

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

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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