

A Socio-linguistic Study to Investigate the Factors Affecting L2 Oral Communication at Postgraduate Level in Pakistan

Misbah Rosheen Khan

English language Institute, King Abdulaziz University
Saudi Arabia

Abstract

The present study aims at investigating the factors affecting oral communication in the target language i.e. English Language by the learners from various social classes in Pakistan. The various factors and reasons which affect their oral communication are attitudes, motivation and their socio-economic status. There are other factors too such as parental encouragement, teacher's role, teaching methodology, medium of instruction and most importantly anxiety – a fear of being ridiculed in front of teachers and the fellows. The sample of the study is the Postgraduate students of The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan. Considering the nature of the study, Gardner's socio-educational model is used as a theoretical framework. Moreover, a comparison is made between the results obtained on the basis of three social classes; lower, middle and upper class. The quantitative results of the study display a significant correlation between the scores of oral proficiency as measured by the Oral Proficiency Test and the factors under study. Whereas, the qualitative data reveals other factors like the role of parents and teachers, teaching methodology, medium of instruction and anxiety. This study has revealed that the Pakistani students belonging to any social class show a strong desire to use English Language due to its great utilitarian value and prestigious status as an international language. However, Gardner's notion of Integrative orientation seems to be inappropriate in Pakistani context for the results show that the lower class, despite of no chance of interaction with the L2 community, desires to integrate with English language community.

KeyWords: Attitude, Motivation, SES (Socio-economic status), SLL (Second language learning), Socio-linguistics

Introduction

In Pakistan, it is generally observed that students' attitude and level of motivation to learn English language is shaped up according to their learning experiences at Urdu and English medium schools. After the initial development of such attitudes and degree of motivation they join colleges for their graduation where they can be motivated externally by their teacher and class room environment. As a result students go through the further development their attitudes, positive or negative, towards English language. For most of the students, communication in English remains a big hurdle. The possible reasons for their hampered communication are the cultural and linguistic backgrounds. They are only trained to pass English language paper by cramming written material.

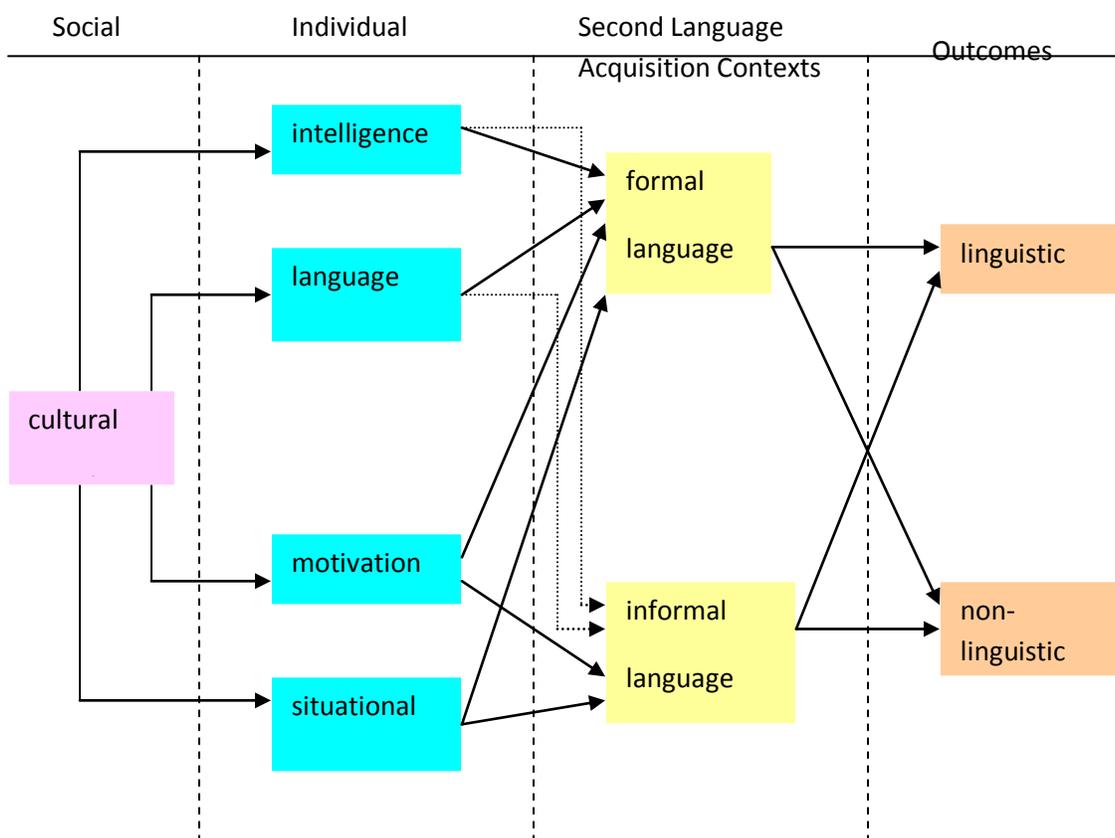
After graduation the same students with low proficiency in English and less motivational intensity reach university. Due to the poor English learning experience at schools and colleges, these students feel difficulty in coping with the subjects at university level (Pathan et al, 2010). In addition some of them may develop unfavorable attitude towards English language and the language community on the basis of their previous experience i.e. low achievement in English language learning. Moreover, even the university curriculum does not include English as a compulsory part of formal education unless they opt for M.A English or other subjects like computer or business studies where medium of instruction is English. Even in these departments emphasis is not on the use of English as a medium of oral communication. The listening and speaking skills are totally neglected. Situation is little bit different in business studies where the high level command of written and oral communication is required. They are trained to improve the communication skills for a business or a management position. The students with low proficiency are likely to develop negative attitude towards English Language. Consequently, they are less motivated to learn and use English Language. Therefore, this study is designed:

- to discover the extent to which English language learning and its usage are affected by motivation and attitude.
- to assess the students' level of English language proficiency and exposure to it as measured by an oral proficiency test, in order to study the relationship between attitudes, motivation, second language learning on the basis of socio-economic status.
- to study the differences of attitudes and English language proficiency and usage of different group of students i.e. students from three social classes
- to discover as to what extent the students belonging to different social classes are integrative or instrumentally oriented towards learning English.

Literature Review

Language learning is a complex phenomenon affected by various external and internal factors. Gardner has presented the interaction of these factors in his Socio-Educational Model.

Figure 1. Schematic representation of Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model of second language acquisition



This model is also concerned with the role of the individual differences in second language acquisition. The model has its formal roots in Lambert's 'Social-Psychological Model. Socio-educational model focuses attention on four classes of variables, which are:

- Social milieu
- Individual differences
- Language Acquisition context
- Out-comes

The language acquisition process is viewed as involving a particular casual interplay of these four types of variables.

According to Gardner (1985), the cultural context plays a vital role in second language learning. As displayed in the model, both accepted beliefs and various individual differences directly influence the second language learning process. As stated by Gardner :

“For example, it is argued that the cultural belief is that it is very difficult to learn second language. The general level of achievement will be low and moreover, individual differences in achievement will be related to individual differences in intelligence, aptitude, motivation and anxiety.” (p146)

According to Gardner (1985), there are four different types of individual differences that influence achievement directly. They are explained in the following words:

- Intelligence: Intelligence is assumed to play a role because it determines how well or how quickly individual understands the nature of any learning task or any explanation provides.
- Language Aptitude: Though it is correlated with intelligence but can be defined as: ‘A series of verbal and cognitive abilities, that would play a role in language learning’
- Motivation: It refers to the effort; want (desire) and effect associated with learning a second language and is seen as important in determining how actively the individual works to acquire language material.
- Situational Anxiety: It is associated with the language itself and it is viewed as important because it would have an inhibiting effect on the individual’s performance, thus interfering with language acquisition.

As put forward by Gardner (1985):

“Once students enter into an informal context, their level of intelligence and aptitude will influence how much language material is learned, but since their effects are contingent upon the students entering the situations, they play secondary roles. These different roles lead to the prediction that whereas individual difference in all four attributes would be expected to relate to differences in achievement of skills developed exclusively in formal context, the relation of motivation and anxiety to achievement would be expected to be higher than those for intelligence and aptitude for skills developed exclusively in informal contexts.” (p148)

Two outcomes can be seen as a result of experience of second language learning and they can occur differently depending upon experience in both contexts.

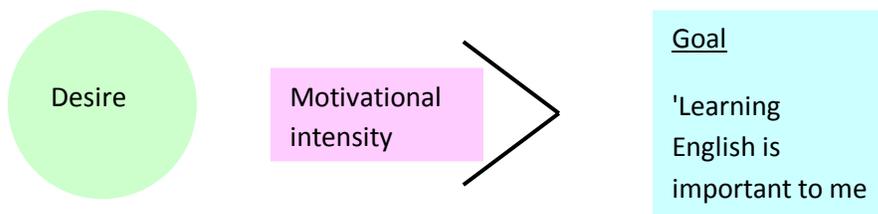
- Linguistic outcomes: These refer to second language proficiency, vocabulary knowledge, grammar, pronunciation, fluency etc.
- Non-linguistic outcomes: These refer to attitudes, values etc. that develop from the experience.

Lambert (1955), Brown (2000), and Ellis (2001) believe that attitudes play important role in developing L2 proficiency. They have conducted researches on attitude to learn L2 in the same realm. They have found out that prior achievement in L2 proficiency shapes up learners’ attitude to learn it. In this regard, the work of Gardner and Lambert has laid a foundation stone for a large body of research. According to Gardner (1985: p. 41), attitude to learn a second language is proved to be independent of intelligence.

“In comparison with those individuals with negative attitudes, those with positive ones would be more attentive in the learning situation, would take assessments more seriously, would find it more rewarding to simply experience the language, and thus achieve more.”

Research studies have proved that motivation is the major factor in second language learning because it “determines human behavior by energizing it and giving it direction” (Dornyei, 1998). The term motivation in second language learning context is seen according to Gardner (1985) as "referring to the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity". (p. 10)

Figure 2. Schematic representation of the concept of motivation as it is related to SLL Gardner (1985)



This concept suggests that motivation and attitudes play an important role in SLL by determining the extent to which learner puts his/her efforts to learn language. The learning situation i.e. teacher and the course, also affect motivation and attitude to the language.

The research studies related to L2 learning in Asian context (for instance, Lukmane 1972, Agnihoti, Khanna and Mukerjee 1982,1988, Sehgal 1993, Khana and Agnihotri 1984, Mansoor 1993, Ghani 2003, Pathan et al 2010 have displayed different results obtained by Gardner and Lambert. First, social variables such as schooling and exposure to the second language are proved to be more important than motivation and attitude. Second, instrumental motivation is found to be more significant in learning second language.

Another important notion discussed by Gardner (1985) is orientation which refers to “a class of reasons for learning a second language”, Gardner (1985: p. 54). Orientation is divided into two basic types:

1. Integrative Orientation
2. Instrumental Orientation

An integrative orientation refers to that class of reasons that suggest that the individual is learning second language in order to learn about, interact with or become closer with the second language community (Gardner 1985: p. 54). An integrative orientation simply means the learner is pursuing a second language for social and/or cultural purposes. It is characterized by learner's positive attitudes towards the target language group and the desire to integrate into the target language community. Integrative orientation has been shown to be strongly related to L2 achievement.

An instrumental orientation is generally characterized by the desire to obtain something practical or concrete for the study of a second language (Hudson 2000). With instrumental orientation the purpose of language acquisition is more utilitarian, such as meeting the requirements for school or university graduation, applying for a job, requesting higher pay based on language ability, reading technical material, translation work or achieving higher social status. Instrumental orientation is often characteristic of second language acquisition, where little or no social integration of the learner into a community using the target language takes place, or in some instances is even desired (Norris-Holt 2001) .

The number of studies has been conducted in Pakistan to examine the motivation in ESL setting. The results of these research studies display that instrumental motivation rank higher than the integrative reasons to learn English Language. The Pakistani ESL learners, regardless of the social group they belong to, are found to learn English language in order to get better jobs, travel

abroad or to be the part of English speaking community of the country (Pathan et al 2010, Rehman et al, 2014)

Socio-economic status (SES) is one of the factors which affect achievement in SLL. Social status or SES is not given much attention in many research studies conducted in this context. The present study is conducted in Pakistan where we can easily see class difference in our society. The economic status plays an important role in almost every field of life. So we cannot ignore role of SES in SLL in Pakistani context. “There is evidence of a relationship between social class and L2 achievement- children from middle-class homes regularly outperform those from lower and working class homes. There are also class related differences in learner’s attitudes” Ghani (2003:01).

Pakistani society consists of three social classes namely lower, middle and upper class. Upper class has advantage in every aspect of life. They enjoy all the luxuries including education. They send their children to prestigious English medium schools. They have more exposure to SL (English) as they travel to English speaking countries. Upper class parents speak English at home and at work place. So, the children from upper class have more opportunities to communicate in target language outside the classroom setting. On the other hand, children from lower class cannot avail such opportunities and therefore, have less exposure to the target language. The lower class parents cannot send their children to English medium schools and they are themselves semi-literate or illiterate. So, these children tend to achieve proficiency in English language, which shows strong association between SES and SL. The results obtained by the research study conducted by Ghani (2003) also show positive relationship between SES, medium of instruction and English proficiency.

Research Design and Methodology

Data for the present study was collected only from The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan. The participants of the study were 120 boys and girls students of previous and final years of Master program. Forty participants were selected randomly from the Department of English, Management Sciences, and Political Science

Moreover, in order to investigate the relationship between oral proficiency and the socio-economic status of the learners, same participants were also divided on the basis of three social classes. The following table explains the distribution of participants on the basis of data collection:

Table 1. Distribution of Participants on the basis of SES

Social Class	No. of Participants
Lower Class (monthly income up to 15000 Rupees)	32
Middle Class (monthly income up to 50000 Rupees)	79
Upper Class (monthly income above 50000 Rupees)	09
Total Participants	120

The questionnaire used for the data collection was based on Attitude Motivation Battery in Gardner (1985) was used. The items were in Likert form with some modifications to suit the level and requirement of the research study. The questionnaire was administrated under the supervision of the researcher. The students were given necessary instructions to fill the questionnaire. Confidentiality regarding the information i.e. name, father’s profession etc. was

assured to the students. As the participants of the study were the students of post graduate classes, the questionnaire was given only in English language.

The most important part of this research study was to check the level of oral proficiency of the participants in order to correlate with the factors affecting their communication skills (spoken). For this purpose, TOEFL iBT speaking section was administered to evaluate English speaking proficiency of the students taking part in the study.

Findings and Discussion

The quantitative data was analysed through SPSS statistical analysis. The analysis shows the following results:

Table 2. Correlations between Oral Proficiency and External Factors on the Basis of Socio-Economic Status

Factors	Upper Class	Middle Class	Lower Class
Motivation	.740*	.882**	.920**
	.023	.000	.000
	9	79	32
Attitude	.676*	.762**	.935**
	.045	.000	.000
	9	79	32
Desire to learn English	.566	.215	.808**
	.112	.057	.000
	9	79	32

• Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The data was analysed through the Pearson Product-Movement correlation coefficient formula to examine the correlation of oral proficiency as measured by Oral Proficiency Test and the variables under study. After analyzing the data, it appears that in the overall group a significant relationship is found between the oral proficiency and the social variables i.e. attitudes, motivation, and the socio-economic status of the learners. The comparative study between the data obtained from three social classes displays no significant difference in results which supports the previous studies dealing with second language learning (Gardner 1985, Lukmani 1972, Mansoor 1993 and Ghani 2003). The variation in findings is a result of many other reasons which will also be discussed later.

Socio-economic status has an overwhelming effect on English learning success in a country like Pakistan where society is clearly divided into three social classes i.e. upper, middle, and lower class (Ghani, 2003). The social status does affect the language learning and its use. But by the results obtained and analysed in the present study are little bit different from the results in previous studies.

Oral Proficiency

The socio-economic status of the students affected their English language learning and oral proficiency according to their respective social classes. The upper class students were expected to be more proficient speaker of English for they are the part of privileged class of the society. They enjoy the luxurious life including education in prestigious institutions, traveling abroad and integrating with native speakers of English. Therefore, they avail the maximum opportunities to learn and practice English language inside and outside the classroom setting. The analysis of the data collected in the present studies shows that the students from middle class outperformed the upper class by securing highest scores in the oral proficiency test.

This result is quite opposite to the findings obtained in the study conducted by Ghani (2003) where the upper class excelled the other two social classes namely middle and upper class. A strong relationship was found between second language learning and socio-economic status. Moreover, the findings of the present study prove that the middle class students strive to get some prestigious position in the society and therefore, have become the proficient speakers of English language

As far as lower class is concerned, the students achieved lowest scores in the proficiency test as compared to middle and upper class. This finding supports the results obtained in the study analyzing the relationship between socio-economic status and second language learning conducted by Ghani (2003).

Attitudes towards English

A significant correlation is found between the scores of oral proficiency and the attitudes. It is surprising to observe that despite of highly positive attitude the students from upper class were unable to perform better than middle class students in oral proficiency test. As discussed by Gardner (1985), the reasons, for this kind of relationship between attitudes towards the language and the achievement, can either be a dislike for the teacher or a feeling of in-appropriation about the context in which second language learning takes place, for example, classroom setting. The students from middle class with highest scores in oral proficiency test showed highly positive attitude towards English language and English language community. They were conscious of their social position and therefore wanted to improve their social status by achieving proficiency in English language.

Being the unprivileged social class of the society, lower class students gave the responses which were expected of them. The lack of opportunities to acquire education in renowned English medium schools led them to become lowest scorer in oral proficiency test. They were unable to communicate in English language as they and hence, no chance to practice or use the language in an informal setting.

Motivational Intensity and Desire to Learn English

The highly positive attitude of the middle class increased their motivation to learn English language. Though, their desire to learn the language is lower than the upper class, the difference is marginal. Similarly, the students from upper class showed the higher motivational intensity but have displayed the strongest desire to learn English language.

On the whole, the students from the lower class have remained the lowest scorers in all ratings. Their less positive attitude de-motivated them to learn English and hence, are unable to become the proficient speakers of English. They are also least concerned with the learning and the practicing of English language. That is why; they have not shown a strong desire to learn it.

Table 3. Correlations between Integrative and Instrumental Measures with Oral Proficiency on the Basis of Socio-Economic Status

Orientations	Upper Class	Middle Class	Lower Class
Instrumental	.797*	.683**	.826**
	.010 9	.000 79	.000 32
Integrative	.830**	.291**	.835**
	.006 9	.009 79	.000 32

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

When the Pearson Product-Movement coefficient formula was applied to examine the correlation of orientations and oral proficiency scores as measured by Oral Proficiency Test, it appears that a significant correlation (at 0.01 level) exists between oral proficiency scores and the orientations (instrumental and integrative) as scored by the students from lower, middle and upper class. As seen in table 4, in general, the integrative motivation ranks higher than the instrumental motivation. This response was expected from the students of upper class for they have more opportunities to travel abroad and integrate with English language community. Quite surprisingly, the lower class students preferred integrative reasons to learn English language. Their scores for instrumental motivation were lower than the integrative motivation. This is unusual because they are expected to get less chance to communicate or integrate with native speakers.

As far as middle class is concerned, the students desire English language for instrumental reasons like to pass exams, to get a good job or to cope with university classes. Their scores for instrumental motivation were lower than the integrative motivation.

Comparison of Data on the Basis of Three Social Classes

The following tables represent the instrumental and integrative reasons to learn English language on the basis of the results obtained from three social classes.

Table 4. Instrumental Reasons to Learn English Language

Degree of Instrumentality	Lower Class	Middle Class	Upper Class
a. to get a job	33%	41%	25%
b. to cope with university classes	00%	03%	13%
c. to read advanced literature	08%	06%	00%
d. to travel abroad	08%	06%	10%
e. to communicate in it as it is working language of my future career	33%	40%	50%
f. to communicate in it as it is an official language of Pakistan	18%	04%	06%
g. to take Public Examinations	00%	00%	00%

Table 5. Integrative Reasons to Learn English Language

Degree of Integrativeness	Lower Class	Middle Class	Upper Class
a. to have acquaintance with people in touch with the latest trends in the west	00%	10%	00%
b. think and behave like English speaking Pakistani	16%	12%	25%
c. to acquire news ideas and broadening one's outlook	35%	20%	19%
d. improve my social status	25%	50%	43%
a. to become friendly with English speaking people	08%	02%	13%
b. to get to know English people more better	08%	02%	00%
h. to visit UK some day	08%	02%	00%
c. to become more modern	00%	02%	00%

Qualitative Data

The most important feature of this part is the enthusiastic participation of the students. The responses given by the participants enabled the researcher to have better perception of the topic under study. The important points and suggestions given by the participants in interviews and discussion are summarized below:

- English is the language of science and technology, that's why only English language is essential for the progress of the country.
- It is the official language of Pakistan. So it is required in almost all the professions.
- One should be competent enough to speak English in order to keep in touch with the rest of the world. World has become global village, so communication should be done in the language which can be understood by everyone and English is the only language which can serve this purpose.
- Oral proficiency in English is required to get prestigious jobs.
- It has nothing to do with religion rather by learning English preaching of Islam in English speaking countries is possible.
- One can present the true picture of Islam in media and of course the language of media is English.
- Proficiency in English or speaking English does not mean adopting the norms, tradition and culture of the English.
- Teacher plays an important role in developing positive or negative attitudes of the students towards target language.
- Teachers should deliver lectures in English.
- Students should be encouraged to speak English in classroom.
- Discussions on various issues should be conducted in the classrooms so that the student can get chance to communicate in English Language.
- English should be made compulsory part of all the courses/ programs offered by the university.

- No efforts are done by the teachers to improve the oral proficiency of the students..
- The lectures are delivered in all the departments in Urdu language excluding Department of English.
- Special language classes should be arranged to facilitate the students where the only target should be the improvement of oral proficiency of the students' language learning.
- Equal language learning opportunities should be given to the students from all the social classes i.e. lower, middle and upper.
- Students can improve their proficiency by reading newspapers and magazines published in English language.
- Fear of humiliation in front of teachers and class fellows is one of the main reasons for the hampered communication of the students.
- Despite of high motivational intensity, students hesitate to speak in English because of the discouraging behaviour of peers.
- All the students cannot afford to attend language classes separately, therefore, they must be given the opportunity to learn and practice the language within their respective course/program.
- English language is required for both higher education and better future.
- It is an international language one has to be proficient speaker of English in order to travel abroad.
- English is the language of developed countries and therefore, is a key to progress.
- The fluent speaker of English is respected in society.
- It has become a status symbol even in middle class.

Recommendations of the Study

The results indicate that some of the variables have stronger impact on English language learning like, particularly in Pakistan, socio-economic status. In addition, the other reasons impeding the communication of students have also emerged as the by-products during the course of study. Some of the above mentioned causes may not be remedied like, it is not possible to change either the socio-economic status of the students or to arrange the parent-teacher meeting, like in schools, at this educational level in order to convince the parents to play an 'active role' (Gardner 1985) to encourage their children to learn English language. However some progress can be made by considering the following suggestions.

Communication Skills Courses

As indicated by the detailed analysis of the results, it is crystal clear that, in general, the university students have highly positive attitudes towards English language and English language community.

As the students work well when there are certain incentives for them, likewise, they learn for instrumental purposes, for example, securing high scores and good GPA. Such instrumental reasons motivate the learners and, thus lead them to develop positive attitude towards learning of language. Therefore, in the light of discussions with the participants of the study, it is strongly recommended that Communication Skills should be a credited course in all the programs offered by the university. This will enhance not only the verbal/spoken skills of the students but it will also enable the students to improve their written expression. The students will be trained for their future professional career as well. Even in those departments where the text books are in

language other than English language should offer Communication Skills course so that the students can pursue for higher studies.

Class Room Discussions

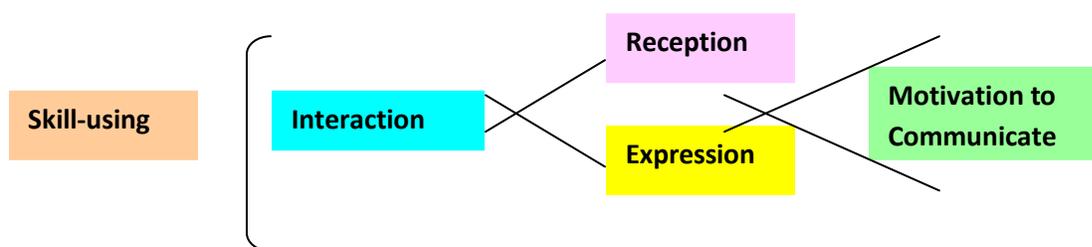
In the light of suggestions given by the participants, discussion on various issues should be conducted in the classroom so that the students may get chance to communicate in English language. According to Rivers (1996), 'all kinds of students can speak (and write) expressively when they have something to communicate that they themselves consider significant' (p. 111). Therefore the students should be given a chance to speak on issues/ topics related to everyday life preferably of their own interest. The ability to speak on familiar topics will bring a sense of achievement in students which will also increase the degree of motivation to learn English language.

Teacher's Role

English language teachers play an important role in developing positive or negative attitude of the students towards learning the language. It is the teacher who acts as a facilitator in the learning process. As reported by the students, no efforts are made by the teachers to improve their oral proficiency. In other words, there is no interaction between the teachers and the students. The importance of interaction between teacher and student is well explained by Jessa (2005: p. 390):

"Language learning is an individual achievement, an exploration of the capacities of the mind to make sense of the environment. This is the internal process of learning, comes as consequence of the interaction that takes place between the teacher and the learner."

Figure 3. Essential process in learning to communicate, Jessa (2005)



English language teacher should be an ESP (English for Specific Purposes) Practitioner who should make the learners to practice the language in actual setting and prepare them for their future profession.

Professional Development of the Teachers through Conferences, Training Courses and Workshops

As mentioned above, teacher's role is very much important in making not only the students develop positive attitude towards learning the language but also the teachers who teach courses other than English language. Therefore, English language teachers need to be cognizant of recent trends in language teaching so that they may overcome their ingrained prejudices (Warsi 2004). As far as other teachers are concerned, there should be professional conferences and workshops conducted by the trained English language teachers.

This will only be possible when the English language teachers will be professionally trained and deeply grounded in linguistic theory and second language acquisition research (Warsi 2004). As argued by David Crystal (cited in Warsi 2004) that 'having a heart does not necessarily make one a successful cardiologist'. This analogy means that one cannot become a proficient second language teacher simply by getting Masters Degree until he/she is professionally trained and is aware of the recent trends of his/her field.

English Language Classes

As the results reveal, there is an urgent need of English language classes where students can develop proficiency in English language. It will give them an opportunity to practice their spoken English as they do not have such environment outside the classroom. 'If the learners are to master language as communication they must have practice in communication'. (Jesa, 2005) It is important to mention that the Department of English offers such classes for students who want to learn English language by developing their four skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, these courses are so costly that the learners who belong to middle and lower classes (as they are in majority) cannot afford to attend them as a separate course. Therefore they must be given the opportunity to learn and practice the language within their respective programs offered by the University.

Teaching Methodology

Casey (1992) has found out that 'there exists highly positive relationship between proficiency level in English language and methods of teaching' (cited in Jese 2005, p. 70). Choosing an appropriate teaching methodology is important for the teachers teaching university classes. A teacher can develop the interest among the students by using modern technology (like Multimedia, Over-head Projector etc.) for their lectures. This can be implied particularly in English language classes where English language may possibly be facilitated by using such audio- visual aids.

Medium of Instruction

Another important point discussed in previous chapter is the medium of instruction. As mentioned by the students, the lectures are delivered in Urdu, for example, in department of Business Administration, where the English language is used only for the technical terms. Therefore the students cannot get the opportunity to listen and speak English in the classroom. As a result, they have no desire to learn English language. Moreover, they can cope with the university classes without being proficient speakers of English language. Therefore, it is recommended that medium of instruction should be English throughout in the departments where the course books are totally in English language. However, this purpose can be achieved by introducing English language courses in such departments offering Masters in Languages other than English language; like Urdu, Arabic, Persian, Islamic Learning etc.

English Language Center

The results reveal that there is a dearth of opportunities to learn and practice spoken English in this area of Punjab, Pakistan. In other words, the students have the minimum exposure to English language. In addition, the students of middle and lower classes may not have a chance to meet or integrate with native speakers of English language. Therefore, the idea of English language

centre is suggested where the students may have ease of access. Such a centre can be established in coordination with British Council, American Consulates or other organizations dealing with English as Second Language in Pakistan.

The motive behind this centre would be the exposure to the English language which would develop the positive attitude and high motivational intensity among university students. Similarly the seminars and workshops on the importance of English as a second language can be organized in coordination with British council and American Consulates. This will give the opportunity to integrate either with the native speakers or English speaking Pakistani. This would certainly bring some positive change among the students regarding the importance English language.

Reducing Apprehension and Anxiety about Communication

One of the major factors impeding communication of the students is anxiety. As mentioned earlier, the students get afraid of making mistakes. They also wish not to be negatively evaluated by their teachers or peers. Some strategies may help to reduce such apprehension.

The students should be encouraged by the teachers to speak English language despite of the low proficiency of the students. It should be kept in a mind that 'the person who has substandard communication skills or who are either ethnically or culturally divergent might also develop communication apprehension' (Richmond, McCroskey 1985, p. 37). Therefore, the students may possibly be learning English either as a second or a third language. Hence, they should be tolerated for their mistakes. Once they start communicating in the class, the level of motivation will be increased. As a result, the students would be less anxious.

Fluency and Accuracy

The idea, that fluency is important than accuracy in the beginning of language learning, would help to reduce the anxiety of the students. As mentioned by Widdowson (1985), "we are not walking grammars" refers that before we make our students confused by developing accuracy in grammatical rules, it is important to make them fluent. Let them express themselves.

Conclusion

The overall results of the study clearly show that the Pakistani post-graduate students are aware of the importance of English language in order to cope with the demands of the modern era. However, their attitudes towards English language and their desire to learn seem to be directly proportional to the social class they belong to. As expected, attitude and motivation are the strong factors behind the attainment of English language proficiency. Moreover, as indicated in previous studies by Lukmani(1972) and Ghani(2003), schooling, parental encouragement and learning experiences have been proved to be the stronger factors in SLL.

As far as SES is concerned, a strong relationship has been found between L2 proficiency and the social class of the learners. Moreover, the findings of the study have revealed that the middle class students strive to get some prestigious position in the society and, therefore, have become the proficient speakers of English language. This is contrary to the study conducted in Pakistan by Ghani(2003) where the students from upper class outperformed the middle and lower class in English language learning.

The lower class, as expected, remained the low scorer on the scales of oral proficiency, attitude and motivation. However, quite surprisingly, the students from the lower class showed interest to integrate with the English language community despite of the fact that they have least possibility

to interact with L2 community. This puts a question mark on the validity of Gardner's notion of integrative orientation (2003) in Pakistani context where the learners with poor socio-economic background can barely get a chance to interact with English language community.

Suggestions for Future Study

The present study is aimed at investigating the variables (individual differences) and other factors affecting the second language learning, identified by Gardner and other linguists. However, only three variables i.e. attitudes, motivation, and socio-economic status have been included in the study. Therefore, further research is needed to explore the relationship between intelligence, language aptitude, anxiety and the second language learning as discussed by Gardner in his Socio-educational Model.

Further research is also needed to explore the process of second language learning with reference to the age, sex and other personality traits (like learning styles, introversion and extroversion) of the learners.

Another area to be studied in second language learning is the role of cultural beliefs and mother tongue of the learners. It is to be studied either the language learning is facilitated or hampered by the influence of culture and the mother tongue of the learner i.e. how the student's own cultural background relates to the background projected by the second language culture' (Cook, 2001).

Since the present study have focused the oral proficiency of the students, further research should be conducted to investigate the problems related to listening, reading and writing skills of the students.

As indicated by the results, the other reasons for low proficiency in English language are role of teachers, their teaching methodologies and lack of opportunities. Therefore, there is an urgent need to conduct research studies focusing the issues mentioned above.

About the Author:

Misbah Rosheen khan has been associated with EFL/ESL teaching for more than nine years. Currently, she is working as an academic coordinator at English language Institute, King Abdul Aziz University. She received her MPhil degree in Applied Linguistics and her research interest lies in exploring the complex phenomenon of L2 learning. She is a passionate teacher and a researcher who believes in teacher empowerment and professional development through research which can be initiated from the classroom.

References

- Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*: Longman.
Cook, V.(2001). *Second Language Learning and Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford

University Press

- Ellis, R. (2001). *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*: Oxford University Press.
- Gardner, R.C. (1985). *Social Psychology & Second Language Learning. The Role of Attitudes and Motivation*: Edward Arnold.
- Gardner, R.C. & MacIntyre, P.D.(1993). On the Measurement of Affective Variables in Second Language, *Language Learning* 43; 2, June 1993, pp.157_194.
- Ghani, M. (2003). The Role of Anxiety in English Language class, *Journal of Research (Pakistan Journal of Language)* vol.4 No.1.
- Ghani, M. (2003). The Relationship of Socio- Economic Status and Length/ Medium of English Instruction with Individual differences and English Proficiency in Pakistan, *Journal of Research (Faculty of Language and Islamic studies)* vol.3.
- Ghani, M. (2003). The status and position of English Language in Pakistan, *Journal of social sciences and Humanities*, Vol.4, No.1.
- Jesa, M. (2005). *Efficient English Teaching: Methods, Lesson Format, Evaluation*: A.P H Publishing Corporation.
- Johnson, K. & H. Johnson. (1998). *An Encyclopedic Dictionary of Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Lukmani, Y. M. (1972), *Motivation To Learn And Language Proficiency*. *Language Learning*, 22: 261–273. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-1770.1972.tb00087.x
- Mansoor, S. (1993). *Punjabi, Urdu, English in Pakistan: A Scio Linguistics Study*: Vanguard Books Ltd.
- Norris-Holt, J. (2001). Motivation as a Contributing Factor in Second Language Acquisition. *The Internet TESL Journal*, Vol. VII, No. 6, June 2001 available at <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Norris-Motivation.html>
- Pthan,H. Shahriar,A. and Mari, M. (2010) Motivation for Learning English in Pakistan. *EFL Annual Research Journal, SALU*. Vol:12,pp75-91
- Rehman,A., Bilal, H., Sheikh, A., Bibi, N., Nawaz, A.,(2014). The Role of Motivation in Learning English Language for Pakistani Learners. *International journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*,Vol.4, No 1
- Richmond, V.P. & McCroskey, J.C. (1985). *Communication Apprehension, Avoidance and Effectiveness*: Allyn & Bacon.
- Rivers, W.M. (1996). *Communicating Naturally in a Second Language: Theory and Practice in Language Teaching*: Cambridge University Press.
- Warsi, J.(2004). Conditions under which English is taught in Pakistan: An Applied Linguistic Perspective. *Sarid Journal*. Available at http://sarid.net/sarid-journal/2004_Warsi.pdf
- Widdowson, H .G. (1985). *Exploration in Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press