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# Developing EFL Learners' Speaking through Analysis of Cross -Cultural Interaction of Saudi Girls Students of Preparatory Year at NBU (NBU Preparatory Year KSA)

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### Abstract

This study was intended to explore the obstacles of developing EFL learners' speaking skills, investigating the relationship between English culture and English language, exploring the effect of English culture on EFL learners and motivating EFL learners to have positive attitudes towards English language. The data were collected by means of an oral test which was given to 50 English language students at the NBU preparatory year KSA for measuring EFL learners' performance in English language. The findings of the study show that the students do not participate in the activities of speaking in the class even those who participate, their participation is limited, inside the classroom. The study recommended that: EFL learners should be enabled to acquire good pronunciation. EFL learners should be involved in classroom interaction. Teacher's pronunciation should be a good model to the students. Teachers should advise students to use listening and pronunciation resources and memories them. Learners should learn English language through culture teaching ICTs should be applied in EFL teaching and learning. Students should be encouraged to practice speaking inside and outside of the classes.

**Keywords:** Speaking skills, performance, English culture, good pronunciation, communication, fluency.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

English Language is the words and expressions used and understood by large group of people, it is spoken or written words of particular kind. It is a means of expression ideas or feelings. It is going to be a tool of communication to other countries. The significant care and the globalization of English have been caused broad demand for good English-speaking skills in various realms. The evidence manifested that some features of speaking abilities are amenable to instruction in the second or foreign language classroom (Derakhshan et al., 2015). Speaking skills should practice and develop alongside other language skills. Modern linguistics is a science that concerns itself with all aspects of language, in particular, speaking which is the default modality for language in all cultures. The production of spoken language depends on sophisticated capacities for controlling the lips, tongue and other components of the vocal apparatus, the ability to acoustically decode speech sounds, and the neurological apparatus required for acquiring and producing language. The study of the genetic bases for human language is at an early stage: the only gene that has definitely been implicated in language production is FOXP2, (forkhead box protein that, in humans is encoded by the FOXP2gene, also known as CAGH44, SPCH1or TNRC10, and required for proper development of speech and language.) which may cause a kind of congenital language disorder if affected by mutations https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FOXP2.

Spoken language relies on human physical ability to produce sound, which is a longitudinal wave propagated through the air at a frequency capable of vibrating the ear drum. This ability depends on the physiology of the human speech organs. These organs consist of the lungs, the voice box (larynx), and the upper vocal tract – the throat, the mouth, and the nose. By controlling the different parts of the speech apparatus, the airstream can be manipulated to produce

different speech sounds. The sound of speech can be analyzed into a combination of segmental and suprasegmentally elements.http://oer2go.org/mods/en-wikipedia-for-schools-static/wp/l/Language.htm.

Children learning a second language are more likely to achieve native-like fluency than adults, but in general, it is very rare for someone speaking a second language to pass completely for a native speaker. An important difference between first language acquisition and additional language acquisition is that the process of additional language acquisition is influenced by languages that the learner already knows.. The reality is that most children begin learning English as a foreign language when they are in school. They learn reading and writing and because of class sizes, there isn't opportunity for practicing speaking. Often, they are spoken at, but they don't actually have to respond. Sometimes reading and writing skills take precedence over the ability to speak. Sometimes parents will turn to private tutoring that work with their children one on one. While children are most likely absorbing the language and may very well end up speaking to a certain degree, they do not have the benefit of a proven methodology that ensures they will speak.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Weakness of students' performance in English in preparatory year, is a very serious issue. Many factors contributed to this problem. Unlike reading, writing, or listening activities, speaking requires some degree of real time exposure to an audience. Learners are often inhibited about trying to say thing in foreign language in the classroom, worried about mistakes or simply shy of the attention that their speech attract even they are inhibited, you often hear learners complain that they cannot think of anything to say have no motive, they have no motive to express themselves beyond the guilty feeling that they should be speaking.

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Only one participant can talk at a time if she is to be heard and in large group this means each one will have only very little talking time. This problem is compounded of some learners to dominate while others speak very little or not at all. It is easier for the student to use their mother tongue in their class because it looks naturally. Therefore most of the students are not discipline in using the target language in the learning process.

## 1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to:

- 1. Investigate the factors that cause the weakness of the students' performance in English language.
- 2. Evaluate the actions taken to solve the problems of the students' weakness.

## 1.3 Questions of the Study

- 1. What causes the weakness of the students' performance in English language?
- 2. Are there any solutions to overcome the students' weakness in English language?

# 1.4 Hypotheses of the Study

- 1- Many factors played different roles in deterioration of the students' performance in English language.
- 2- Culture plays a basic role in shaping EFL speaker's communicative competence.

# 1.5 Significance of the Study

This thesis will be an attempt by which both practicing and potential language teachers. Furthermore, it is hoped that the insights, which have been gained from attempting to deal with issues relevant to the subject.

## 1.6 Limits of the Study

The researcher is going to deal with the situation at the preparatory year. Thus, the focus will be on the English language performance of students' communication skills at Al-Uwyqilah preparatory year NBU. (2018December).

## 2. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

## 2.1 The Aim of Speaking

According to Harmer (2001), learners should know "language features" and the ability to process them in communication. If the speaker dominates these language features, will help learners to acquire successful communication goal. Speaking is the production skill that is included in two main categories: accuracy and fluency. Accuracy consists of using vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation through some activities, fluency take into account "the ability to keep going when speaking spontaneously" (Gower, Philips, & Walter, 1995).

Bygate (1987) identified two elements: production skill and interaction skill. In production skill, speaking ability take place without time limit environment and in interaction skill, there is a negotiation between learners. Both skills help learners to improve their speaking ability easier. Stuart (1989) proposed that learners should plan and adjust their talk; and effective speakers should be proficient by practicing. It shows that speaking is high risking activity that creates anxiety and causes learners worry about losing face. Speaking is a part of daily life that everyone should develop in subtle and detailed language. One of the most important factors about language is that it deals with social contexts and culture (Schmitt, 2012).

The past four decades has witnessed the rapid development of speaking skill in second language learning (Derakhshan et al., 2015). Speaking is a complex skill, which should be taught everywhere, and it is a skill that learners learn better in group (Celce-Murica, 2001). Children learning a

second language are more likely to achieve native-like fluency than adults, but in general, it is very rare for someone speaking a second language to pass completely for a native speaker.

An important difference between first language acquisition and additional language acquisition is that the process of additional language acquisition is influenced by languages that the learner already knows. The reality is that most children begin learning English as a foreign language when they are in school. They learn reading and writing and because of class sizes, there isn't opportunity for practicing speaking. Often, they are spoken at, but they don't actually have to respond. Sometimes reading and writing skills take precedence over the ability to speak. Sometimes parents will turn to private tutoring that work with their children one on one. While children are most likely absorbing the language and may very well end up speaking to a certain degree, they do not have the benefit of a proven methodology that ensures they will speak.

## 2.2 Developing Speaking Skills

Brown, (2007:22) points out some types of speaking performance that can help students to improve speaking skill:

- a. **Imitation:** Students should pay attention to certain vowel sounds and intonations; next they should imitate correctly. Meanwhile learners need to practice an intonation contour or to find exactly certain vowel sound.
- b. **Responsive:** It refers to short replies to teachers. It can be learners to initiated questions or comments. Students should be active in the classroom. They should reply to teachers' questions and comments. They should participate in the classroom. For example:

T: How's it going?

S: Pretty good!

- c. **Intensive:** Any speaking performance is planned to practice some phonological or grammatical features of language that can be self-initiated or pair work activity (Brown, 2007:30).
- d. **Transactional Dialogue**: It is used to convey a message or exchange the information. In addition, it is utilized to elaborate a concept or to manifest the purpose of something. Learners should participate in conversation (Brown, 2007:35).
- e. **Extensive:** It refers to students at intermediate to advanced levels that are asked to provide extensive monologues in the form of oral reports, summaries or short speech (Brown, 2007:37).

In order to improve second language skills, learners should practice regularly. First learners should expand their general vocabulary and then they can improve their domain of vocabulary by listening from simple sentences to complex sentences. Meanwhile they can increase their knowledge by reading short story and sometimes memorizing some important parts of it (Chastain, 1988:93). When you read a book, story and magazine aloud, it can help you more. When you practice, your fluency would be better, too (Celce-Murica, 2001).

According to Hedge the term fluency has two meanings: The first, which is the ability to link unit of speech together with facility and without strain or in opportunities slowness undue hesitation and purpose a second, more holistic sense of fluency that of natural language use which is likely to take place when speaking activities focus on meaning and its negotiation when speaking strategies are used and when over correction is minimized (as cited in Celce-Murica, 2001: 104). Teachers should encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning; they should encounter with simple procedures. Another important factor is that the learners

should participate in conversation by setting up a group (Celce-Murica, 2001:65).

The conversation between students and the teacher should be based on classroom observation data (Wenli, 2005:48). Some teachers have problems with students that do not participate in classroom and are always silent. Teachers should provide students facilities to participate in group work, for example: use pictures, role play, etc.

## 2.3 Teachers can Develop Students Speaking

## 2.3.1 Through Questions

In the classroom, the teacher often asks questions to learners and learners answer the questions to participate in learning activities. These forms are called teacher-learner interaction as Cazden (1988:52) argues that such interactions take place between the teacher and the class and/or small groups in the class and/or individuals. In the traditional classroom, the teacher only sits or stands behind a desk, and spends a large amount of time giving lectures and directions whereas students' role is sitting, listening and taking notes passively. The focus of interaction was predominant between the teacher and learners. This one is usually initiated and controlled by the teacher. The teacher's central role is to dominate in terms of the talking time and of the running of the process. The teacher controls the topic for classroom talk, and determines when start and stop talking in the classroom.

Tsui (1995:33) claims that, at the beginning of the lesson, the teacher reviews what has already been done, introduces new content, explains problematic concepts and then clarifies complex requests and activities during the lesson. At the end of the lesson, the teacher sums up the new content studied and gives feedback. However, teacher is central to the classroom interaction while students are passive listeners. At

times, students are required to participate only by answering questions which their teacher already knows the answers.

They also have no time to ask questions and always rely on the teacher's instructions and cannot solve problems independently. It seems that teacher talk takes up the largest proportion of classroom talk. It represents approximately two-thirds of the discourse in both L1 and L2 classrooms students have only very restricted opportunities to participate in the language of the classroom as it is mentioned by Chaudron (1988:42). Therefore, this kind of interaction does not clearly provide a motivating learning environment. However, teaching is always a shared-relationship job. It involves the participation from many people.

Brown (1995: 99) states "Teacher talk should not occupy the major proportion of a class hour; otherwise you are probably not giving students enough opportunity to talk.". According to Harmer (2001:49), to foster learners to produce communicative outputs, learners should be engaged in communicative activities.

## 2.3.2 Through Discussion Cues

Teachers should use a lot of English speaking activities to motivate learners to study and speak in English, and they should increase learning classroom environment (Oradee, 2012). Teachers can use a funny discussion and ask students to talk about their best moments that they ever had. Students' participation in discussion causes other students to actively take part in negotiation; therefore, students become surprised about their ability and intelligence (Celce-Murica, 2001). Some students have a lack of desire to speak because of their shyness and low confidence, but there is no appropriate solution about how teachers can overcome this problem (Chastain, 1988). Evidence shows that these learners should start with short answers, and short sentences, but it may be time-consuming.

## 2.3.3 Role-play

According to Tatayama (1998:43), role play is a part of activity derived by various approaches to languages. He also mentioned that it is vital to improve learners' comprehension and production system and their ability would be cooperate sociopragmatic and pragma-linguistic knowledge in interaction.

Role-play is one of the methods that enable learners to improve a range of real life spoken language in the classroom (Cook, 2001). For example, a teacher chooses a conversation from a book and after repeating aloud with students, teacher asked some students to be volunteers in role-play. This activity can help students to overcome their shyness, fears and anxiety. Learners can listen and practice phrases that are used in speech acts (Celce-Murica, ibid).

Cakir (2006:64) found that video materials have improved due to increasing the quality of speaking ability. According to an investigation by Rice &Woodsmall (1988:32), the video markedly raise learners' lexical grammar. The effectiveness of video depends on students' age and interest in specific context.

#### 2.3.4 Flashcards

As highlighted by Palka (1988) flashcards have significant effect not only for learning vocabulary but also for learning sentences structures, tenses and phrasal verbs. Meanwhile, Brown (2000) claims that learners usually cope with new words by flash cards and most learners try to use them to review it afterwards.

## 2.3.5 Graphs

Graphs serve as representation of real observation and as analytic tools for detecting under lying patterns which in turn inform the observer and the learner about phenomena (the target) under investigation. Traditional views consider graphing as intelligence manifested in students' minds (Lynch et al. 1992). Another way to improve learners' presentation is to utilize videos, graphs and flash cards. Also using flash cards has appropriate effects on young learners. Besides, using pictures has vital rules in learning grammars on learner speaking ability. There are a lot of chants for adults, make learners proficient in vocabulary and pronunciation. They tell story and draw some pictures for learner and tell them "now you do it" (Celce-Murica, 2001). The other technique is interview. The significant advantage of interviews is their flexibility. They can be long or short and useful for learners from beginning level to advanced level; with high aptitude and low aptitude learners. They can be considered as additional oral activities or subsequent writing task. Another important factor is pronunciation.

Learners have problems to pronounce words fluently with native like pronunciation because of prosodic features: like intonation, stress and other phonological nuances (Richards and Renandva. 2002). Another factor that Celce-Murica (2001:130) mentioned is intonation. Intonation can help learners analyze and generalize the sentences to notice the stress timed. Moreover, Internet can provide broad resources for learners and even teachers. There are a lot of sites and CDs that can help learners to pronounce like native learners (Nunan, 1991:125). Knowing grammatical and semantic rules is not sufficient instruments for speaking. Learners must be familiar with the knowledge of how native speakers use the language in the context of well-organized interpersonal exchange, in which many factors interact. Thus, it is difficult for EFL learners, especially adults, to speak the target language fluently and appropriately.

Wong (2006) claims that speaking competence deals with speaking accuracy and fluency. Speaking accuracy demonstrates "the extent to which the language produced conforms to language norms under which the appropriate use of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar are subsumed.

Speaking fluency pertains to the ability to produce the spoken language "without undue pausing or hesitation" (Skehan, 1996:22). Speaking can be deemed as an indispensable tool for language teaching and learning since it can "facilitate language acquisition and development" (Goh, 2007: 1), and it can be fruitful to learner's academic accomplishment and professional success.

## 2.4 Need for Culture Teaching

The dialectical connection between language and culture has always been a concern of L2 teachers and educators. Whether culture of the target language is to be incorporated into L2 teaching has been a subject of rapid change throughout language teaching history. In the course of time, the pendulum of ELT practitioners' opinion has swung against or for teaching culture in context of language teaching. For example, during the first decades of the 20th century researchers discussed the importance and possibilities of including cultural components into L2 curriculum (Sysoyev&Donelson, 2002); the advent of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the late 70s marks a critical shift for teaching culture, for the paradigm shift from an approach based largely on form and structure to a plurality of approaches causing an unintended side effect: the negligence of culture (Pulverness, 2003).

Recent studies focus on the same less relationship between L2 teaching and target culture teaching, especially over the last decade with the writings of scholars such as Byram (1989; 1994a; 1994b; 1997a; 1997b) and Kramsch (1988; 1993; 1996; 2001). People involved in language teaching have again begun to understand the intertwined relation between culture and language (Pulverness, 2003). It has been emphasized that without the study of culture, teaching L2 is inaccurate and incomplete. For L2 students, language study seems senseless if they know nothing about the people who speak the target language or the country in which the target

language is spoken. Acquiring a new language means a lot more than the manipulation of syntax and lexicon. According to Bada (2000: 101), "the need for cultural literacy in ELT arises mainly from the fact that most language learners, not exposed to cultural elements of the society in question, seem to encounter significant hardship in communicating meaning to native speakers." In addition, nowadays the L2 culture is presented as an interdisciplinary core in many L2 curricula designs and textbooks (Sysoyev&Donelson, 2002).

# 2.5 Raising Cultural Awareness in the English Language Classroom

According to Kramsch (1993:21), learners cultural background supports their language proficiency. Accordingly, culture should help learning of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Language learning implies and embraces cultural learning. When it comes to teaching the culture of the English-speaking peoples with their social and political underpinnings, many EFL students know very little if anything. However, culture learning, along with the four traditional skills. EFL learners need to be aware of addressing people express gratitude, make requests, and agree or disagree with someone. They should know that behaviors and intonation patterns that are appropriate in their own speech.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This study mainly depends on the pre-test, post-test in the process of data collection. For many true experimental designs, pre-test and post-test designs are the preferred method to compare participant groups and measure the degree of change occurring as a result of treatments or interventions.

## 3.1 Subject

The total number of students in the preparatory year of Alwuyqilah (girls) in academic year (2018-2019) is 73 students. Sampling procedure: 50 students are randomly selected as the sample for this study from the 73 students who pass the first semester and transferred to specialist.

### **3.2 Tool**

The pre-test is a topic followed by some questions given to participants before the student begins in order to determine their knowledge level of the course content. After the completion of the course, participants are given a post-test to answer the same questions of the comparable difficulty. Comparing participants "post-test scores to their pre-test scores enables researchers to check whether the student was successful in increasing participant knowledge of the book content. In addition, a well- designed pre- and post-test can help trainers understand which concepts were well taught during the teaching and which ones need additional time or alternative method. Questions for each topic are five. The total marks of the test are five. It is oral test, organized to measure students' fluency, confidence, pronunciation and accuracy.

#### 3.3 Procedure

The pre-test will be administered to the selected sample at the beginning of the fourth week in semester. Students will be tested individual each student will give five minutes, grads will be saved by the researcher to be analyzed along with post-test after being implemented at the end of the term.

## 3.4 Data Analysis and Discussion

This chapter discusses and presents the analysis and interpretation for the data and test of the results against the hypothesis, questions and objectives of the study. Data analysis and interpretation will be organized according to the

configuration of the instruments implementation as stated in chapter three.

## 4. RESULTS OF THE TEST

## **Paired Samples Statistics**

Test	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig.
						(2-tailed)
pre1	1.64	50	.631	-10.967	49	.000
post1	2.54	50	1.034			
pre2	2.00	50	.904	-12.457	49	.000
post2	2.76	50	1.061			
pre3	2.18	50	1.024	-6.044	49	.000
post3	2.80	50	.990			
pre4	2.34	50	.982	-5.957	49	.000
post4	2.76	50	1.021			

#### Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	pre1 & post1	50	.867	.000
Pair 2	pre2 & post2	50	.916	.000
Pair 3	pre3 & post3	50	.741	.000
Pair 4	pre4 & post4	50	.877	.000

Pre-test/post-test evaluation is one of two assessment tools that is strongly recommended for use by faculty because it is a concise and effective direct evaluation that brings about reasonable dialogue to improve student learning. Pre- and post -tests are used to measure knowledge gained by participating in book course. The pre-test is a topic given to participants before the student begins in order to determine their knowledge level of the course content. After the completion of the course, participants are given a post-test to talk in the same topics. Comparing participants' post-test scores to their pre-test scores enables researcher to check whether the students was successful in increasing participant knowledge of the book content orally. The total mark of the oral test is 5 marks, it is to test fluency, accuracy, confidence organized pronunciation.

### 5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion. the most important components ofcommunication is speaking. Thus, it is the responsibility of EFL teachers of EFL to exactly investigate the factors, conditions, and components that form the basis of effective speaking. The present paper deals with factors and issues with which have great influence on speaking ability, accuracy and fluency. Although a lot of studies have been done in this area, we feel the need for further research to provide some solutions for teachers to apply more effective methods and procedures in their teaching.

Effective methods include using role-play, pictures, flash cards, graphs, chants and interview that can improve learners' pronunciation, grammar, every day speech and real word activities. Further, it can eclipse both adults and children to improve their speaking along with accuracy and fluency, so that they can reach their goal that is speaking English fluently and appropriately. Moreover the previous factors have a great impact on developing positive attitudes factors toward learning English as a foreign language. English teachers should consider the previous factors and principals according to their students' needs, interest and teaching context. Finally it is worth mentioning that empowering positive perspective toward EFL learning is dynamic performance (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2010).

The study investigates the relationship of English culture to English language. To collect the necessary data for this study, a questionnaire is distributed to EFL teachers Then the collected data were analyzed with the SPSS program. The following are the results:

# 5.1 Findings

1. Student-student interaction develops EFL learners' speaking skills.

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- 2. Clear teachers' pronunciation influences EFL students speaking skills.
- 3. Some EFL Saudi learners' speaking interference related to the mother tongue.
- 4. Cross cultural understanding enables EFL learners to good communicators.
- 5. Practicing oral interaction in EFL classes improves learners speaking skills
- 6. Motivation encourages EFL learners to improve speaking performance.

#### 5.2 Recommendations

The study has the following recommendations:

- 1. EFL learners should be involved in classroom interaction.
- 2. Teacher's pronunciation should be a good model to the students.
- 3. Learners should learn English language through culture teaching.
- 4. EFL learners should gain cross cultural knowledge of the target language.
- 5. Classroom management should be stressed for clear interactive communications.

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