguistics' circle (Aida, 1994; Campbell and Ortiz, 1991; Bailey et al., 1999). As a result, the attention of students decreases during class, and performance is lowered in foreign language classrooms. Akkakoson (2016b) also investigated the sources of speaking anxiety and discovered through interviews that a lack of self-confidence, a restricted language background, and a low motivation was all factors contributing to the participants' speaking anxiety. To cope with the anxiety causes, the participants reported that they used affective, emotional, cognitive, and meta-cognitive techniques. Furthermore, several research in ESL / EFL contexts has studied the link between speaking anxiety and variables like gender or English proficiency (Karatas et al., 2016; Santos et al., 2017).

Communication Apprehension

An individual's inclination of anxiety while talking to somebody (Horwitz et al., 1986). Daly et al. (1997, p. 21) characterize it as "people's willingness to approach or avoid social interaction ". (Buss as referred to in Daly et al., 1997) has characterized it as shyness, (Tsui, 1996) as reticence, and (Schlenker and Leary, 1985) as social anxiety. Impediment or inconvenience that a student has in bantering with a companion or in a gathering within the classroom or outside of it is the "indications of correspondence dread" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 127).

Similarly, Public speaking anxiety (PSA) is a problem that affects the general public, but particularly students. According to McCroskey (1977), twenty percent of students experience public speaking anxiety. To elaborate further, he discovered that an individual's fear of anxiety is linked to actual or proposed contact with another person or people. PSA may be felt as a character or as state-based anxiety. Trait-based public speaking anxiety affects students who become nervous at the prospect of giving a speech in front of an audience. Students that express an improvement or worsening in anxiety at a specific point in the public speaking process are grouped together.

Test Anxiety

Horwitz et al. (1986) showed the test as the unfamiliar segment of ESL speaking anxiety and depicted it as "a kind of uneasiness originating from a dread of disappointment". Mandler and Sarason (1952) began the idea of test anxiety by building up a 37 item Test Anxiety Questionnaire (TAQ). Their goal was to determine the impact of judgment and

unpleasant circumstances of assessment upon the undergraduates before through the assessment activity. In a second language learning class at the advanced level. The overall standard for stamping is offering tests to the students. This is the place students having high test anxiety will confront numerous troubles.

Fear of Negative Evaluation

Horwitz et al. (1986) choose the Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) as the third part in unknown dialect tension. Watson and Friend (1969, p. 448) characterize it as "apprehension of other's evaluations, distress over their negative evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectations that others would evaluate oneself negatively." It tends to be considered as one of the most significant elements in the Pakistani setting. This dread of negative assessment can be applied to any circumstance of like open talking, prospective employee meet-ups, and so on. He proposed this as a third form of anxiety, fear of negative assessment, in 1986. Test anxiety and fear of negative feedback are somewhat similar, but the former differs from the latter in that it exists in a broader sense, ranging from social to evaluative, such as when using words in front of a class or during a job interview.

Researches in Pakistan on Anxiety

Lately, there has been an incredible commitment by Pakistani researchers in the field of English language speaking anxiety. Researchers have studied language learning anxiety, such as Gopang et al. (2016) and Hussain et al, (2020), who studied language anxiety and learner beliefs in language learning. However, further research is needed to determine which types of anxiety are more common among students in various contexts. Noreen et al. (2015), in a gender-oriented investigation, at the intermediate level, explored the impact of the Role of Students' Motivation, Attitude on Anxiety in Learning English. Similarly, Gopang et al. (2015b), at Lasbela University, Baluchistan, examined English language speaking anxiety. Likewise, the element of parental pressure on students for achieving high grades and its impact on students' performance was investigated by Sheikh and Hussain (2014). One of the elements explored in this was anxiety. Dar and Khan (2014) researched the fear of oral communication among undergraduates. Shahzadi and Zahabia (2014), while investigating at the University of Sargodha, explored the obstacles in learning the English language for undergraduate students. Zahid and Ghani (2014) observed the relationship of the learners' attitude with anxiety. Similarly, Nazir et al. (2014) investigated anxiety among ESL Intermediate learners. Javed et al. (2013) compared the anxiety of Indonesian and Pakistani students towards the English language. Waseem and Jibeen (2013) investigated patterns of motivation in Pakistani students and related them with anxiety. Adeel (2011) conducted a study of anxiety among English as a foreign language graduation students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is qualitative in nature and aimed at exploring the causes of anxiety while speaking English as a second/foreign language. The researchers used an open-ended questionnaire to collect the data from the participants that belonged to an engineering sector university in Karachi.

Data Collection Procedure

The researchers collected the data by asking the participants to fill a consent form to volunteer for participation in the research. The participants then filled a demographic sheet that asked them about their age, gender, etc. The participants then filled an open-ended questionnaire that asked them about the possible causes of speaking anxiety in an English language speaking classroom. Similarly, the next question enquired about the technique they used to cope with the anxiety they had while speaking English as a second language in an English language speaking classroom.

Data Analysis Technique

After collecting the data, the researchers used content analysis, thematic analysis, and constant comparative method to analyze the data. The responses were codified as "M" for male participants and "F" for female participants. Similarly, each participant was assigned a number starting from 1 onward. After the process of codification of the responses, themes were generated from these responses and were categorized accordingly. These themes engendered the causes of speaking anxiety and the strategies that the students used to cope with the anxiety they had while speaking English as a second language.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample of the study has been taken from a Public sector engineering university in Karachi using the Purposive sampling method. The data was collected from 80 students studying in different departments. Out of these 80 students, 40 were males and 40 were females. These participants were randomly selected from 7 different departments. Two separate questions regarding the causes of ESL / EFL speaking anxiety and the strategies employed by the learners to cope with the ESL / EFL speaking anxiety were asked from the participants. To ensure the comprehension of the questions, the researchers translated the items of the questionnaire into the Urdu language. The translations were verified by the specialists and the suggested changes were also incorporated.

FINDINGS/RESULTS

Reasons for ESL / EFL Speaking Anxiety

The participants of the study gave varying answers to the inquiry regarding the most likely causes of ESL / EFL Speaking Anxiety.

Lack of Confidence

The examination of the responses resulted in pointing towards "lack of confidence" as one of the salient themes. It was the most commonly found answer and 33 of the responses among the 80 recorded pinpointed it to be a chief reason for ESL / EFL speaking anxiety. Similar answers identifying lack of confidence as the main reason for ESL / EFL speaking anxiety were given by most of the participants, albeit in different words.

A few of the responses were precise like "*Less confident*", "*Lack of confidence*", "*Low confidence*" which endorses the element of lack of confidence among learners. Following the same trend, some of the short answers also pointed towards a lack of confidence while utilizing English as a foreign language to communicate. "*Lack of confidence is also the major problem*", "*One of the major factors that make me anxious is the confidence that I lack, at times*", "*Lack of confidence while speaking English*", "*Lack of confidence is the major factor that makes me anxious*". A number of the answers received contained further explanations. "*The major factors in an English language speaking classroom that make me anxious of speaking English in the classroom is that a lack of confidence…*".

Vocabulary

The next concept that dominated the replies that were received turned out to be "vocabulary". Among the 80, 24 answers identified Vocabulary as the second greatest cause of ESL / EFL speaking anxiety. Quite a few answers in this group were also to the point and precise in nature as they pointed towards vocabulary like "*Vocabulary, Hard words*", "*Vocabulary is the major factor*", "*Lack of vocabulary*" which show the conformity with the theme of vocabulary. Difficulty in pronouncing words was also singled out by the participants as an issue. This was also considered to be connected to inadequate knowledge of vocabulary. This category also contained some answers in the form of phrases, these also pointed towards vocabulary. "*Vocabulary is not that much strong*", "*…also I have a short vocabulary too*", "*…lack ness of vocabulary made me anxious while speaking English*". A few of the answers were relatively more detail-oriented. "*In my opinion, the most troublesome thing in an English speaking class is the lack of vocabulary*", "*The major factor which makes afraid that people will laugh at me if I say anything wrong. This is because of vocabulary problem*".

Fear of Being Ridiculed or Humiliated

The answer that received the third most votes and was supported by 19 people, almost tying with the second reason was "Fear of Being Ridiculed or Humiliated".

Among the participants, many utilized phrases in their answers like "*I afraid of being mocked*", "*Other students laugh at me*", "*If someone makes fun or laugh*", "*Afraid that other students laugh on me*", "*Afraid that people will make fun of me*", "*I say something wrong they will make fun of me*", "*Hesitation for getting embarrassed in front of all*", "*I am afraid that if I am wrong others are laugh at me*", "*…can anybody laugh on my English – these are the things which makes me anxious about speaking English in the classroom*", "*The major factors in an English language speaking classroom that make me anxious of speaking English in the classroom is… if I would say a single word of anything so making fun of that word in class*" which confirms that the participants had a fear of being ridiculed or humiliated.

Peer Pressure

Peer pressure was recognized as a source of speaking anxiety by the participants of the research and came in 4th. This differed from the previous group which dealt with the mocking behavior faced by the students struggling with ESL / EFL speaking anxiety in the respect that it dealt with the mere existence of the students who exhibited conceited behavior and demoralized other students through their actions. 19 of the participants admitted to experiencing ESL / EFL speaking anxiety because they did not feel comfortable in the company of their peers. They did not report any mocking behavior on the part of their peers.

Many responses were of clipped nature. The responses were, "*Hostile audience*", "*All other students*", "*…demotivation from the crowd*". Most of the responses utilized phrases like "*Also, the environment is not so encouraging*", "*Students…made me anxious while speaking English*", "*Sometimes when audience is not cooperating makes me anxious*", "*Presence of A-level student with his smug face that he knows all*", "*…when I comes to speak English – I all time thinks that what the other can said about my English…*". Other answers contained explanations and were put as, "*Disturbance and teasing of those students who are very well in speaking English…*", "*One of the major factors in an English language speaking classroom is the attitude of the teacher and the audience. If their attitude is not good, there would be anxiety*".

Facing a lot of People

The 5th most common conclusion obtained from the results was the phobia of facing a crowd. 18 participants from the 80 who answered reported feeling not at ease while speaking in front of large audiences.

Some of the responses to the question were specific in nature. Some of them were like, "*People crowd*", "*The crowd, Stage fright*", "*The audience make us anxious*". However, the majority of the answers were of comprehensive nature like "*People sitting around me make feeling anxious*", "*The major is that people are looking and listening to me*", "*The very first thing which usually makes me anxious is to face the audience*", "*The major factor that makes me anxious of speaking English in the classroom include the tension that is given to me when everyone's eyes are on me*", "*Factor that makes me anxious of speaking English in the classroom is when I speak in front of an audience makes me nervous and I start hesitating in front of others*", "*Similarly the fact that everyone might be staring at you or you becoming their centre of attention makes me more anxious before I speak English in front of them*".

Rules or Use of Grammar

Among the responses from the open-ended questionnaires, there were reports of the Pakistani ESL / EFL learners facing the challenge that is regarded as a difficult obstacle in learning English as a foreign language across the world.16 of the respondents admitted to not being proficient in the rules of grammar or at least conceded to naming grammar among the chief causes for their ESL / EFL speaking anxiety.

A few of the responses were exact in nature like "*Lack of grammar skills*", "*Grammatical errors*", "*Grammatical mistakes*", "*...grammatical mistakes*". Some of the answers utilized phrases such as "*Grammatical mistakes while speaking English*", "*...and to remember the correct usage of tense while speaking*", "*I feel that my grammar and tenses are not that much strong*". A number of the replies contained explanations, for example, "*The rules of grammar are the main reason of anxiety during speaking English*", "*Sometimes grammatical error, the fear arise to deliver correct tense, without slipping of tongue*", "*Mostly I make grammatical mistake so whenever I speak so am just afraid that whether by words or grammar are correct or not*", "*According to my opinion, some major factors in an English language speaking classroom that make anxious of speaking English are grammar mistakes, proper use of tenses…*".

Lack of Preparation

"Lack of preparation" was found to be the next dominating theme among the responses identifying the causes of ESL / EFL speaking anxiety. 11 out of 80 participants pointed towards Lack of preparation as a cause of ESL / EFL speaking anxiety for them.

Some of the participants kept their answers short, "*Not know what to say*", "*...little information about the things*". While others used 1-liners to share their opinions like "*Not knowing what to say further if not prepared*", "*Feels uncomfortable when speak English which is not prepared*". There were a few comprehensive answers. "*I have a lot of hesitation when I have order to speak on such topic which is unknown to me*", "*Teacher ask question but I have not prepared in advance…I have not speak without preparation*".

Fear of Making Mistakes

"Fear of Making Mistakes" also emerged as a source of ESL / EFL speaking anxiety. 10 among the 80 participants of the study acknowledged that the dismay at the prospect of making an error made the participants suffer from ESL / EFL speaking anxiety.

Some of the replies were phrasal in nature like "*...error fear*", "*Afraid to make a mistake in front of everyone*", "*I am afraid of making mistakes while I was speaking English*". A few of the replies were more thorough with explanations such as "*Secondly, if I made a mistake during a speech or presentation and come (someone) one corrected it during my speech is a worst thing because it can bring more mistakes*", "*The only thing which will make me anxious will be if I make a mistake and couldn't takle (tackle) it couldn't overcome it*".

Negative Attitude of the Teacher

The greatest issue faced by students in ESL / EFL learning classrooms is the negative attitude displayed by the teacher. Precisely 6 responses identified this as a source of anxiety in the research at hand. These responses were "*Teacher's attention on me*", "*The questions of teacher*", "*...teacher...made me anxious while speaking English*", "*Whether the teacher would insult me if use improper English*", "*The major factors in an English language speaking classroom that make me anxious of speaking English in the classroom is… critical feedback…*", "*One of the major factors in an English language speaking classroom is the attitude of the teacher and the audience. If their attitude is not good, there would be anxiety*".

Lack of Fluency

Another cause of ESL / EFL speaking anxiety, as apparent from the answers of the unrestricted questionnaire was "Lack of Fluency" by 5 out of 80 participants. The participants reported as, "*My accent*", "*Not good at English*", "*Speaking power is not that much good*", "*Not all understand the way I explain*", "*I found some difficulties because I think I am not very much good in speaking English*".

Comprehension Problem

The next source of ESL / EFL speaking anxiety identified from among the replies to the unrestricted questionnaire was "Comprehension Problem", the particular answer was given by only 5 respondents out of 80 as "*Less understanding*", "*Fluency, the flow of words…*", "*Fast speed of teachers while asking questions*".

Comparison with Other Learners

A source of ESL / EFL speaking anxiety identified by 3 among the 80 participants was "comparison with other learners" done by the ESL / EFL learners themselves. The learners are very much interested in the progress of their peers and measure their own success against their colleagues. This often gave rise to unhealthy competition or feelings of resentment.

The participants reported as "*I feel degrade when my friend speak good English then (than) me*", "*Other major factor is a lot of people speak well than me, so I become more conscious*", "*According to my point of view if we are sitting in the class and there are so many students present in our class room so lacking of confidence occur in myself do due to this I can't speak English properly or correctly rather than those students who speak English very good*".

Fear of Negative Evaluation

Only a single participant out of all 80 respondents admitted to their fear of getting low scores. The response was as, "*Only when marks are on the line otherwise I never get anxious of speaking English in the classroom.*"

Coping Strategies for ESL / EFL Speaking Anxiety

Some themes dominated the qualitative data gathered from questionnaires given out on the topic of coping approaches adopted by the ESL / EFL learners to deal with ESL / EFL speaking anxiety.

Avoiding the Audience

The first approach taken by the majority of the ESL / EFL learners to deal with ESL / EFL speaking anxiety turned out to be avoiding the audience. 16 out of 80 answers favoured this approach.

A few of the answers given were brief in nature as, "*I don't do eye contact*", "*Avoid to make eye contact*", "*Try to avoid the audience…*", "*Less eye contact with others…By looking at fan*". Some of the respondents answered using phrases like "*Ignoring the reaction of others if I say something wrong*". While a few others gave in-depth responses, stating as, "*I ignore the audience in front of me and concentrate on my content, what I have to deliver*", "*I suppose that there is no audience and I am standing in front of my parents…Closing my eyes*", "*One thing that very (every) other person say (says) to me is not eye contact with the audience and I do the same*", "*If I face anxiety in speaking English language, I don't see people and look down or I look at the wall so that I don't get confused*".

Taking Help from Teacher or Peer

The second most common reply among the answers regarding the approach undertaken by the ESL / EFL learners to deal with ESL / EFL speaking anxiety was "Taking Help from Teachers or Peers". 13 among the 80 participants disclosed that they had had discussion regarding the issue they faced with a colleague or instructor they trusted.

Just 3 respondents opted for precise answers. They stated as, "*By asking the teacher for help*". Some of the respondents gave concise answers like "*Support of class teacher and class mates*", "*Because of teachers and friends help I feel better*", "*I take my teacher's help to understand what I don't*", "*…taking help from the friends before speaking…*". The comprehensive replies also displayed similar trend, "*I used to look at my teacher b/c she is very co-operative and my best friends who help me out during English presentation*", "*In classroom when teacher support me and say keep it up so due to this my I speak English better because my teacher support me not demotivate me so due to this my lacking or English very much and these apriciation (appreciation) of teacher was help me in speaking English*".

Preparing Well

The third approach to deal with ESL / EFL anxiety was identified as "Preparing Well". 11 out of 80 participants cited preparing well beforehand for an ESL / EFL speaking test as a means to reduce ESL / EFL speaking anxiety.

The responses were, "*I like to prepare myself before speaking English*", "*I'll be more focused to my topic*", "*Revising your speech in your head might also reduce anxiety to a great extent*", "*I practice the things all over before delivering so that I won't say anything wrong…Try to learn new vocabulary and improve grammar so that I may not have any problems in speaking*", "*Study a lot for preparing anything…Practice many time before presentation so that no mistake would be done*", "*To reduce anxiety I fully prepared that what my topic is… I do practice more to present and to speak English in English language speaking class*".

Taking Deep Breaths

Another approach that the ESL / EFL learners adopted in order to deal with ESL / EFL speaking anxiety and reported as being greatly beneficial was "*Taking Deep Breaths*". 10 out of 80 respondents acknowledged "taking deep breaths" as a useful approach. They participants wrote, "*Deep breathes*", "*I take breath…*", "*Breathe slowly*", "*Take a deep breath*", "*By taking deep breath*", "*When I feel afraid, or face anxiety, I take deep breaths…*", "*I take a long breath and slowly realize it to calm my nerves down*", "*When I feel anxious while speaking English language in an English language speaking class, I take long deep breaths to overcome to anxiety*".

Facilitating Anxiety

The 5th approach taken by the ESL / EFL learners to deal with ESL / EFL speaking anxiety turned out to be a type of ESL / EFL speaking anxiety i.e. "Facilitating Anxiety".it is an uncommon behavior among the learners to treat Anxiety as a constructive element and to utilise it in a productive manner.

9 of the respondents treated anxiety as a constructive element that they could utilize in order to better their ESL / EFL speaking performance. They reported, "*Believe in yourself*", "*…I kept speaking wrong with confidence*", "*I try to talk and communicate with the audience*", "*Look at the group collectively not individually*", "*I start talking to myself in my mind then speak…Enhances my body language…Try to relate my topic with other things*", "*During presentation, I suggest that audience are my friends do there's no worry in making mistakes in front of them cuz they'll surely correct my mistakes calmly*", "*I make myself calm by thinking that they all are human being and they all have insecurities, thinking about their insecurities makes me calm and as result it makes me more confident to when I am going to convey something in English*".

Distracting the Anxiety

The 6th most popular theme in the coping approaches reported in the answers was "Distracting the anxiety". 9 participants admitted to using various methods to divert their attention from the feeling of anxiety and instead focusing their energies on something else entirely

The responses were, "*Feel relaxed*", "*Diverting attention*", "*I try to calm down myself*", "*I'll divert my mind to other things*", "*I start talking to myself in my mind then speak*", "*During speaking try to keep myself calm to ponder mistakes and increase confidence level*", "*To try to stop thinking about a specific thing and try to pretend myself that everything is fine*".

Self-Talk / Praise

The 7th most beneficial approach to manage ESL / EFL speaking anxiety as identified by 9 of the respondents was "Self-Talk / Praise". The responses were, "*I keep on reminding myself that it's not that bad and I can do it*", "*…praising myself that 'Yes I can do it', helps me a lot in gaining confidence*", "*Confidence in myself that I am right or correct and ignore everything and concentrate on speaking*", "*I start encouraging my ownself at times, also I express those feelings with my friends so that I can overcome my pressure. I start convincing myself, that I can do it in the best possible way*".

Restarting

One of the ways to handle ESL / EFL speaking anxiety is "restarting". The participants stated their responses as, "*Repeat the same things*", "*…restart of what I had said earlier*", "*To reduce the anxiety, I will restart my topic*", "*Just I repeat and make sure I correct the mistake*", "*I usually begin my sentence all over again and I concentrate on every word I say. I usually think before speaking. I make sentence in my mind first*".

Physical Movement

The approach that stood at number 9 in those recorded in the answers of open-ended questionnaires turned out to be "Physical Movement". The participants reported feeling more in control and sure of themselves as they used their physical movements to curb their ESL / EFL speaking anxiety. The responses were, "*I make my hands busy*", "*Hold the pen lightly between fingers*", "*Go behind the rostam (dais) and then speak*", "*I usually walk and look down it reduce my anxiety*", "*I started to move forward and backward on the floor*".

Using Humor

Another helpful strategy to manage the ESL / EFL speaking anxiety is to use tactics such as "humour" to reduce the levels of anxiety. Only a small number of the participants admitted to using the aforementioned approach and stated as "*Passing jokes*", "*Crack a joke in front of all*", "*...sometimes I laugh to reduce tension*", "*Making the question answer session more enjoyable through my fellow classmates*".

Maintaining Eye Contact with Only One Person

Another approach reported to be undertaken by the respondents of the following study was "Maintaining Eye Contact with Only One Person" that they might feel most comfortable with. This allows the ESL / EFL speakers to ignore the confusing actions of the people that might impact their performance adversely and cause anxiety. The participants responded as, "*By looking at the faces of friends I feel very confident*", "*Making eye contact with the person to whom I believe in*", "*To see your friends' face because they give you confident (confidence)*", "*To take a look on some specific person who seems to be sincere in listening the word what guttered*".

DISCUSSION

The participants were directed to share their opinions in order to examine the chief factors contributing to ESL / EFL Speaking anxiety. The conclusions of the study led to a newfound understanding of these contributing factors of ESL / EFL speaking anxiety in the context of the students of tertiary level Public Sector Engineering Universities.

According to the results, low self-confidence was one of the capital reasons behind ESL / EFL speaking anxiety among the ESL / EFL students of higher education level in Public Sector Engineering University. In their answers, most of the students pinpointed non-fluency in the language as the principal cause of low confidence. They also acknowledged and agreed with the researchers regarding the role that the lack of experience in ESL / EFL speaking, especially at the beginning of the classes, played in this respect. Another factor that led to low confidence among the students turned out to be their fear of crowds which, again, can be said to stem from the lack of exposure and opportunities for the ESL / EFL speakers to speak in front of large audiences early on in their academic journey. The nervousness and the pressure felt by the students as they face large crowds also made them hesitant while speaking in front of their classmates. This can also be counted among the contributing factors of ESL / EFL speaking anxiety.

Another source of ESL / EFL speaking anxiety as concluded by the answers given by participants in the research was peer pressure. It has been noted that as the ESL / EFL learners try to measure their progress and expertise against their peers and, more times than not, find themselves lacking. This leads to a feeling of disappointment in their own abilities and resentment towards ESL / EFL speaking skills. In tandem with peer pressure, Fear of humiliation at the hands of the fellow ESL / EFL speakers is also said to be a causative factor of ESL / EFL speaking anxiety. This can be greatly demotivating and hence is the gravest of all the sources of public anxiety as it could put off the student from learning ESL / EFL. The greatest concern displayed by the ESL / EFL learners is how others, especially their fellow ESL / EFL learners, might view their ESL / EFL speaking progress. This further leads to competitiveness among the students in the ESL / EFL speaking activities.

Allotment of marks and the fear of getting low scores is another issue faced by the ESL / EFL speaker in their ESL / EFL speaking activities and tests. The prospect of making errors while attempting ESL / EFL speaking tests or during ESL / EFL speaking activities is a leading cause of ESL / EFL speaking anxiety among the students. The fear can stem from lack of practice before an ESL / EFL speaking activity or ESL / EFL speaking test and is a natural reaction in case of lack of preparation. The fear of making mistakes along with that of getting low scores in ESL / EFL speaking activities and ESL / EFL speaking test results in ESL / EFL speaking anxiety can significantly be controlled by changing the way the instructors approach the situation i.e. by providing constructive criticism rather than pinpointing the students' flaws and reprimanding them.

The treatment of an ESL / EFL learner by their teacher can also have a great impact on the level of ESL / EFL speaking anxiety experienced by them. As expressed by many of the students who took part in the study, the behavior exhibited by their instructor is one of the chief sources of the ESL / EFL speaking anxiety they experienced. Constructive change in the teacher's behavior can play a huge role in reducing or even eradicating ESL / EFL speaking Anxiety among the ESL / EFL learners. The role that an instructor plays in either motivating or demoralizing the students on their journey of mastering English as a second language cannot be denied and as such, it is their duty to unravel the complex theories and ideas to make them easily understandable for the students.

Insufficient mastery over grammar and limited vocabulary are also counted among the main causes of ESL / EFL speaking anxiety. A common practice found among the ESL / EFL learners is that of using the direct translation method in which they translate what they wish to say in their own language into the desired language i.e. English in this case. The approach is apparent in their slow speech filled with gaps, some longer than others. As a language, English has borrowed many words

from many languages around the world and thus, has a huge vocabulary. This poses a huge problem to novice ESL / EFL learners as they face hardships in their quest to find the perfect word to use appropriately in a situation. The complicated grammar rules add to the worries of the ESL / EFL speakers as they struggle to learn and appropriately utilize them in their ESL / EFL speaking activities.

The studies conducted on the same topic in Pakistan yielded similar results to the one at hand. As reported by Awan et al. (2010) in their research into foreign language classroom anxiety and the impact it had on the students' achievements, "speaking in front of others" tops the list as the major source of anxiety, closely followed by "worries about grammatical mistakes". Another research conducted by Adeel (2011) and Hussain et al, (2020) on the subject of anxiety in the Graduation Learners of English as a foreign language in the Pakistani context reported the self-constructed impressions and ideas of the ESL / EFL speakers about their own capabilities to be one of the chief sources of speech anxiety. The overly stiff and conventional environment of the classrooms also contributed to the anxiety. According to Waseem and Jibeen (2013), conditional or instrumental motivation was noted to be a huge cause of second language anxiety in their research on anxiety among the students of English as a second language. This included apprehension against getting low scores, fear of speech, concern regarding exams, and feeling of anxiety due to English classes. Integrative motivation, on the other hand, only added on to the anxiety due to fear of negative evaluation. Similarly, in a study conducted by Nazir et al. (2014) on the subject of second language speaking anxiety in the Pakistani ESL / EFL students of intermediate level, the results pointed towards communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation as the chief causes of extreme levels of ESL / EFL speaking anxiety experienced by the learners.

Research into the factors contributing towards the anxiety that the ESL / EFL speakers undergo while learning and speaking English as a foreign language has led to various discoveries. In an investigation into the role played by factors such as anxiety, exhibited behavior, and morale of the students as they learn English at the intermediate level in Pakistan, Noreen et al. (2015), emphasizes the importance of the role played by the instructors and the steps they take to alleviate pressure from their students to mitigate anxiety among the learners. The conclusions of the study conducted by Gopang et al. (2015b) on the topic of English language speaking anxiety that the students of Lasbela University underwent revealed communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation as the contributing factors towards the issue. In another research undertaken by Gopang, Bughio, and Pathan (2015a) focusing on the levels of foreign language learning anxiety in the learners studying English in a Public sector University, the results displayed the similarity in the degrees of speaking anxiety experienced by the Undergraduate students of Lasbela University both inside and outside of the classroom; they experienced moderate speaking anxiety. The students are hesitant to engage in situations that might require them to speak English and hence keep away from them. The anxiety becomes more noticeable in their interactions with native speakers. A similar trend in anxiety levels had been reported by Dar and Khan (2014) among the Engineering students which they attributed to the fear of oral communication.

The findings of the study conducted by Shahzadi & Zahabia (2014) on the issues faced by the learners of English Language skills in the University of Sargodha suggest that the participants felt more comfortable speaking in their own language and displayed reluctance using English as a foreign language. This unsure behaviour can be counted among the causative factors of ESL / EFL speaking anxiety and can be dealt with by introducing changes into the teaching material being utilized. Sheikh and Hussain (2014) list the expectations set by the parents on the students to secure outstanding scores at the tertiary level and the stress that comes with meeting such expectations as another salient causal factor of anxiety. This is referring to the development of the fear of negative evaluation among the learners leading to low scores and bad performance in Speaking activities conducted in class. Zahid and Ghani (2014) in their research that studied the relationship between the anxiety experienced by the students and their approach denote the behavior exhibited by the students as a source of anxiety. The findings of the study conclude the students' behavior to be in tandem with the levels of anxiety. A constructive approach with an optimistic outlook on the process adopted by the student displays promising results as the student finds learning English as a foreign language easier and experiences low levels of speaking anxiety. Another research conducted on the students of intermediate level by Nazir et al. (2014) revealed communication apprehension and the fear of negative evaluation to be the core reasons behind the participants displaying extreme levels of speaking anxiety.

Research on the subject of ESL / EFL speaking anxiety conducted in the international context was also instrumental in finding out the important factors that contributed to ESL / EFL speaking anxiety. Gaibani et al. (2014) in their study concluded that gender and speaking anxiety were directly related but the impact that gender had on Public speaking anxiety was non-existent. As suggested by Tsai and Li (2013), anxiety in learning the English language along with other important variables such as gender and majors significantly affects the morale of the students and how they feel about learning the English language. This also supports the idea that in some contexts, speech anxiety can stem from the presence of the opposite gender. According to the study carried out by Amini and Naghadeh, (2013) on the influence gender had on the levels of anxiety experienced by people, female learners were reported to be under more stress and had greater anxiety than their male counterparts. While the female learners displayed anxious behaviour despite preparing beforehand for Speech

activities, the male students tended to avoid impromptu activities. Another trend found among the female learners was their tendency to be afraid of giving incorrect responses and having to face consequences publicly. Thus, fear of negative evaluation also played a part in holding the female students back from actively participating in activities. In this respect, the male students exhibited opposite behavior and were found to be less fearful of facing humiliation in social settings. Competition among the female students, especially with those doing significantly better, bred low self-esteem in the female learners ultimately leading to feelings of anxiety. Peoples' perception of their progress when they used English also seemed to impact the anxiety levels of the female students. One common factor among both the male and female learners of ESL / EFL was found to be their misconceptions regarding their own capabilities when it came to communicating in English. The degree of anxiety experienced by the female learner in the studies was concluded to be higher than that of their male counterparts.

The enthusiasm factor of the members belonging to different groups which were on varying levels in English language proficiency seemed to be independent of the effect Anxiety had over learning English as a foreign language. The learners were noticed to rely more on instrumental motivation instead of integrative motivation in order to gain mastery over a language (Lian & Budin, 2014). The results further attributed a high degree of anxiety to be associated with English language class rather than in English use and test where they experienced significantly less anxiety. As apparent from the study conducted by Abu-Rabia and Shakkour (2014), a very obviously positive correlation was discovered between the L1 and ESL / EFL linguistics skills. However, linguistic skills in both the languages (English and Hebrew) and anxiety towards the two languages, when studied, displayed a negative correlation. The participants approached both the language with an equal level of apprehension. The findings from this study recognized the part played by different types of personalities, specifically neuroticism, in the estimation of the probability of language anxiety and ESL / EFL success.

Various other factors inside a classroom can play an instrumental role in increasing the anxiety levels of the students learning a new language. As concluded from the quantitative data gathered in the research carried out by Öztürk & Gürbüz (2014), the students viewed Speaking skills as a major source of anxiety despite showing less signs of experiencing ESL / EFL speaking anxiety. Among the chief factors contributing towards ESL / EFL speaking anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, giving wrong answers, faulty pronunciation and abrupt questions topped the list. A study conducted in the similar vein by (Batiha, Noor, and Mustaffa, 2014) pointed towards apprehension towards tests, fear of getting low scores, negative evaluation, teacher-student interaction, lexis, and unrealistic expectations as chief sources of anxiety. Another study carried out by Yahya, (2013), reported the fear of negative evaluation as the recipient of the highest mean (2.93) along with communication anxiety (2.80) and test anxiety which was classified as the lowest mean (2.68). The suggestions included maintaining an optimistic and lively environment in the classrooms ELTs were to be conducted in to control the impact of trait anxiety (TA) on speaking anxiety.

A comfortable environment and uplifted moods can significantly reduce speech anxiety among the learners. It should be an obvious fact for the instructors teaching English as a foreign language that students might feel intimidated and anxious inside the classrooms as it is a laborious task. It is essential to be aware of the nature of the challenges and anxiety experienced by the students in their journey of learning a foreign language. Gaining such understanding can aid the instructor in designing an effective course plan that matches the requirements of the learners experiencing speaking anxiety. Language classrooms have been called language labs where the instructors play the role of the researchers. In this context, the teachers must take the opportunity to pinpoint the issues related to language faced by students and work as researchers to find solutions. The instructor must be knowledgeable of their students' aptitude, their approach towards the language, reasons behind their disinterested reaction towards a language learning activity, and the factors affecting their output in the classroom. Making these efforts would not only be beneficial to students by ensuring better results by improving the quality of their language acquisition, increasing their morale, and mitigating the factors contributing to anxiety, it would also prove advantageous for the teacher by aiding them in improving their professional capabilities. According to Young (1999), a constructive and relaxed approach of the instructor can play a huge part in reducing the anxiety levels of the students. Less constrictive teaching practices such as maintaining a stress-free environment in the classroom, building a rapport with the students, utilizing humor, and providing support to students can encourage the learners to be more confident and lower their Foreign language anxiety, aiding the learning process.

The results of the research conducted by Putri (2013) revealed that the XI social students experienced extreme levels of anxiety which stemmed from their test anxiety, communication apprehension, and fear of negative evaluation. A substantially direct relationship was also discovered between the low anxiety score and speaking performance of the XI social students. Whereas, an inverse relationship was noted among the learners with high anxiety score and their speaking performance. According to Akbari and Sadeghi (2013), the levels of foreign language learning anxiety experienced by Bilinguals learning English as their third language was significantly greater, especially, in regards to the communication anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, and apprehension experienced in the ESL / EFL classroom atmosphere. The findings of the study conducted by Nazir et al., (2014) also mirrored the aforementioned study and cited extreme levels of

communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation as sources of anxiety. Dividing the communication activities into three stages; the Pre-speaking stage, the While-speaking stage, and the Post-speaking stage was among the ideas put forward by the researcher to deal with the levels of anxiety. The pre-speaking stage was suggested to entail assigning the topic to the student with sufficient time to prepare beforehand. Similarly, students would be encouraged to speak without restrictions in the While-speaking stage and the Post-speaking stage would involve giving constructive criticism to the students to further their interest.

An effective approach would involve prioritizing fluency over precision and as such, minor grammatical mistakes during communicative activities should be overlooked by the instructor. This would significantly improve the anxiety levels experienced by the learners who feel apprehensive at the prospect of making an error in public settings. An important causal source of anxiety is the atmosphere of the learning space. It is the instructors' responsibility to courteously encourage the usage of the desired language by the learner. It could be made possible by ensuring that the topic of discussion is not overly difficult and outlandish but instead matches the learners' aptitude so that the participants face no issues in engaging in the discourse. The instructor should make certain that his participation remains minimum.

How the learners view the process of learning a foreign language also impacts the degree of anxiety experienced by them. According to Smith and Schroth (2014), the learners who gained the highest grades were the ones who reported feeling "normal". They exhibited a cluelessness regarding their own success and conceded to feeling relatively more under pressure and anxious regarding other courses compared to foreign language courses. The students pointed towards independent variables such as whether they had prepared enough or had gotten enough sleep as the factors that determined their levels of anxiety. However, the influence of anxiety on how students performed in class was reported to be not as great as had been predicted. A research carried out to investigate the idea behind anxiety in speaking English as a foreign language by Qaddomi (2013) reported that the QOU learners disclosed that they felt more anxious when they had to interact with native speakers. It was also revealed that the QOU students, especially female learners, experienced greater anxiety while participating in ESL / EFL classrooms. Educational variables, however, did not did not hold much influence. According to the findings of the research carried out by Bozavli and Gulmez (2012), even though the statistical gap regarding classroom anxiety between groups was insignificant, the mean score displayed higher anxiety levels in the learners of NS class as compared to those in NNS class.

CONCLUSION

The following conclusion has been reached after the above discussion by the researchers; the results of the data gathered displays that a moderate level of general ESL / EFL speaking anxiety is experienced by the ESL / EFL learners of the Public sector universities. A general feeling of insecurity persists among the ESL / EFL speakers despite facing no issues in using English as a foreign language for communication purposes. The low levels of anxiety adversely affect their confidence in their own capabilities.

Nonetheless, extreme ESL / EFL speaking anxiety due to peer pressure is also reported. Though, friends can also act as a helping hand in alleviating the anxiety of the ESL / EFL speakers. The ESL / EFL speakers compare their progress to that of their ESL / EFL speaking colleagues and feel anxious upon seeing them excelling, this gives rise to an unhealthy spirit of competition.

Extreme levels of anxiety due to fear of negative evaluation have been reported among the ESL / EFL speakers belonging to the tertiary level Public sector Universities, the students feel extremely apprehensive of the grades they might receive in ESL / EFL speaking activities included in ESL / EFL speaking tests. The experience of going through the ESL / EFL speaking tests is what gives rise to the ESL / EFL speaking test anxiety. The speakers might be under extreme levels of anxiety and stress prior to the ESL / EFL speaking test, but feel quite calm during the ESL / EFL speaking test itself.

Another factor that could slightly contribute to anxiety as pointed out by the ESL / EFL speakers is their struggle to comprehend the instructions of the ESL / EFL speaking teacher. While this is reported to be a cause of learning anxiety for a number of ESL / EFL speakers, for many it is not a matter of concern.

The ESL / EFL speakers do not exhibit any signs of anxiety and feel quite at ease in their interactions with the native speakers of English.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- In-depth and comprehensive research is suggested to gather more knowledge regarding the sources of ESL / EFL speaking anxiety in the Pakistani context.

- More comprehensive research that covers more subjects should be undertaken so that the views of the other disciplines regarding the reasons contributing to Speaking anxiety could also be taken into account.

- Moreover, a tool to examine and study the elements of ESL / EFL speaking anxiety in the Pakistani framework should also be devised.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Following are the limitation of this study:

The study covered first-year public sector engineering university students. It did not include the learners of second, third, and final year students. There is a probability that if the data is collected from the students as well, the researchers would be in a better position to generalize the findings of the study.

Many students are studying in private sector engineering universities. Therefore, not including them deprived the researchers of generalizing the findings on all the engineering university students.

It was a cross-sectional study. The elements of EFL speaking anxiety investigated in this research are highly subjective and vary from time to time, person to person and even within a person they have the tendency to vary from time to time. Therefore, the results of this study will remain valid for a specific period.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted at public sector engineering university students of Karachi. The population of the study comprised first-year students. The results of this study will facilitate the teachers of Oral Communication or Functional English at public sector engineering universities to locate the possible sources or causes of EFL speaking anxiety in their classrooms. Consequently, it is going to help them in reducing the anxiety-provoking factors in their EFL speaking classrooms.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Syed Qaiser Hussain is the major contributor in terms of conceptualizing the study, devising its framework, and providing the foundations for writing Introduction and Literature Review. Dr. Naeem Akhtar contributed by analysing the data and writing the conclusion and discussion part of the study. Nida Shabbir assisted in writing the Introduction and Literature Review chapter. Nazia Aslam assisted in finding the relevant literature and shortlisting the relevant articles. Samra Arshad provided her expertise in language-related issues and formatting.

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