English Grammar Rules as an External Barrier Faced by EFL Students for Effective Communication

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Abstract: The key objective of the study was to 'investigate English grammar rules as an external barrier faced by EFL students for effective communication and to examine the impact of English grammar rules as an external barrier faced by EFL students for effective communication'. To fulfil the preceding purpose this research utilizes the mixed method approach and for the proper execution of this work, the researcher collected data through a questionnaire. Research data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results of data analysis illustrate the respondents of the study responded with medium to low degree mean values. The results of the current study reveal that most of the foreign language learners indicated that in the two preceding situations and atmospheres the external barrier such as silent letters, difficult spellings, wrong pronunciation, variation in pronunciation due to complex spelling systems, pronunciation of words matches with their spellings, and lengthy words learners feel a high degree of difficulty and English grammar rules work as a hurdle for effective communication.

Key Words: English Grammar Rules, External Barrier, EFL Students, Effective Communication

Introduction

Grammar, according to Azar (2007), is a systematic collection of well-established rules and systems for constructing proper sentences and regulating their formation. Without these rules and systems, a sentence with flawless and clear meaning cannot be created. Larsen-Freeman (2001) expanded on this context and approach, stating that learning English grammar aids learners in comprehending critical language concepts that allow them to recognize a variety of sentence characteristics. These rules and structures are important because they help learners understand how to use verbs in the proper form and formula, as well as how to use adjectives, adverbs, phrases, prepositions, and other grammatical rules for a specific syntax. Grammar helps students write and read correctly both within and outside of the classroom. The correct effects

of learning a second language will not be realized until you study and revise grammar. In reality, grammar is the base of all languages. There are specific strategies and methods that must be followed and not ignored to achieve the aim of learning the language proficiently and competently. Every language has its own system of words and sounds, which is also a well-known fact. This approach not only helps us to learn the correct language but also allows us to explore the meaning of the language (Azar, 2006).

Grammatical Obstacles in Foreign Language Learning and the Positions of Teachers and Students

Various strategies and approaches to identifying grammatical barriers have been discovered in foreign language learning studies. To begin, Krashen (1982) proposes an intuitively appealing concept of "simple rules and hard rules," but he fails to make the distinction clear. Finally, Green and Hetch (1992) distinguish between simple and hard rules based on the degree to which the rules can be articulated. Easy laws, according to this perspective, are those that are consistently and correctly expressed. These basic rules that Green and Hetch define in their analysis, rules that apply to readily understood categories and can be implemented unconsciously, are not affected by broad contexts, such as morphological inconsistencies such as the use of a/an, who/which, simple cases of some/any, and simple word order of the language. Hard laws, on the other hand, are those that are impossible to detect or express. Green and Hetch offer a clear example in this regard: language learning, which necessitates more than the attainment of a simple detailed summary of the language. DeKeyser and Sokalski (1996), in a similar vein, consider grammatical barriers for students in terms of language comprehension and development. They claim that some grammar constructs are simple to comprehend but difficult to construct, whereas others are simple to build but difficult to comprehend. Conditional forms of a verb exemplify the former case for Pakistani learners with a multilingual context studying English, while English direct and indirect objects exemplify the latter case. Hulstijn (1995) uses these two words interchangeably to describe grammatical barriers in terms of the feature's basic complexity. It develops a justification that the more complex and complicated a grammar structure is, the more difficult it will be for foreign language learners to learn L2 in EFL classrooms, regardless of how this complexity is well-defined. The fact that not all simple structures are easy to learn is a challenge for this concept (DeKeyser, R.) (2003). For example, while the English simple past tense –ed and third person –s are simple to build, they take a long time to use spontaneously. Larsen-Freeman (2003a, 2003b) claims that various terminologies, such as linguistic structure, semantic interpretation, and functional usage, present grammatical difficulties. To begin, linguistic form is concerned with the correct application of a grammar feature's syntactic (sentence-related) aspects. Second, recognizing the literal meanings of terms, phrases, and sentences determined by a lexical object or a lexico-grammatical function is the focus of semantic meaning. Finally, logical usage in the sense of grammatical difficulty refers to correctly applying a lexico-grammatical function within a given context, so grammar context is important. A grammar function can be simple in one aspect but difficult in another, according to Larsen-Freeman. The English passive voice, for example, is simple to learn but difficult to master. Grammatical barriers have been explained in a variety of ways, including the extent of learners' articulation of the grammar structure, comprehension and production barriers, the intrinsic complexity of the grammatical structure itself, ease or difficulty of learning a form of

the language, meaning, and use of the grammar and language, and a comparison between subj. This variation in grammatical barrier meanings paradoxically bears witness to the fact that L2 grammar learning is multifaceted and complex. It is easy to conclude at the conclusion of the discussion that the issue of what makes learning foreign language grammar challenging is of great interest to L2 students and teachers. Furthermore, research into the relationship between learners' perceptions of grammatical barriers and their L2 abilities has the potential to provide useful and valuable information for L2 learning and teaching. Furthermore, the relationship between which aspects of grammar learners find difficult to learn and their ability to use those features is both experimental and hypothetically interesting. The aim of this study is to help researchers, teachers, and students gain a deeper understanding of these topics. This research, like Scheffler (2008), looks at grammatical obstacles from the perspective of EFL students in an L2 classroom. This study also looks into the issue of grammatical barriers as one of the variables from the perspective of university-level Pakistani EFL students doing their BS in English language and literature.

Research Design

The objective of the study is to explore the role of internal and external target language barriers in effective communication at the graduation level. To fulfil the preceding aim structured L2 learners' questionnaire was used as the key research instrument. The authenticity of the research methodology is vindicated by Strydom and Venter (2002) as these two are of the view that research methodology had better contain an account of research respondents, research sites, the plan regarding sampling technique used for the study, and research instruments deployed for collecting research data. This study was conducted while utilizing the

mixed-method approach. For the proper execution of this work, the researcher collected data through a questionnaire for the study face to face along with online due to COVID-19 restrictions so that a huge junk of data can be gathered. With a view to fixing the topics' findings regarding the role of internal and external target language barriers to effective communication, the researcher constructed an L2 learners' questionnaire and this questionnaire was rationalized from the studies accomplished by Belegdair, A. (2015), Al Hosni, Samira (2014), Bourez zane, Nadia (2014), Al Othman, Fadel & Shuqair, Khaled (2013), Nombre, Segura Alonso & de Junio (2012), Al-ma'shy (2011), Ahsan, Ali, & Hussain (2021), Ahsan, Ashger, & Zafar (2020), Ahsan, Seemab, & Nawaz (2021), Ahsan, Asif, & Hussain (2021), Ahsan, Younus, & Husain (2020), Ahsan, Asif, Kaukab, Zafar, & Naeem (2020), Ahsan, Asgher, & Hussain (2020), Younus, Nawaz, & Ahsan, (2021), and Ahsan, Nawaz, & Seemab (2021) as models for this research with trivial modification on the basis of scholar's own five years of teaching/learning experience at public sector college and university level. The questionnaire used in this research has two fragments i.e. research question 1-5 is comprised of demographic information and the remaining 74 statements are based on the format of a five-point Likert scale.

Objectives of the Study

i. To investigate English grammar rules as an external barrier faced by EFL students for effective communication.
ii. To examine the impact of English grammar rules as an external barrier faced by EFL students for effective communication.

Research Questions

i. What type of role do English grammar rules play as an external barrier faced by EFL students for effective

communication?

ii. What is the impact of English grammar rules as an external barrier faced by EFL students for effective communication?

Sampling and Research Tool of the Study

Research data was collected by administering an L2 learners' questionnaire. The research sample included in this work was limited to the 17-22 years learners' age group. Above one thousand L2 learners' close-ended questionnaires were circulated among the participants. The participants for the present study were from the BS English program continued in Public Sector University i.e. Ghazi University, affiliated public and private sector colleges to the said university and sub-campuses of Bahaudin Zakariya University Multan and Govt. College University Faisal Abad is situated in Dera Ghazi Khan Division. Close-ended, well-structured research questionnaire comprised of a 5-Point Likert scale was projected to accumulate researchable data. The researcher reviewed a huge bulk of relevant research to find out a suitable research tool that might be easily managed and administered to the respondents of the current study. The researcher constructed an L2 learners' questionnaire and this questionnaire was rationalized from the studies accomplished by Belegdair, A. (2015), Al Hosni, Samira (2014), Bourez Zane, Nadia (2014), Al Othman, Fadel & Shuqair, Khaled (2013), Nombre, Segura Alonso & de Junio (2012), Al-ma'shy (2011), Ahsan, Ali, & Hussain (2021), Ahsan, Asher, & Zafar (2020), Ahsan, Seemab, & Nawaz (2021), Ahsan, Asif, & Hussain (2021), Ahsan, Younus, & Husain (2020), Ahsan, Asif, Kaukab, Zafar, & Naeem (2020), Ahsan, Asgher, & Hussain (2020), Younus, Nawaz, & Ahsan, (2021), and Ahsan, Nawaz, & Seemab (2021) as models for this research with trivial modification on the basis of scholar's own five years of teaching/learning experience at public sector college and

university level. The questionnaire used in this research has two fragments i.e. research question 1-5 is comprised of demographic information and the remaining 74 statements are based on the format of a five-point Likert scale.

i. Completely Agree
ii. Agree
iii. Neutral
iv. Completely Disagree
v. Disagree

Context of this Research Work

The pure focus of this research is adult L2 learners enrolled in BS English programs continued in public sector universities i.e. Ghazi University, affiliated public and private sector colleges to the said university and sub-campuses of Bahaudin Zakariya University Multan and Govt. College University Faisal Abad is situated in Dera Ghazi Khan Division. These are those L2 learners who want to achieve better L2 skills so that they can do excellent in their L2 classrooms, jobs or in academics. In this study, adult L2 learners are those students who have completed their intermediate studies and they are of above 17 years of age.

Significance of the Study

Since this research work will attempt to disclose the role of internal and external target language barriers to effective communication at public sector universities i.e. Ghazi University, affiliated public and private sector colleges to the said university and sub-campuses of Bahaudin Zakariya University Multan and Govt. College University Faisal Abad situated in Dera Ghazi Khan Division, it's worth is restricted to the following considerations:

1. This research work is significant as it fixes whether L2 learners are willing to accept the role of internal and external target language barriers to effective

2. Statistics from this work regarding L2 learners' attitudes towards the role of internal and external target language barriers to effective communication encourage and persuade students in L2 settings.
3. The present study is noteworthy as it will exalt the level of L2 learners' speaking skills by overcoming internal and external barriers by adopting appropriate methods, techniques and procedures for proficiency, aptitude, and accuracy of speaking skills.
4. This research project will highlight the reasons and causes of such barriers and challenges and will try to discover a suitable solution for the same.
5. This work would facilitate curriculum communication in L2 classrooms.

developers in developing and designing apposite curricula to make L2 learning more advantageous in the context of Pakistan.

Delimitation of the Study

This research work was demarcated to explore the role of internal and external target language barriers to effective communication at the graduation level. The current study was conducted at Public Sector University i.e. Ghazi University, affiliated public and private sector colleges to the said university and sub-campuses of Bahaudin Zakariya University Multan and Govt. College University Faisal Abad is situated in Dera Ghazi Khan Division, where BS in English is in progress.

Data Analysis

Table 1. Statistical Description of the Psychological Factors i.e. Pronunciation Category of the Scale Grammar Rules Category of the Scale.

Cronbach's Alpha	0.925625786
Split-Half (odd-even) Correlation	0.903992678
Split-Half with Spearman-Brown Adjustment	0.949575793
Mean for Test	19.55228758
Standard Deviation for Test	6.468036897
KR21 (use only 0 and 1 to enter data for this)	1.607152002
KR20 (use only 0 and 1 to enter data for this)	1.615119518

Table 2. Screening Frequency of Students Testified on Grammar Rules Category of the Scale.

Scale Category	Sum of Students	Mean	Standard Deviation	Frequency of Category
Grammar Rules	307	19.5522	6.4680	0.9256

Table 3. Frequency, Mean and Standard Deviation of the External Barrier i.e. English Grammar Rules as Hurdle Faced by Students for Effective Communication.

S. No	Statements	Mean	SD	Frequency Categories
56	The grammar of the English language is very difficult to practice in its full sense during speaking.	1.6992	0.4603	Low
57	Grammar teases me a lot when I have to cram its rules to improve my speaking skills.	1.9323	0.6179	Low
58	The teacher teaches grammar in the traditional	4.00	1.147	High

S. No	Statements	Mean	SD	Frequency Categories
	way by giving rules and formulas.			
59	I do not like English because I do not know the correct use of tenses.	3.00	0.7905	High
60	I get confused while making subject and verb agreements.	3.700	1.313	High
61	I get confused while using the forms of a verb.	2.00	0.4079	Medium
62	Sometimes I get confused while using singular/plural nouns	2.18	0.8705	Medium
63	It becomes very difficult for me to memorize two-word verbs.	2.000	0.6810	Medium
64	I become upset while using verb tense.	2.000	0.6056	Medium
65	The use of phrasal verbs is always confusing for me.	2.000	0.6618	Medium

The acknowledged descriptive data in table 3 demonstrate that the target language learners responded about 'the external barrier i.e. English grammar rules as hurdle faced by students for effective communication' from high to medium and medium to low degree values. It is the sixth grouping in the middle of the eight sub-categories of the main scale and this group is supplementary and separated into 10 sub-statements of the major statement and the ultimate statement reported by L2 learners was Item #56 'Teacher traditionally teaches grammar by giving rules and formulas' (M= 4.0000 & SD=1.1470), Item #58 'I get confused while making subject and verb agreement (M=3.7000 & SD=1.3130), Item #60 'Sometimes I get confused while using singular/plural nouns' (M=2.1800 & SD=0.8705), Item #59 'I get confused while using forms of the verb' (M=2.0000 & SD=0.4079), Item #61 'It becomes very difficult for me to memorize two-word verbs' (M=2.0000 & SD=0.6810), Item #62 'I become upset while using verb tense' (M=2.0000 & SD=0.6056), Item #63 'Use of phrasal verb is always confusing for me' (M=2.0000 & SD=00.6618).

Table 4. Age Group T-test Showing Relation of Age Group on Grammar Rules Scale Category.

S. No	Variables	Age Group	N	Mean	SD	F	P
1	Grammar Rules	17-19 years	109	1.853	1.061	0.546	0.970
		20-22 years	198	1.848	1.021	0.602	0.966

(0.05) level of mean shows a significant difference.

Table 4 shows that the data of 307 male and female L2 learners were divided into two major categories of age groups i.e. 17-19 years and 20-22 years age groups. In the first category of the age group of age groups i.e. 17-19, there were 109 male and female respondents who were 35% of the total participants. In the second category of age group i.e. 20-22 years, there were 198 respondents who were 65% of 307 male and female foreign language learners. The collaboration of age group category with 'English grammar rules as an external barrier faced by EFL students for effective communication' with F=0.546; 0.602 and P=0.970; 0.966 respectively showed a non-significant relationship.

Table 5. Gender T-test Showing Relation of Gender on Grammar Rules Scale Category.

S. No	Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD	F	P
1	Grammar Rules	Female	133	1.6992	0.4603	0.08	0.774
		Male	174	1.6839	0.4663	0.07	0.892

(0.05) level of mean shows a significant difference.

In table 5 the acknowledged data was alienated into male and female categories of the participant in the female gender category there were 133 respondents who were 43% of the total 307 accomplices and in the male category, 174 L2 learners were included who were 57% of the overall numbers who contributed in this research project. The interaction of the gender group with 'English grammar rules as an external barrier faced by EFL students for effective communication' with F=0.08; 0.07 and P=0.774; 0.892, showed a non-significant correlation with the main scale category.

Table 6. Current Semester of Enrolment T-test Showing the relation of the Current Semester of Enrolment on Grammar Rules Category.

S. No	Variables	Current Semester	N	Mean	SD	F	P
1	Grammar Rules	2nd	56	1.6607	0.4778	0.118	0.954
		4th	55	1.7091	0.4584	0.034	0.911
		6th	105	1.6952	0.4625	0.082	0.922
		8th	91	1.6923	0.4641	0.017	0.916

(0.05) level of mean shows a significant difference.

Data for the current study exhibited in table 6 were collected from the four semesters of the Spring 2021 session i.e. 2nd, 4th, 6th, and 8th. In the first category, i.e. from the 2nd semester, 56 foreign language learners participated and it was 18.24104% of the total population. In the second category i.e. from the 4th semester 55 male and female students contributed and it was 17.91531% of the total numbers. In the third category i.e. from the 6th semester, 105 participants were included that indicating 34.20195% of 307. In the last category i.e. from the 8th semester, 91 L2 learners participated and this was 29.64169% of the total population. The collaboration of the current semester of enrolment category with 'English grammar rules as an external barrier faced by EFL students for effective communication' with P=0.118; 0.034; 0.082; 0.017 and P=0.954; 0.911; 0.922; 0.916 showed non-significant affiliation.

Table 7. Populations' Institution Wise T-test Showing Relation of Populations' Institution Wise on Grammar Rules Scale Category.

S. No	Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD	F	P
1	Grammar Rules	Public	260	1.7037	0.4576	0.94	0.333
		Private	47	1.6406	0.4836	0.81	0.129

(0.05) level of mean shows a significant difference.

In table 7, firstly, the established information was distributed to public and private

teaching institutes and it was recounted that 260 respondents were enrolled in the public sector institutes which were 84.6905% of the total of 307. The second category signified that 47 learners who participated in this research were from private affiliated colleges and degree awarding institutes and they were 15.3095 per cent of the selected sample of the current study. The relationship of learners' institution-wise category with 'English grammar rules as an external barrier faced by EFL students for effective communication' with F=0.081; 0.079 and P=0.333; 0.129 showed a non-significant connection.

Table 8. Living Background T-test Showing the Relation of Living Background on Grammar Rules Scale Category.

S. No	Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD	F	P
1	Grammar Rules	Rural	134	1.6888	0.4639	0.029	0.899
		Urban	173	1.6970	0.4631	0.031	0.811

(0.05) level of mean shows a significant difference.

In table 8, the first category was about the rural background of the selected population and it showed that 134 male and female students were from countryside areas this was 43.6482% of the whole figure. The second category indicated the 173 male and female students who were 56.3518% of the total number of the sample were from urban areas who contributed to the current study. The collaboration of the living background category with 'English grammar rules as an external barrier faced by EFL students for effective communication' with F=0.029; 0.031 and P=0.899; 0.811 showed a non-significant relationship.

Findings and Discussions of the Research Questions

Research Question 1

What type of role do English grammar rules play as an external barrier faced by EFL students for effective communication?

Regarding English grammar rules as a hurdle faced by students for effective communication the results of data analysis illustrate the respondents of the study responded with medium to low degree mean values. Only two out of ten statements where L2 learners agreed that their wrong pronunciation is a cause of embarrassment for them for effective communication and complex spelling system is the main cause of their wrong pronunciation. The results of the current study reveal that most of the foreign language learners indicated that in the two preceding situations and atmospheres the external barrier i.e. English grammar rules work as a hurdle but in other situations such as silent letters, difficult spellings, wrong pronunciation, variation in pronunciation due to complex spelling system, pronunciation of words matches with their spellings, and lengthy words learners feel no or less difficulty and English grammar rules do not work as hurdle faced by students for effective communication. These findings and results of this study are also normally dependable and steady with the literature of (Krashen 1982; Green and Hatch 1992; DeKeyser and Sokalski 1996; Hulstijn, 1995; and Larsen-Freeman 2003a, 2003b).

Research Question 2

What is the impact of English grammar rules as an external barrier faced by EFL students for effective communication?

The results of the current study reveal that most foreign language learners indicated that English grammar rules work as hurdles. Similarly, in other situations such as silent

letters, difficult spellings, wrong pronunciation, variation in pronunciation due to complex spelling system, pronunciation of words matches with their spellings, and lengthy words learners feel more difficulty as compared to the aforementioned category and English grammar rules work as the greatest hurdles faced by students for effective communication in English language classroom.

Conclusion

The current prove the null hypothesis regarding English grammar rules as a hurdle faced by students for effective communication the results of data analysis illustrate the respondents of the study responded with medium to low degree mean values. The results of the current study reveal that most of the foreign language learners indicated that in the two preceding situations and atmospheres the external barrier such as silent letters, difficult spellings, wrong pronunciation, variation in pronunciation due to complex spelling systems, pronunciation of words matches with their spellings, and lengthy words learners feel a high degree of difficulty and English grammar rules work as a hurdle for effective communication for the university students in south Punjab.

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