



## English Speaking Problems Faced by ESL Students of Intermediate Level in District Chitral



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**Abstract:** *The present research study is an effort to explore the English-speaking problems faced by ESL students of intermediate level in district Chitral. The research is oriented on both quantitative and qualitative paradigms. The population of the study was five colleges of district Chitral and fifty ESL students were selected as research participants. Data was composed by using an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent to the participants via Email and WhatsApp. The collected data was analyzed in numerical form and presented in tables and graphs. The main finding of the research is that there is a lack of proper environment inside the ESL classrooms for speaking English and also a lack of basic facilities like English language laboratories and there is no separate programs inside the educational institutions for the development of language skill. Most of the English teachers teach English subjects in their native language. Some recommendations are also given by the researchers.*

**Key Words:** Speaking Skill, Speaking Proficiency, Speaking Accuracy. Speaking Fluency, College Level, ESL Students.

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### Introduction

Education has a fundamental role in the social and economic growth of a state as it is performing a dominant part to bring change in the world (Ramaley, 2013). The district Chitral is located on the northeastern side of KPK province in the Hindukush region of Pakistan (Ahmad, et.al. 2018). The people of district Chitral face socio-economic difficulties, so there are not any alternative

resources except education for communal development but the deficiency of institutes and amenities makes it problematic for the local community to get advanced education. The Chitrali people have their own cultures, languages, dialect and accents. The English language is widely used as a medium of instruction in the maximum institutes of the district Chitral, which grows direct understandings between the instructors and learners. Each standard language comprises

four fundamental skills called listening, speaking, reading and writing skills but the problem is that for the development of these skills, there is a need for an appropriate atmosphere for language enhancement. Speaking skill is regarded most important in the field of education, especially in communicating procedure. In the educational field speaking skill has a crucial role for instructors and learners. According to (Brown & Yule, 1983) spoken language production is often considered one of the most difficult aspects of language learning. The speaking procedure is not merely to compose or organize words but its function is also to pronounce these words, moreover, speaking skill encompasses three conditions interactive, partially interactive and non-interactive. According to Arora (2012) in teaching and learning programs speaking skill not only facilitates the medium of instruction but also provide an opportunity for the expression of knowledge imparted from the teacher to the student and the student acquired that knowledge through speaking and listening skill. English is a global language it is also the language of science, learned as a 2<sup>nd</sup> language in Pakistan but Pakistani ESL learners face many difficulties in ESL learning especially in speaking skills. The researchers make an effort to solve this problem by highlighting this problem in their contributive research work, which will prove beneficial for both Pakistani ESL teachers and ESL learners.

### Statement of the Problem

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The English language is the leading language in the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Ali, Kamal, & Imran, 2023). The English language is the international language in the world and the speaking of the English language has become the need of almost everyone. If we want a good job and reputation in our society, we should have a command of English but unfortunately, Pakistani ESL students show a lack of accuracy and fluency while speaking

the English language. There are many reasons for their disqualification in this skill of standard English as unsuitable educational atmosphere, absence of resources, lacking self-confidence, and social and economic difficulties which are leading to nervousness. A majority of the Chitrali students come to the colleges from Urdu medium schools and adopting English medium of instruction is difficult for them. The resolution of the present research work was to determine English speaking complications of intermediate-level ESL students of district Chitral and produce a solution for refining speaking skills.

### Research Question

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- What are the challenges and problems faced by intermediate-level ESL students while speaking English in the teaching-learning process in district Chitral?

### Significance of the Study

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The present research study will be supportive of Pakistani ESL students in improving their skill of English speaking. This will benefit ESL learners to become fluent speakers by understanding the English-speaking difficulties and ESL teachers to advance their method of instruction by communicating efficiently. The strategy makers and educationalists might take benefit from the present research study by considering the complications of the speaking skill of standard English language at college level ESL students in district Chitral. Furthermore, the present research study will also help as a future reference for the forthcoming researchers in their research works in the field of English linguistics. The present research will also edify ESL students to recognize the status of the standard English language. This research work will be proving a substantial attempt in encouraging the speaking skill of ESL learners.

## Literature Review

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The main purpose of the literature review is to know the history of related topics (Ahmad, Maitlo, & Rao, 2022). The literature review comprises English language skills, English language proficiency, English speaking skill, English speaking proficiency, English speaking accuracy and English-speaking fluency followed by some previous studies related topics.

## Language Speaking Proficiency

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Language skills distinct humans from animals because this is the capability of humans to transfer their ideas by using language (Maitlo, Tumrani & Ali, 2022). Language is a significant ability of humans they advanced this complicated arrangement to communicate with each other for the purpose of transferring their ideology. Language is an organized procedure of wordings which aids in transferring our views and ideology by using diverse sounds and methods of communication. It's essential for ESL learners to be mature and talented in English linguistic skills (Ahmad, Farhat & Choudhary, 2022). Speaking skill is productive skill in oral mode. It involves more than just pronouncing words so it is more complex endures than it seems. "Speaking and writing are recognized as productive skills because these both skills entail formula of language production" (Ahmad, Iqbal & Rao, 2023). Although its a desire of most ESL learners to become proficient in English speaking skills, it is a very problematic mission for ESL learners. ESL learners recognize the grammatical rules of language but they feel difficulties in speaking the English language in the conditions where other persons speaking sound English. In Pakistan, numerous people can comprehend the English language but they cannot speak it. Similarly, in many states, the public experiences a similar phenomenon for instance in Japan several

people face problems while speaking the English language (Tatham & Morton, 2006). Speaking is the creative skill in the spoken style it's identified as a dynamic skill as the speaker creates thoughts and transfers these ideas to the listener appropriately. Dissimilar dialects and languages are spoken in a different way according to geographical setting. In District Chitral, Khowar is spoken as a first language or language one and Urdu language is used as language two and is generally used language in the education sector of District Chitral which is a stepping stone for ESL learners (Kennan, 2009). The ESL learner is essentially to be a decent writer as well as a talented speaker since this is the elementary purpose of English education. Brown & Yule (1983) stated that producing a verbal language is measured as a record tough aspect in the process of language learning (Brown & Yule, 1983).

## Some Related Studies

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In an international context, Akasha (2013) explored the problems faced by ESL learners & instructors at the school level the native language of these participants was Arabic language. Huwari (2019) investigated difficulties met by undergraduates in English-speaking in Jordan. Aziz & Kashinathan, (2021) analyzed the difficulties and problems while speaking the English language in ESL classrooms in Malaysia.

In the national context, Gul, Ali and Hassan (2022) investigated the English-speaking difficulties faced by secondary school students by selecting five public schools in district Kohat for the population of their study and selecting seventy students for sampling. The questionnaire containing thirteen questions was used as research instrumentation for this study. This research work produced significant outcomes as Societal and mental aspects were creating hindrances in English speaking skills. Arshad, Mirza & Alam, (2022) directed research in the twin cities of Islamabad and

Rawalpindi and analyzed the issues distressing English speaking skills at the graduation level. The research findings revealed that students commit errors while speaking the English language. Ali, Kamal & Imran, (2023) conducted research to reveal the difficulties met by Pakistani ESL students in English-speaking by selecting one hundred research participants from Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta equally twenty participants from these cities. The findings of the research exposed that ESL students psychologically and linguistically faced difficulties in English speaking.

In the context of district Chitral although some researchers conducted their research as Sharar (2012) introduced the practice to instructors in an English medium lower secondary private school in Chitral. Jan, (2019) conducted research on improving grade 9<sup>th</sup> students' English-speaking skills by using task-based language teaching methods in a private secondary school in district Chitral. But instead of these researches, there is a gap left as there is no single research conducted which is highlighting English speaking problems in the context of district Chitral. The researchers with the help of their professors decided to conduct research work which will be beneficial for the ESL learners of Chitral, especially coming generations of district Chitral. Farhat (2019) in her doctoral dissertation pointed out that increasing English language displays that in coming years none native speakers will more than native speakers this phenomenon rapidly emerging in Asian countries, especially in Pakistan. In the contemporary age, different

pieces of research are conducted everywhere in all areas of Pakistan which is justifying the above-mentioned Farhat's statement in her dissertation.

### Research Methodology

This part of the article contains the methods and designs used in the research. "The methodical study of the procedure is called the research method" (Ahmad, Shahid, & Farhat, 2023). The current study investigated English-speaking complications of college-level ESL students in district Chitral. The population of the study was five colleges of district Chitral ten research participants were selected from each college to contribute to this present research work. Thus, the total selected sample size was fifty students of intermediate level. For the purpose of data, a questionnaire was developed by the researchers, the first part of the questionnaire was containing on demographic information while the second part contains twenty-one close-ended questions giving two options yes or no. The questionnaire was sent to the research participants by means of WhatsApp for the purpose of data collection. The collected data was analyzed in numerical form and presented in tables and graphs.

### Results and Findings

This part of the article provides details about the demographic information of the participants in table one and in figure two responses to the close-ended questions are presented.

**Table 1**

*Demographic Information of the Participants*

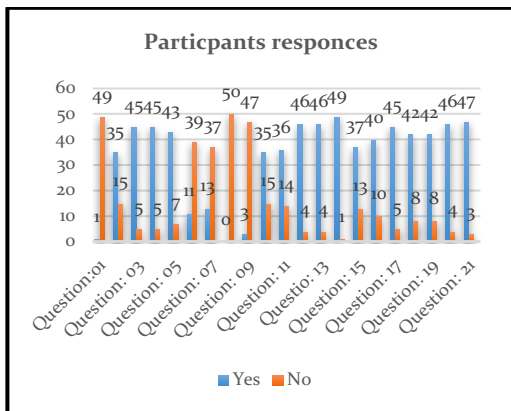
Gender/Locality	Participants/Area	Numbers	Percentage	Total
Gender	Male	50	100%	Total 50/ (100%) students' participants.
Location	Urban	25	50%	
	Rural	25	50%	

A total of 50 (100%) ESL students participated in the research all were male students of

intermediate level selected from five colleges of district Chitral. The 25 (50%) students belong to the urban while the other 25 (50%) students belong to the rural areas of district Chitral.

**Figure 2**

*Responses to the Close-Ended Questions*



All the responses to twenty-one closed-ended questions are presented in the above graph. The participants were asked to respond to the questions in yes and no. The discussion about every question is presented below in numbers.

- I. In the 1<sup>st</sup> question, students were asked about the "English Speaking Environment." The result displayed that 98 % (49 out of 50) of the participants respond that there is no English-speaking environment available inside colleges whereas 2 % (1 out of 50) of the participants said that there is English speaking environment. The majority of the participants claim that there is no English-Speaking Environment inside the colleges which is one of the hindrances to speaking English.
- II. The 2<sup>nd</sup> question showed that teachers use English rarely as a medium of instruction at the college level. 70 %

(35 out of 50) students said English is not used as a medium of instruction at colleges while 30 % (15 out of 50) students said it is used. Overall, the majority of the participants agree with the statement that teachers don't use English as a medium of instruction at the college level.

- III. As the study shows that it is quite difficult for students to pronounce English words at the college level. As shown in the table that 90 % (45 out of 50) students respond that it is difficult to pronounce English words while the rest of 10 % (5 out of 50) participants respond that it isn't that difficult to pronounce English words.
- IV. Hesitation is one of the hurdles for the students speaking skills, especially at high and secondary levels. The table shows that 80 % (40 out of 50) students feel hesitation while speaking English while 20 % (10 out of 50) students don't. The study found that the majority of the student feel hesitation while speaking English in their learning process.
- V. The study shows that the students find it difficult to participate in a discussion going on in the class in the English language. The result shows that 86 % (43 out of 50) students find it difficult to participate in the discussion going on in the class in English while 14 % (7 out of 50) students don't.
- VI. Table no 6 shows that the students' responses in interaction with their fellow students are very low with a percentage of 22 % (11 out of 50) while 78 % (39 out of 50) of the students don't speak English with their fellow students. The majority of the students don't communicate in the English language with their fellow students and family members.

- VII. The table clearly shows that most of the teachers don't use any teaching aid for enhancing English speaking skills. Only 26 % (13 out of 50) claims that teachers use teaching aid for enhancing English speaking skill while the rest of the 74 % (37 out of 50) students said that they don't use them.
- VIII. The study shows that students face a lot of problems due to a lack of facilities and environment in speaking English, language lab is one of the factors as shown in the table that 100 % of students viewed that there is no language lab in college.
- IX. The environment is very necessary for every field of life especially in language because acquiring language is habit formation so you can form new habits from the environment. Students can't speak proper English because of a lack of environment. The results show that 94 % (47 out of 50) students respond that there is no English-speaking environment available outside college while 6 % (3 out of 50) students respond that there is English speaking environment outside college.
- X. The table shows 70 % (35 out of 50) participants said that their parents are educated while 30 % (15 out of 50) participants claim that their parents are uneducated. It is found that the majority of the parents are uneducated.
- XI. The table shows that 72 % (36 out of 50) students claimed that their parents are interested in the English language while 28 % (14 out of 50) students said that their parents are not interested in the English language. The majority of the participants claimed that their parents are interested in the English language.
- XII. The table shows that 92 % (46 out of 50) students use English with their friends and family members while 8 % (4 out of 50) students don't use it. The study shows that most of the students use English with their friends and family member.
- XIII. It was found that maximum students are agreeing with the statement that English is a better medium of instruction than any other language. The table shows that 88 % (44 out of 50) students claimed that English is a better medium of instruction while 12 % (6 out of 50) students said English is not a better medium of instruction than other languages.
- XIV. The table shows that 98 % (49 out of 50) students feel a lack of confidence while speaking English while 2 % (1 out of 50) students don't feel a lack of confidence while speaking English. It means maximum students feel a lack of confidence while speaking English.
- XV. The table shows that 75 % (37 out of 50) students claim that have a fluency problem in speaking English while 26 % (13 out of 50) students don't have a problem with fluency while speaking English. As the study shows that the majority of the students have fluency problems in speaking English.
- XVI. Table/diagram 16 shows that most of the students have very less vocabulary bank. About 80% (40 out of 50) of students have vocabulary problems. Whereas 20 % (10 out of 50) students don't face vocabulary problems while speaking the English language. So, this is one of the problems of students' weak level in English.
- XVII. The study shows that maximum students don't think of mistakes while speaking English they utter whatever comes to their mind 90 % (45 out of 50) participants think of mistakes while speaking while 10 % (5 out of 50) participants don't think of mistakes

- while speaking English they utter whatever comes to their mind.
- XVIII. The table shows that 84 % (42 out of 50) students claim that they feel shy while speaking English and 16 % (8 out of 50) students said they don't feel shy while speaking English. The majority of the students feel shy while speaking English.
- XIX. Language is learned by imitation. The table shows that 90 % of the students are watching English news channels or movies in all three colleges. The table shows that 90 % (45 out of 50) students agree with the statement that students don't watch English news channels and English movies while 10 % (5 out of 50) students don't agree with the statement.
- XX. The table shows that 92 % (46 out of 50) participants are of the opinion that English was not the medium of instruction in primary education while only 8 % (4 out of 50) students said it was not the medium.
- XXI. Some students think of grammar rules are a burden on them but these rules are also helpful in English speaking skills the table shows that 94 % (47 out of 50) students claim that grammar rules are helpful in speaking skills while 6% (3 out of 50) students said that grammar rules are not helpful in speaking skill.
- as a medium of instruction at the college level. As the study shows that it is quite difficult for students to pronounce English words at the intermediate level and they feel hesitation while speaking English in their learning process. The study shows that the students find it difficult to participate in a discussion in the ESL classroom and they don't communicate in English language with their fellow students and family members. It was found that most of the teachers don't use any teaching aid for enhancing English speaking skills. Students face a lot of problems due to the lack of facilities and environment for speaking English as there are no laboratories in the colleges. The environment is very necessary for every field of life especially in language because acquiring language is habit formation so you can form new habits from the environment. Students can't speak proper English because of a lack of environment. It is found that the majority of the parents are uneducated and have no interest in English language learning. It means maximum students feel a lack of confidence while speaking English. The study found that the majority of the students have fluency problems in speaking English. The majority of the students feel shy while speaking English. The results of the present research study are similar to the results of the previous studies (Huwari, 2019; Aziz & Kashinathan, 2021; Gul, Ali & Hassan, 2022; Arshad, Mirza & Alam, 2022; Ali, Kamal & Imran, 2023).

## **Discussions of the Findings**

Most of the research participants claimed that there is no English-speaking environment inside the colleges which is one of the hindrances in speaking English and the researchers found that instructors use English infrequently as a medium of instruction in the colleges. Overall, the majority of the participants agreed with the statement that instructors don't use English

## **Conclusion**

In the present research work, English-speaking challenges and problems are explored by the researchers in district Chitral. For this purpose, they selected research contributors of intermediate level from different colleges of district Chitral. Most of the participants pointed out that institutes of district Chitral are lacking

facilities such as there are no laborites in the colleges for ESL learning and the English language is not used in colleges as a medium of instruction. These causes are leading students to lack confidence and they feel shy while communicating with others. This study highlighted various problems which can be solved, to find solutions to these problems ESL students and ESL teachers should equally take responsibility. English language is preferably used as a medium of instruction in all institutes and the government should advance ESL learning in Chitral. In a nutshell, this research study will prove beneficial for the field of education, especially for English language learners of district Chitral.

## Recommendations

### ***The researchers have given some recommendations:***

- The Pakistani government should provide inexpensive education to the people of Chitral.
- English language must be trained in Chitral as a core subject on all educational levels.
- The ESL teachers must be encouraged from the government side by providing facilities.
- There should be a proper environment where they can communicate with their teacher, fellow students and family members in and outside the college.
- Teachers must have to use English as a medium of instruction inside the college.
- Students must have to participate in group discussions, presentations, quizzes etc. so that they can speak proper English as well as can remove their shyness and hesitation. By participating in such activities students will be confident enough to speak fluently.
- Teachers especially English teachers must use teaching materials and AV aids such as different videos of native speakers, stories and dialogues so that the students can improve their listening as well as speaking skills.
- There should be well-equipped language with instruments like a projector, sound system, and stage for performers and different equipment for simulation etc.
- By understanding the importance of the English language both the students and their parents must be interested in English.
- According to my own opinion words are balls to play with in the ground of language, so students must have to be given vocabulary on a daily basis related to daily routine.
- Students must not monitor themselves while speaking the English language because it will bring a pause in their fluency. They have to utter whatever comes to their mind.
- Curriculum makers have to include items in the course of primary education which are helpful in language skills e.g., dialogues, vocabularies, poems and stories and most important thing, audio and videos which must be played inside the classroom.
- The teacher should be trained along with various training pregames in and outside the institute to enhance the teacher's skills in speaking English.



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