Studying of the Barriers Faced by EFL Iraqi Students in teaching Speaking skills At Intermediate School

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Abstract

Speaking is a very central part in learning a foreign language. In this study, the researcher ; as an English teacher for more than 30 years ,finds out that students at any school level encounter a lot of barriers that avoid them from being fluent English speakers. Consequently, the present study aims to find out these challenges among EFL Iraqi students at Intermediate school s. The sample of this survey consists of 117male students. Cronbach's alpha was utilized to calculate internal consistency to decide the reasons that lead to oral shortage and suggest solutions to overcome these challenges. The results discovered that there are some challenges that relate to the students , teachers and Textbooks .In fact, Textbooks, may not motivate students to speak particularly, with limited periodic teaching time and consequently, mainly center on teaching grammar` structure and writing tasks. The researcher proposed a set of solutions to tackle these problems such as, teachers should support students to perform the language orally in and out the classroom and provide students the self-confidence to speak unexpectedly using that language. They must also analysis students' mistakes beneficially. Besides, textbooks should contain a lot of comprehensible pictures to arouse oral communication skills and graspable drills check students' ability to speak fluently

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Tel.Mob: 07711322852
e ISSN: 2789-6838
p ISSN: 2663-7405

الملخص

يعد التحدث جزءًا أساسيًا جدًا في تعلم لغة أجنبية. وفي هذه الدراسة، وجد الباحث كمدرس للغة الإنجليزيةلأكثر من 30 سنة أن الطلاب في أي مستوى مدرسي يواجهون الكثير من العوائق التي تمنعهم من أن يكونوا متحدثين باللغة الإنجليزية بطلاقة. وبالتالي، تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى معرفة هذه التحديات لدى طلاب المرحلة المتوسطة الثانية العراقيين في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في المدرسة المتوسطة. وتتكون عينة هذا الاستطلاع من 117 طالباً. تم استخدام ألفا كرونباخ لحساب الاتساق الداخلي لتحديد الأسباب التي تؤدي إلى النقص الشفوي واقتراح الحلول للتغلب على هذه التحديات. وأظهرت النتائج أن هناك بعض التحديات التي تتعلق بالطلاب والمعلمين والكتب المدرسية. في الواقع، قد لا تحفز الكتب المدرسية الطلاب على التحدث وخاصة في الوقت المحدد للتدريس وبالتالي تركز بشكل أساسي على تدريس القواعد ومهام الكتابة. واقترح الباحث مجموعة من الحلول لمعالجة هذه المشكلات، منها ضرورة قيام المعلمين بدعم الطلاب في أداء اللغة شفهياً داخل وخارج الفصل الدراسي وتزويد الطلاب بالثقة بالنفس للتحدث بشكل غير متوقع باستخدام تلك اللغة. ويجب عليهم أيضًا تحليل أخطاء الطلاب بشكل مفيد. إلى جانب ذلك، يجب أن تحتوي الكتب المدرسية على الكثير من الصور الاستيعابية تثير مهارات الاتصال الشفهي وتدريبات المفهومة للتحقق من قدرة الطلاب على التحدث بطلاقة.

المقدمة

INTRODUCTION

In my country, English Language is taught as foreign language and the speakers , mainly school students are not noticeable with its significance . Students use English periodic barely within the classes and fewer recurrent outer the class. While, student does not have enough time to speak English in class, and he does not have enough sustain to carry out English exterior the class to be distinguishable with English. It is a shortage conveys a trouble for the learners to communicate in English. The study investigates the reasons and challenges that the learners find hardly to speak in English and recommend alot clarification so as to be able to prevail over these obstacles. The major objective of teaching speaking is to be a good talkative speaker. Teaching speaking is the way for helping students increase their capacity to talk effectively in the target language. In order to achieve this goal, they have communicative competence. (Nunan, 1999, p. 226) "defined the uniqueness of talkative capability as a means to assist learners improve their talking skill, the instructor should aid learners progress their sentence structure, develop their expressions, and control associations to expand their verbal skill".

Problem of the study

Nowadays ,The importance of English language lies on how people to master this language.   English language based on four central skills, these are receptive(listening,reading)andproductiveskills(speaking,writing).The   present study focuses on speaking skills are also known as productive one. This skill is essential for the users of any language. It is not only simply talking, but it is a way of   ideas, feeling or information for connecting people through communication. It means that speaking skill involves some people or mainly students to make a conversation. The researcher as an English teacher observed many problems that students made when they speak such as, absence of words, nonexistence of pronunciation, lack of confidence to speak, and have a fear of making mistakes when they speak. Additionally, the student feels shy to speak English and express their ideas or opinions because they are afraid of making errors in pronouncing the words. So, students became not self-assured because the student felt worried to make mistakes when they pronounced English words in front of the class. Furthermore, the students favored to use the mother tongue to answer the teacher's questions, when they were asked . Based on these observations , the researcher realizes, that these problems should be really studied and suggested some solutions to these barriers encountered by EFL students at intermediate stage of school in this research paper.

Research Questions

1-What are the troubles and hardness that countenance the learners of English at 2ndyear Intermediate school in speaking skills?

2-What are the appropriate resolutions?

The significance of the Study

The significant results of this study are expected to be useful

theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretically, the research could be a source of information to study of the students' problems in speaking English.

2- Practically, it can help the teachers to understand students' problems in speaking English and the reasons that caused these difficulties ,it also can open the gate for further Investigations and studies to get more information about the students' problems in speaking skills.

Aims

The present study aims at:

1-Finding out Iraqi EFL   students' barriers in learning speaking skill at 2ndyear Intermediate school .

2-Finding out the best solutions for Iraqi EFL students' barriers in learning speaking skill at 2ndyear Intermediate school .

Limits

The current study is limited to:

1- The academic year 2024/2025.

2- Iraqi EFL 2nd-Year students at AL-Sediek Intermediate School For Boys, Diyala Governorate.

3- Speaking Skills' barriers faced by Iraqi EFL 2nd-Year students at AL-Sediek Intermediate School For Boys, Diyala Governorate and the best solutions.

Definition of The Basic Terms

Speaking Skill: "It is one of the essential skills to be developed as a means of effective communication (Al-Eiadeh et al., 2016)

Learning speaking: " learning speaking of foreign language is the acquisition and knowing of its grammar and vocabulary through communication". Shumin (1997)

 Speaking barriers: "They are obstacles that encounter speaker when expressing or speaking a foreign language". Shumin (2002) .

Whey speaking skill is important?

Speaking skill is the most essential part for the attainment of EFL/ESL learning . Speaking skill is the judgment of the students winning in real life situations. Although, its importance, teachers still have been ongoing their teaching of speaking skills as memorization of dialogues or reiteration conversations. However, nowadays the requirement of verbal skills for the learners and the English instructors   to teach these oral English language skill . So they need to develop their abilities in speaking and transmit well in real-life situations.

As we see in our teaching environment very less superiority is given to the oral skills whereas more attention is to reading and writing skills. Despite, that instructional teaching put heavy emphasized with elements of enhancing the speaking, fluency and accuracy. As Richards and Rodgers (2001: 157) stated that "fluency and acceptable language is the primary goal: Accuracy is judged in the abstract, but in context, while speaking fluently requires students to produce correct utterances to be fully understood and communicatively competent". The awareness of the significance of oral abilities, more importance now lays on developing the speaking skills of the learners to chase their studies effectively and do extremely well in their education.

(Bueno, Madrid, and Mclaren (2006: 321), state that "Speaking is one of the most difficult skills language learners have to face" speaking is a difficult skill among the four basic skills of the English language, because the speakers have to create accurate and adequate grammatically and vocabulary sentences.

Furthermore, speaking skills are also helpful for students when they graduate and do well in their professions and jobs. Moreover, an successful speaker can enthuse the listeners a lot and put on the complete concentration of the listeners

and continue the same rhythm until the end of his/her speech. So the active listeners involve totally in the speaker's speech and they sometimes not remember the real world and put their complete concentration on the speech. It means that listening and speaking are two productive skills and they must be taught comprehensively. In fact, it is difficult to improve these skills inside classroom with insufficient time and practice devoted to them for each students since they need they more time to be grew and because grammar has still a long written custom. (Bueno, Madrid and Mclaren, 2006).Therefore, speaking skills take a central part in as everything rely on the way how people be in touch with others.

Challenges in learning speaking skill

Oral skill in EFL is somehow a complicated mission because students meet a lot of obstructions while talking, several of these barriers cover the process of being efficiently in that language . The most problems they were feeling shy and fear of mistake, or even being disapproved of instructors and others, not have of inspiration, not have of self-assurance and not have information on the topic talk about , these complexities are measured as psychosocial factors by ,Schwartz (2005) . The mainly challenges encountered the students in EFL class in rising their oral abilities ended them pass up talk in English , classify in three parts:

A/Learners challenges:

1- Be short of stimulation and self-assurance.

2- Not have information on the topic chat about

3- Feeling Shy , worry and fear of mistake , or being disapproved by others.

4- Students don't have a chance of speaking English outside the classroom.

6-They usually think in Arabic when they talk English so
 this makes hinder with English language.

7- Neglecting listening skill which is connected to pronunciation.

B/ Teachers challenges:

1- A number of teachers overdo their mother tongue (Arabic) in EFL classes.

2- A number of instructors give a lot concentration to written activities solitary.

4- A few instructors rarely utilizing novel methods and instructions in teaching speaking.

C/ Teaching environment and course book problems:

1- The given time for training speaking skill inside lessons is too limit.

2- Classes are overloaded with students .

3- minimum number of oral communication activities in the course book.

4- Most of tests are neglecting oral communication skill.

Possible Solutions for Speaking skill Barriers

To expand the oral communication skill required for students, they have to overcome some obstacles .Researchers and educators treated these problems, and suggested a number of possible solutions, Price (1991), Pesce (2011), . Kurtus (2001), Liu and Huang (2010)**.,** Ye Htwe (2007).**,** Charles (1993). such as:

1- Encouraging and supporting for students to avoid disapprove of learner's mistakes, they will obtain self-assurance from their instructor's assist and pay concentration to them .

2- constructing a sociable association with students to overcome shyness .

3- Transmitting the ideas and topics in a clear way, students will add trust to talk, and avoided fear of mistake, they get help from their teachers and an optimistic strengthening will be residential**.**

4- Making use of motivated and interested actions as a resolution of attractive learner's enthusiasm to learn, and that will overcome students' lack of motivation.

5- Providing a high-quality and relaxed setting for students to feel positively and talk English language by increasing learners' time to speak is an excellent way as strategy to build learners' self-confidence

Additionally, Kayi (2006)) advocates crucial doctrines when teaching speaking skill:

1-Rising the quantity of time students talking English inside classroom.

2-Creating exceptional learning materials and environment where students can learn and work together.

3-Each student gets to verbalize in every class and take part in different ways.

4-Give students helpful advice and support each time student talks.

5-Ask students open-ended questions and raise critical thinking , this will increase students speaking time.

6-Focusing on at any oral error without confuse or disturb students, from what they are demanding to speak.

7-Teachers should dynamically walk around the classroom to assist students and ensure they are having the correct answers when students work with peers.

8-Uesing activities that students verbalize in and outside the classroom such as role play, conversations ,group dissections and group work in order to build trust among students and be effective oral communicators..

9-Preparing solution for language obstacles that some students encounter throughout lesson so students delayed when use mother tongue language and providing students with vocabulary that student s require in speaking activities earlier.

10-Teaching the required vocabulary or grammar structure a little lessons earlier than .In order for students to be well-known with content they use when talking.

Methodology &Sample

The researcher follows the descriptive method in this study.

Sample :The researcher chooses a sample of the study composed of(117) male students they are in the second Intermediate stage at AL-Sediek Intermediate School For Boys, Diyala   Governorate, at 3 sections mainly,(A,B,C) .The participants are native speakers of Arabic, learning English as a foreign language for7 or 8 years ,aged between14 or 15years old .

Procedures

The descriptive design was employed in this research paper .A questionnaire of (15) items was presented to   the students at their English sessions(40 minutes)to each section(A,B,C)for responding to the items. The aim of the study and its beneficial results was explained by the researcher, also clarification and translation if it was necessary to some items was offered throughout the limited time.

Instrument of the Study

To know students' opinions and views about learning speaking skills barriers and to overcome these speaking problems. A questionnaire of (15) items was applied in this study . A five point Likert scale ranging from five to one: 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral , 2 = Disagree, to 1 = Strongly Disagree was used in this survey(See **Appendix A**). Respondents were instructed to select only one response for each item .To ensure the questionnaire validity, two experts of the field reviewed the items of the questionnaire. Statistical method was used in the study. The researcher analyzed the questionnaire by using (SPSS -27) program. The researcher used the percentages in this study. The reliability of the study tool has been confirmed using Cronbach's alpha. The tool's reliability for the questionnaire (Cronbach alpha =0.90), indicating excellent internal consistency

Data analysis & Discussion

In order to summarize the total level of difficulties and problems that facing the students of English at Iraqi EFL 2nd-Year students Intermediate stage in speaking skills, table 1 clearly shows that the final score of the 15 questions listed in the questionnaire was with minimum score= 15, maximum score= 60, and the median score =36(Table 1& Figure 1).

Table1: The mean, standard deviation, and range of the total score

	Total score
Mean±SD	37.15±8.39
Standard Error of Mean	0.779
Range	15-60
Percentile 05th	24
25th	32
50th (Median)	36
75th	42
95th	54
99th	60

15-----------little----------30---------Fair----------45--------high--------60
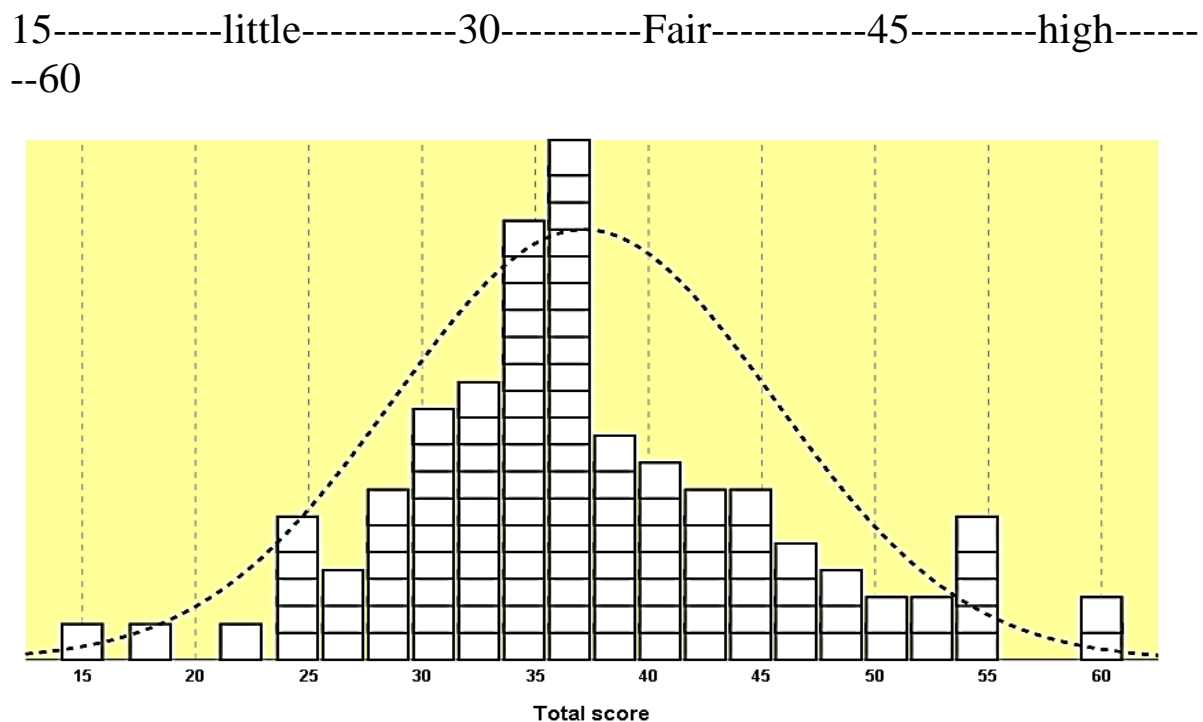

Figure1: The total score system distribution.

       Table 2 reveals that statistics on students' responses towards each items were obtained by adding all scores of scale items and compared with the median score. The median was computed to be 30 and, for the purpose of this study, those who scored greater or equal to the median were considered to have high obstacles towards speaking skill because their average scores were either agreed or strongly agreed, and those who scored below the median were considered to have less obstacles because their average scores were either strongly disagree or disagree. This indicates the majority of students at Iraqi EFL 2nd-Year students Intermediate stage faced problems in speaking skills since their number(77),(22) high, fair and their scores ranging between (30-44), (=>45) with 66.45%, 19.0%respectively. It means the most of students encountered difficulties when they speak English while a little number of students(14.7%) have less problems encountered towards speaking English (Figure 2).

Table2: The total score system.

Total score	No	%
little (<30)	17	14.7
Fair (30-44)	77	66.4
high (=>45)	22	19.0
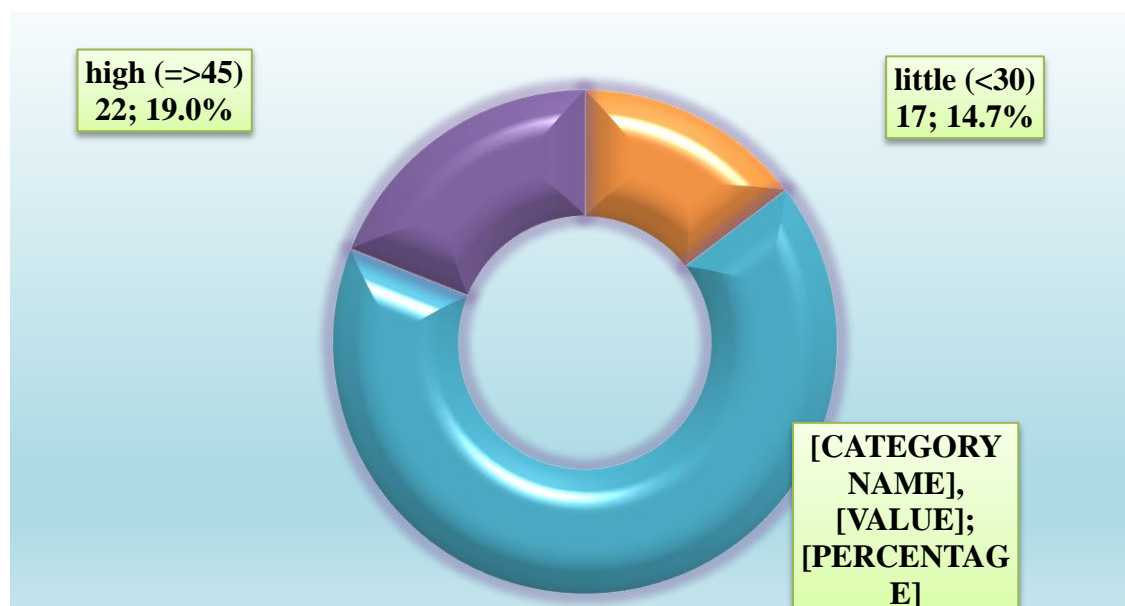
Figure2: The total score system.

To discover the main challenges faced by intermediate students, in speaking skill the researcher had calculated the percentages of responses in table 3 which indicates that the most important cause of challenges in speaking English is related to the teachers who did not encourage critical thinking and oral communication this statement is drawn from the statement (*Teachers do not raise questions to arouse critical thinking and oral communication*) which got the highest percentage. The other important causes related to textbooks, feel of shyness, and fear of making mistake. These were drawn from statements (*Textbooks do not include adequate engaging and stimulating English oral communication activities*.), (*Have difficulty to speak orally in English & feel shyness*)and (*Afraid to make a mistake, when comminuting orally*).

Another the greatest reasons of speaking challenges also occurs in to textbooks which are lacking of oral communication tests , emphasize English grammar

and writing more than oral communication activities and not comprise adequate comprehensible pictures to awaken oral communicating. This result is drawn from statements (*English oral communicating tests are lacking in the English textbooks), (Text book emphasize English grammar and writing more than oral communication) ,(Textbooks do not guide students to access online oral communication activities in English), (Textbook are not comprise pictures to awaken oral communicating*) since these statements get highest percentage.

Table 3: The students' Responses to the speaking difficulties

	Percentages
Teachers do not raise questions to arouse critical thinking and oral communication	73.8
Textbooks do not include adequate engaging and stimulating English oral communication activities.	43.1
Have difficulty to speak orally in English & feel shyness	38.8
I am afraid to make a mistake, when I am comminuting orally	37.9
English oral communicating tests are lacking in the English textbooks	35.3
Textbooks emphasize English grammar and writing more than oral communication.	33.3
Textbook are not comprise adequate comprehensible pictures to awaken oral communicating	31.9
Textbooks do not guide students to access online oral communication activities in English	31.6
I do not practice English outside the class.	30.0
Teachers do not utilize motivated techniques to support oral communication inside class such as; role play, pair, and group work	27.6
Not motivated to communicate orally	26.7

I have lack of self- confidence from comminuting orally.	26.7
Teachers don't give me a chance to talk in English inside the class	25.9
Teachers do not encourage me to practice English outside the class	25.9
Teachers disrupt me to correct my mistakes.	19.8

Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed that the lack self- confidence, shyness, and fear of making mistakes prevent students from oral practice skills, are all personal challenges that students might face in learning proficient English speaking skills. As for the challenges related to teachers and textbook it was found that the absence of oral tests, insufficient time, no encouragement to use the language, motivation and enjoyable atmosphere are the common reasons related to students' ineffective English speaking. Finally, the most important causes were related to the textbooks: lack of motivation, focus largely on grammar and writing that have no interest and most exercises that employed inside the classroom are not communicative.

Thus, to solve this problem the following were the suggested solutions: students should be patient and self-confident when obtain the oral skills and to not use the first language in the classroom. Also, teachers should encourage students' to be more confident, to communicate without fear and gently correct their mistakes. Lastly, textbooks should include adequate comprehensible pictures which arouse oral communication and oral exercises to check students' ability to communicate orally.

Previous Studies

Some related studies are in the same line with the current study:

1-The first study was employed by Abrar et al. (2018), The results of this research were language barriers such as lack of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and fluency, psychological factors such as anxiety, attitude and lack of motivation, enjoyable learning environment . All the above prevent the students of being fluent English speakers. He suggested practicing the language such as self-practice ,practice with tutors also practice uses media and technology, to avoid these challenges.

2- Nazara (2011) was applied a study aimed to investigate the perceptions of students of English speaking skill development. The result was also showing that 45% of participants knew their speaking level was high, while 55% of participants were not. Thus, the participants wanted to speak in English, and for that matter, speaking mastery was important for them.

3-This study came from Juhana (2018), which aimed to find out psychological factors that hindered students from speaking and the causes of the factors as well as possible solutions to overcome the factors. The result showed that there were five psychological factors in hindered speaking in English, such as fear of mistake (37%), shyness (26%), anxiety (18%), lack of confidence (13%), and lack of motivation (6%). Based on this research, the solution depended on how the teacher could motivate the students and asked them to participate actively in the learning process.

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Appendix A

A questionnaire of Iraqi EFL Students' Barriers in teaching Speaking Skills At Intermediate school

NO.	Statement	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neutral	agree	Strongly agree
1	I have difficulty to speak orally in English I feel shyness.					
2	I am not motivated to communicate orally.					
3	I do not practice English outside the class.					
4	I am afraid to make a mistake, when I am comminuting orally.					
5	I have lack of self-confidence from comminuting orally.					
6	Teachers disrupt me to correct my mistakes.					
7	Teachers don't give me a chance to talk in English inside the class.					
8	Teachers do not utilize motivated techniques to support oral					

	communication inside class such as; role play, pair, and group work		502			
9	Teachers do not encourage me to practice English outside the class.					
10	Teachers do not raise questions to arouse critical thinking and oral communication					
11	Most textbooks drills are calculating not comminuting.					
12	Textbooks do not guide students to access online oral communication activities in English					
13	Textbooks emphasize English grammar and writing more than oralcommunication.					
14	English oral comminuting test are lacking in the English textbooks					
15	Textbook are not comprise adequate comprehensible pictures to awaken oral comminuting.					