



An Analysis of Undergraduate Students' Oral English Communication Challenges at Government College University, Hyderabad

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Abstract

This work is focused on determining the causes of communication apprehension, particularly in oral English, for undergraduate students of BS English – Part – One, Department of English Language and Literature, Government College University, Hyderabad. This study employs descriptive research and quantitative analysis on data collected through surveys from 107 students focusing on the major reasons communication apprehension. This study identifies personal, educational, and linguistic elements as the most significant variables causing communicative apprehension. These recommendations for overcoming communicative barriers will largely be incorporated in teaching for students' improved educational and professional outcomes. These will provide a more comprehensive approach in meeting the objectives of the comprehensive curriculum for the students.

Keywords: Communication Apprehension, Oral English Communication, Learning Strategies, Quantitative Research, Language Education.

Introduction

According to Ismail et al in 2018 business, socio-cultural aspects, and academic world aids in the daily functioning of every human being. Communication acts a lynchpin of human existence and is considered to be a part of our lives, as people share thoughts, send and receive information, and engage in more complex conversation. Humans primarily utilize oral communication on a day to day basis. The word communication is derived from the Latin word “communis” which means “common” and “communicare”, means “to pass on information.” Communication is to be the successful transfer and exchange of thoughts, information and ideas which where one part is active and the other is passive. Communication according to Rodica 2005 is the transfer of electro-magnetic symbols and information which have meaning. Communication is made of modules and in a static way consists of sending, receiving and understanding sets of ideas. Then according to Byrne 1985, oral communication is an interrelated operation between the communicator and the audience. It also goes on to say that the communicator is the one that speaks while the audience is the one that understands, therefore the audience listens, and this form of listening is considered to be active. It requires that the symbols and the sets of ideas be paid attention to, so that the message from the communicator is clear and to the point.”

The relationships we form, whether personal or professional, are enhanced through communication. It is the first step of human socialization, as it allows people to talk, send messages, and form societies (Rao, 2019). Additionally, in a corporate setting, effective communication is very important because it helps people send and receive messages, which help in achieving shared goals (ibid). Life, as it is, is practiced through the socialization of people who are active speakers. Good communication skills help an individual to communicate well, the outcome of which, is contingent upon the learning process undertaken, the barriers that impede the growth of communication skills and the social setting of an individual (Levis, 2018).

English Language in Pakistan and the Plight of Students

Kabir (2014) argues that Pakistan suffers from a severe disgruntlement with English owing to the inadequate employment readiness youth possess with regards to the market and industry. Knowing English is a standard requirement which contributes to the dilemma - the major issue for many youths is the inability to communicate in English. No wonder then that students try to learn English with the sole aim of improving their career opportunities as a result. For students however, the ability to communicate in English in a formal setting poses a greater challenge which is as a result of a deficiency of English conversations in the real world outside the classroom. There is a pedagogical gap in the framework and its implementation with regards to their oral English which will aid in tackling the issue that surround English language communication (Mohsin, Rashid & Farooq, 2024). It is critical for the English language education framework to apply the systematic gaps in the country to help students achieve the necessary skills for communication.

Problem Statement

It is difficult for students to communicate in English effectively during class and in other day to day activities. It is not being said that they do not have the ability to speak English, but the lack of language proficiency and speaking skills affects communication with friends, peers, teachers, and others in their social life and hampers (Amin et. al. 2024). Employment opportunities also suffer as a result. English language communicators face lesser challenges when it comes to developing careers and moving along desired career paths. Thus, it is important to equip students with English language, in addition to, other subjects they are interested in and learning. The government sector students have difficulties with English and communication skills, and other underdeveloped regions, have the appropriate focus for this study in particular. These solutions will provide practical recommendations that the students will be able to easily utilize in their professional life as well as during their academic activities.

Objective of Research

- To investigate the causes of Communication Apprehension of Students Of Government College University, Hyderabad.

Research Question

- Which are the most important causes of Communication Apprehension of the Undergraduate Students of Government College University, Hyderabad?

Importance of Research

This study focuses primarily on the problems that undergraduate students face when trying to communicate in English. By diagnosing and recommending methods to resolve Communication

Apprehension, this study aims to broaden academic achievement and enhance students' ability to communicate in a variety of professional scenarios, boost self-confidence, improve teaching methods for both teachers and policymakers, enhance employability, and broaden the scope of knowledge available to the public.

Review of Literature

Significance of Communication Skills

Communication is a multi-step process that transfers and shares information, including ideas, messages and opinions, in both verbal and non-verbal formats from one person to another. Language is the most dominant and common type of communication and its most common form is face to face. Communication can also include the use of designs and diagrams. An alternate type of definition emphasizes the fact that communication is the process of mutual sharing and meaning making through the use of symbols. The communication process starts from the point when a message is sent from a sender (the speaker/writer) to a receiver (the listener/reader) and goes through a medium, and still, from the sender, the message goes back as feedback (the sender/ receiver codes and interprets the information (Lathifah, 2015). Although the definitions appear different, they still illustrate some basic ideas as far as communication is concerned, as the message is a form of information that is the most crucial part of communication, and feedback is a vital part to any communication that is developed iteratively. Thus, communication is the aggregate of any act or actor that gives value to the message that is meant to be sent (Kurniadi & Mahaputra, 2021). Interaction as defined by (Fitriani, 2023) is a form of transaction that involves two or more people who are trying to create meaning. According to the (Azizah, 2024), communication is the process of sending and receiving messages either verbally or non verbally. During the process of communication signals are sent and received using the words or the body of the sender and receiver.

Studies Conducted in Local and International Context on the Barriers of Oral Communication

As speaking has often been termed the most difficult skill to master in learning English as a second language, it is not surprising to find Afebri and Muhsin (2018) among the extensive array of researchers and authors grappling with the problem of students' difficulties in spoken English. The study conducted by Al-Roud (2019) is focused on the challenges facing students of the southern universities of Jordan, namely Mukta, Al-Husein Bin Talal, and Tafila Technical Universities. The sample consisted of a total of 239 male and female students to whom a questionnaire aimed at their difficulties was administered. The problem of the study was to ascertain the difficulties the students were facing. Based on the students' self reported their difficulties, the study concluded that the difficulties were most pronounced among the female students. The purpose of Sudirman's (2008) study was to understand what challenges and factors affect high school students in speaking English. His findings include students' difficulties with speaking accuracy, talking without pause, phonetics, vocabulary, grammar, and fluency. The study further revealed, through interviews, the conditions under which the students struggled in English other than perform, affective, and listening factors, and topic knowledge, which were primary of the students. Speaking, as noted by Chand (2021), is an important skill as it shows the degree of mastery of other skills in a given language. Chand's study on the students' speaking challenges and issues at the bachelor level in Far-Western University, Nepal also falls in this category. This empirical qualitative study involved a questionnaire and semi-structured

interviews. Chand was able to categorize the issues and was able to provide pragmatic solutions. The suggestions in the study include the fostering of an English speaking atmosphere in the classroom, integration of approaches in the English curriculum, and restructuring the teacher's role, pedagogical practices, and classroom control in the teaching-learning process. To understand the challenges experienced while speaking English in classes in Zarqa University in Jordan, Alhasan.et. al., (2022) researcher interviewed and collected data from twelve students. The responses were grouped into four categories: language problems, psychological issues, the learning atmosphere, and insufficient practice. The research concluded that the major problems were related to pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Sandika (2021) studied in detail the speaking problems second grade students had in their conversations at SMA N 2 Kelayang. The research applied methods of interviews, observations, and recording. The study proved that students had issues in understanding the conversations being held, which was due to their inadequate vocabulary. This happened due to the varied pronunciations in English in spoken and written forms. In addition to this, many students, in their attempts to speak English, were more interested and more concerned with the need to construct sentences and the possibility of making errors, which resulted in them not being able to speak English at all.

Refinements and Barriers to the Acquisition of Effective Oral Communication Skills in the English Language Communication Anxiety

In the Defeat of the Purpose of the Study, Discussed Barriers to Oral Communication in the Framework Focused on Communication Anxiety. According to MacIntyre (2017), Communication Anxiety is one of the foremost factors which impair the effectiveness of the communication, and, therefore, needs, to be the focus of special concern. To explain better the barriers to the oral communication, one needs to explain in detail the communication anxiety and its impact to the oral communication skill. The Cambridge Organisation (2014) addresses the Communication Anxiety Problem in the Complex process of communication. The study aims at providing a rich and systematic outline of the discourse on the barriers we face, especially under the circumstances of the context of grand challenge under with the undergraduate students of GCUH, in the dominance which is the expression of English born in the formal sphere.

Methodology

Design

Study follows quantitative design.

Participants of the Study

The participants of this study are undergraduate students of 'Government College University, Hyderabad' students. For quantitative research that was based on the usage of structured questionnaires, students of BS English Part I, a total of 107 undergraduates, were purposively selected based on convenience sampling. This quantitative portion intends to paint a general picture of the existing trends and attitudes within the students' community.

Study Site

The study was held in Government College University Hyderabad (GCUH), a unique and one of its kind educational establishments in the city of Hyderabad, Pakistan, and was a college for well over a century. GCUH was founded in 2018 and as such was greatly distinguished as a newly formed university.

Sampling

Convenience sampling was used for the Quantitative portion of the study to 107 undergraduate students from BS English - Part I at the Institute of English Language and Literature GCUH. This approach was used because the researcher was faced with time constraints and had to quickly gather a large quantitative dataset.

Instrument

This research study uses a questionnaire as an instrument for the collection of data. The questionnaire for this research study had 22 items with closed-ended questions of a Likert-type scale. In this study, the instrument is the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24) by James McCroskey & Beatty in 1982. The PRCA-24 enables the detailed systematic quantification of communication apprehension for undergraduates in the Government College University, Hyderabad. The instrument is standardized for designing the systematic measurement of communication apprehension in individuals accruing communication apprehension, offering a structured methodology for evaluating participants' variables relating to experiences and perceptions of barriers toward the oral communication.

Collection of Data

A questionnaire developed from McCroskey's 1982 Personal Report of Communication Apprehension PRCA-24 was sent out to 107 undergraduate students who were part of the convenience sample and who completed the questionnaire using Google Forms. The students were mailed the links, and subsequently, the completed questionnaires were accessible as filled .CSV and Excel files for further analysis. The links were sent to emails and WhatsApp groups of the respective classrooms. Each response was documented and subsequently downloaded for analysis.

Analysis of Data

The Google form was used to create a QSS which corresponding to a qualitative data form to capture a global view of the respondents' attitudes, experiences, behavior, or perceptions.

The QSS developed for this study was broken down to three sections. In the first section, the purpose was to capture the participants' demographic like Name, Department, Batch, Gender, Age etc. In the second section, the aim was to capture the respondents' perceptions of the Linguistic Aspect of the Psychological Perspective of the student. Finally, the third section aimed to capture Psychological Aspect of the student(s).

Demographic Data of Participants

The table shows that the entire population was from Batch 2024. This was an open-ended question; thus, students ventured various spellings or versions of the answer such as 2024 BATCH, 2K24, and BSENG- 2024.

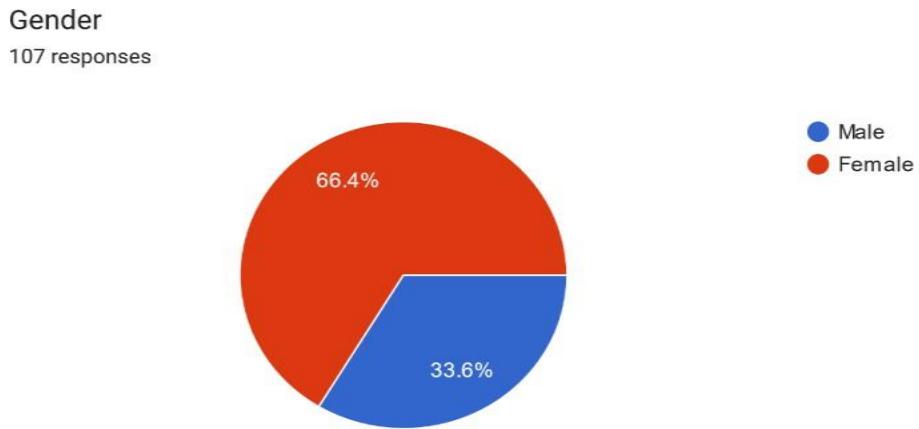


Fig: 5.1. Demographic Data

The data indicates that there was a total of 66.4 % Females while 33.6 % Males participated.

Age

With 19 years old participants comprising 30.8% of the sample since they were the most numerous, the second largest age group was those 18 years' old which accounted for 22.4% of the sample. 20 years old participants accounted for 20.6% of the sample. Collectively these groups accounted for most of the sample which suggests that most of it is made up of late teenage early twenty-year-old participants which would be fitting for undergraduates. The 18+ years old, 21 years old, 24 years old, and 25 years old age groups are represented to a much

Age

107 responses

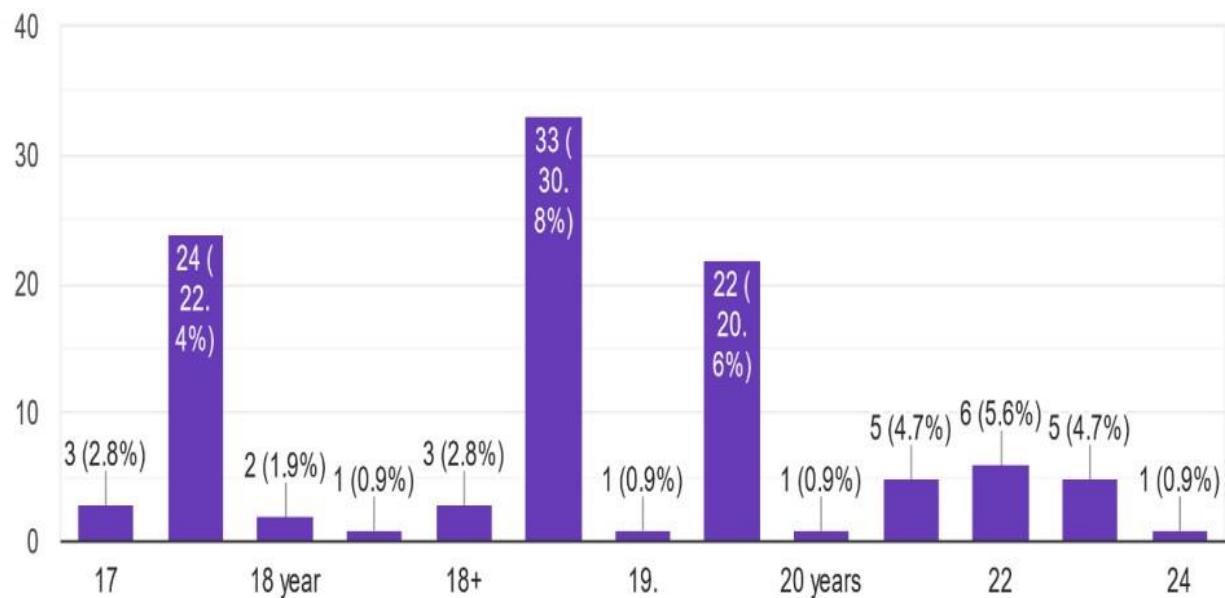


Fig: 5.2. Age

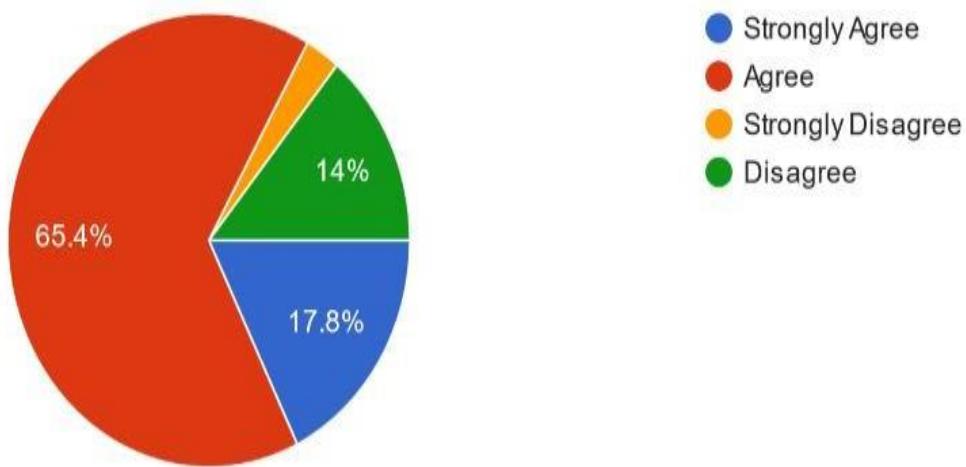
lesser extent. Each of these groups accounted for less than 1% of the sample. This concentration suggests that the participants are probably at the start of their undergraduate studies.

Aspects of Linguistics

Question 01: I Feel Afraid to Speak in English Because My Vocabulary Is Limited

2. It feels difficult for me to express ideas verbally when speaking.
11. I feel afraid to speak in English because my vocabulary is limited

107 responses



		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	15	14.0	14.0	14.0
	Agree	70	65.4	65.4	79.4
	Strongly Disagree	19	17.8	17.8	97.2
	4	3	2.8	2.8	100.0
Total		107	100.0	100.0	

The data depicts that a considerable part of the respondents 65.4% concurred with the statement and believe they are afraid to speak in English because of the lack of words. This sheds light to the fact regarding the apprehensions of the participants in relation to their language competency and its effect on overall confidence in articulating English. A smaller, 14.0% portion of respondents offered a counter stance, postulating they do not believe vocabulary is a hindrance when it comes to English speech. Furthermore, 17.8% of respondents who strongly disagreed, had an assertion that is truly an outlier, which is an indication of a good amount of confidence on their part in describing English speech. There is a minor 2.8% of respondents who opted out of answering the question.

Question 02: It Is Difficult for me to Show My Self Ideas in an Oral Form.

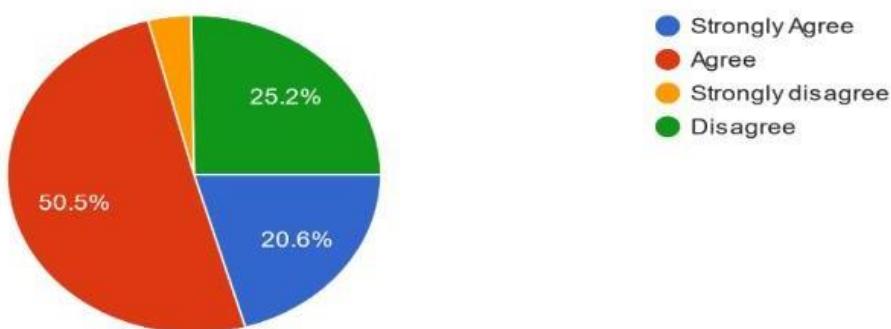
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	28	26.2	26.2	26.2
	Agree	57	53.3	53.3	79.4
	Strongly Disagree	20	18.7	18.7	98.1
	Strongly Agree	2	1.9	1.9	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

The data signifies that the plurality of respondents, 53.3% (57 participants), affirmed the statement which indicates that not a few people hold the conviction that they have a problem with a very basic aspect of communication. A significant proportion, 26.2% (28 participants), disagreed with the statement signifying that these particular individuals do not have a problem articulating their thoughts. Further, 18.7% (20 participants) of the respondents strongly disagreed, suggesting that there is a high level of confidence of being able to articulate thoughts. A marginal proportion 1.9% (2 respondents) of the respondents was able to strongly agree to this question.

“Question 03 I often Get Confuse to Combine and Use the Proper”

3. I often get confuse to combine and use the proper vocabulary to speak.

107 responses



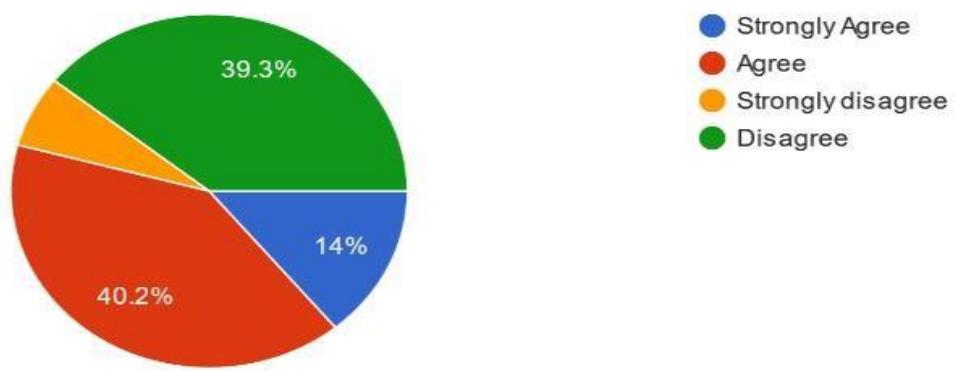
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	27	25.2	25.2	25.2
	Agree	54	50.5	50.5	75.7
	Strongly Disagree	22	20.6	20.6	96.3
	Strongly Agree	4	3.7	3.7	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

The evidence suggests that a larger proportion 50.5% (54 participants) of the respondents agreed with the statement which suggests that indeed they get confused when trying to put the right words to form a speech. This indicates that the ability to phrase is a problem that a number of participants have. A significant proportion, 25.2% (27 participants) disagreed with the statement meaning that these individuals are not confused when trying to formulate speech with vocabulary. Furthermore, 20.6% (22 participants) strongly disagreed which implies that there is a high level of confidence in their vocabulary. A small fraction of the respondents, 3.7% (4 participants) indicated that they were able to strongly agree to this question.

Question 04. I Rarely Response to My Partner When Speaking Because They Speak Faster

4. I rarely response to my partner when speaking because they speak faster.

107 responses



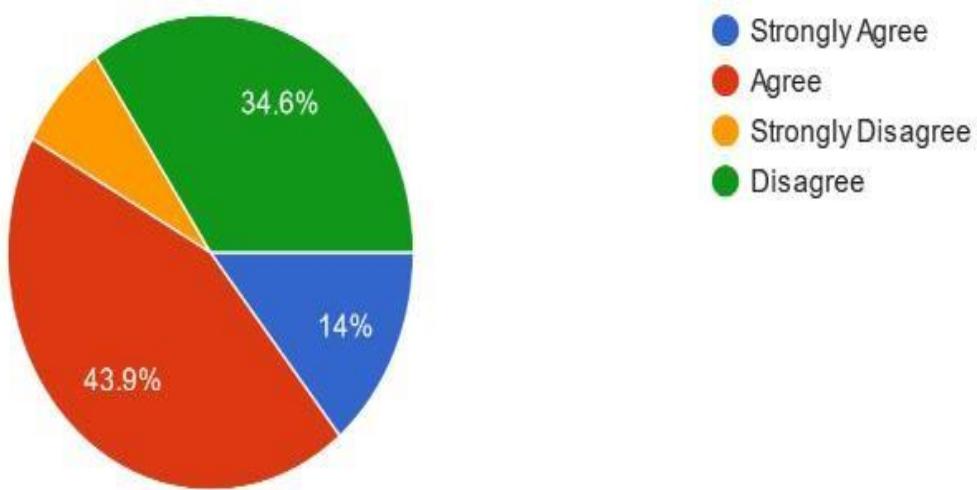
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	42	39.3	39.3	39.3
	Agree	43	40.2	40.2	79.4
	Strongly Disagree	15	14.0	14.0	93.5
	Strongly Agree	7	6.5	6.5	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

The data shows that a large part of the respondents, 40.2% (43 participants), endorsed the statement meaning that they often do not respond to their partners because they talk faster. This points to a situation where the speed in which some respondents are talked to compromises their ability to respond adequately. A large number of respondents, 39.3% (42 participants) disproved the statement meaning that they do not consider their partners talking too fast to respond. It is being in the category of strong disagreement, which was 14.0% (15 participants), also seems to suggest that such respondents are somewhat confident that they can respond irrespective of the talking speed of their partners. A proportion of respondents (7 participants) strongly agreed to this question, which was a rather small number (6.5%).

Question 05. I Evidence Myself to Be Difficult to Arrange the Words into Sentences to Speak in English.

5. I have difficulty to arrange the words into sentences to speak in English.

107 responses



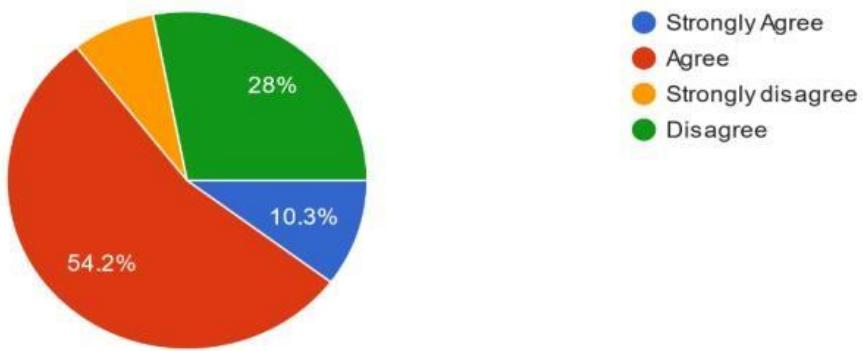
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	37	34.6	34.6	34.6
	Agree	47	43.9	43.9	78.5
	Strongly Disagree	15	14.0	14.0	92.5
	Strongly Agree	8	7.5	7.5	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

The data shows that a large portion of respondents, 43.9% (47 participants), agreed with the statement which indicates that they encounter problems in their speech due to the difficulty of word arrangement. This seems to suggest that many participants struggle with the issues of constructing correct and coherent English sentences while speaking. According to the results of the study, 34.6% of the population is probably of the opinion that most of these people do not find it difficult to organize words into sentences. More, 14.0% of the participants which amounts to 15 people, argued that this statement just has to be true and constructed sentences strongly agree or of opinion above it. There is 7.5% which amounts to 8 participants of the total sample who strongly agreed to the statement.

Psychological Aspects

Question 01: I Do Not Want to Make a Mistake in Speaking Because I am Afraid of Getting Correction

1. I do not want to make a mistake in speaking because I am afraid of getting correction
107 responses



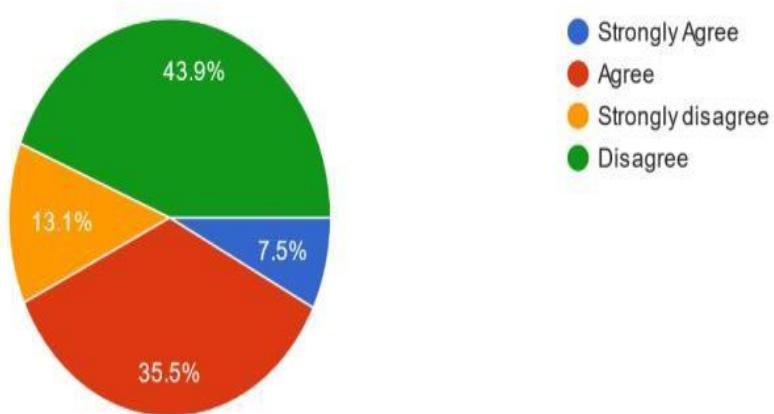
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	30	28.0	28.0	28.0
	Agree	58	54.2	54.2	82.2
	Strongly Disagree	11	10.3	10.3	92.5
	Strongly Agree	8	7.5	7.5	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

Out of 107 participants, 58 (54.2%) expressed agreement with that particular statement. This shows that most students demonstrated a lack of confidence in speaking English, and, thus, a fear of making mistakes and, subsequently, receiving corrections. This fear can be classified as a psychological barrier that may impede effective oral communication and progress in language acquisition. In contrast, 30 participants (28.0%) indicated that they do not fear making mistakes in English, and, in fact, making corrections was of little concern to them. 11 (10.3%) participants even qualified their disagreement as a strong one, showing that they possess confident and assertive speaking skills, with little fear of receiving corrective feedback. As an additional note, the smallest groups of 08 participants (7.5%) and 08 participants (7.5%) strongly agreed with the corrective feedback as severer a psychological barrier.

Question 02: I Have Less Confidence to Speak English Because I Think My Friends Will Laugh at Me When I Speak

2. I have less confidence to speak English because I think my friends will laugh at me when I speak.

107 responses

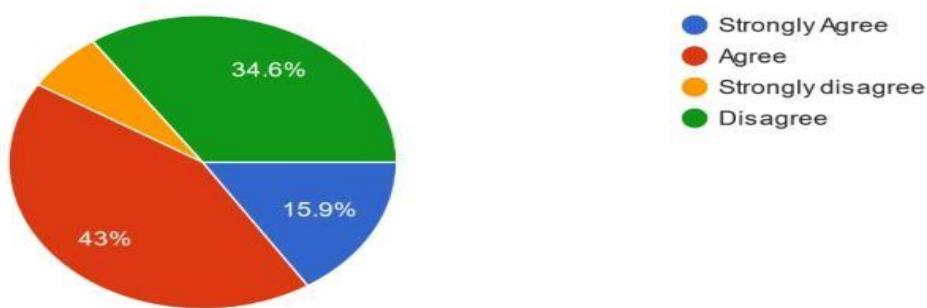


		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Disagree	47	43.9	43.9	43.9
	Agree	38	35.5	35.5	79.4
Valid	Strongly Disagree	8	7.5	7.5	86.9
	Strongly Agree	14	13.1	13.1	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

Once again, there was a strong prevalence of the phenomenon in question, with 35.5% (38 participants) agreeing with the statement. In this particular case, respondents displayed a lack of confidence in their spoken English skills simply because they felt that their peers would mock them. Such a fear has the potential to greatly hinder an individual's willingness to practice spoken English and improve this particular skill. In contrast, the statement corresponds to the verb tense, with 47 participants (43.9%) responding that while speaking English, 'I am less afraid of ridicule from my peers,' and 7.5% (8 participants) strongly disagreed, which means they have high confidence speaking English without ridicule. 9.7% (10 participants) and 13.1% (14 participants) both strongly agreed claiming that they have the most anxiety when laughing towards friends while they are speaking English.

Question 03: When I Start to Speak in English, I Get Blank and Forget Everything Suddenly.

3. When I start to speak in English, I get blank and forget everything suddenly.
107 responses

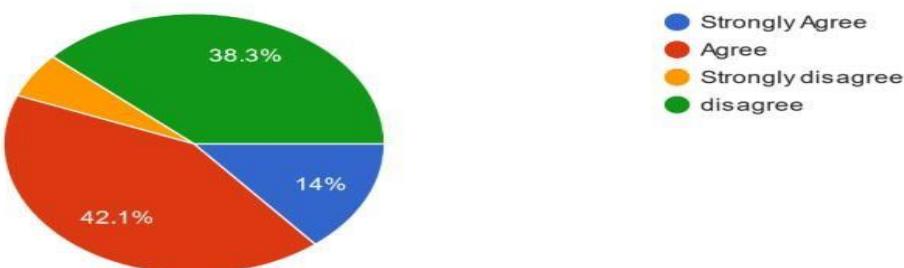


		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	37	34.6	34.6	34.6
	Agree	46	43.0	43.0	77.6
	Strongly Disagree	17	15.9	15.9	93.5
	Strongly Agree	7	6.5	6.5	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

According to the data, 43.0% (46 participants) of respondents agreed with the statement, and this agrees with the sentiment that they blank and forget everything when they begin to speak English. This could be the result of anxiety or lack of practice in verbal English communication. This, in turn, could affect the confidence in speaking and the overall speech fluency. In this context, 34.6% (37 respondents) of the participants who 'did' the 'forget' did not agree with the statement, over 14% (37 participants) and 15.9% had lack of confidence in English. This indicates that at least 6.5 (7 participants) who strongly agreed with the statement, had a big challenge to overcome in mental blockage, starting English speech.

Question 04: I Feel Ashamed to Speak English Because I Do Not Have Fluent English Ability

4. I feel ashamed to speak English because I do not have fluent English ability.
107 responses



		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Disagree	41	38.3	38.3	38.3
	Agree	45	42.1	42.1	80.4
Valid	Strongly Disagree	15	14.0	14.0	94.4
	Strongly Agree	6	5.6	5.6	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

Respondents acknowledging this feeling, 42.1% (45 participants), appreciate this feeling as shameful when speaking English, as not having a command of English or feeling not fluent even affects communication confidence. This feeling, confidence or willingness, is vital for further learning the language. On the positive side, 38.3% (41 participants) of respondents offered the participants would not see the shame to speak English. This also is the case with 14.0% (15 participants) who strongly would not see shame. Nonetheless, there is also a small portion of 5.6% (6 participants) who strongly agreed with the statement, thus showing the serious psychological hurdle that exists for some people to speak English to not pass as fluent.

Recommendations

The results of the study have outlined communicative apprehension and barriers to effective oral communication that students at GCUH deal with.

1. The introduction of Communication Skills Workshops:

Communication apprehension focuses on the inclusion of oral communication skills in the curriculum at all educational levels. The workshops can be designed with tailored communicative apprehension reduction activities, incorporating structured debates, and opportunities for impromptu speaking, paired teaching and active participation sessions, and other public speaking anxiety reduction activities.

2. The introduction of peer review sessions:

The study suggests that peer review and constructive feedback can mitigate communicative apprehension. Therefore, incorporating peer review sessions, where students present in front of smaller audiences and receive constructive feedback, foster an environment for open communication and speech barrier alleviation. Furthermore, learning processes are made easier, and this helps mitigate students' fear of making mistakes.

3. Encourage Technology-Enhanced Learning Tools:

Motivation and learning can occur through the use of mobile language learning applications, virtual reality applications, and other technology tools. Furthermore, technology enables unsupervised and paced learning environments for students. Also, learning technology helps to diffuse the pressure of real-time conversations, hyper customization enables adaptive, individualized learning experiences for students, and technology helps personalize the learning experience.

Conclusion

This study aimed to analyze the communication apprehension and communication barriers within the students of Government College University, Hyderabad (GCUH). The study aimed to

employ a qualitative approach, i.e., qualitative interviews and a quantitative questionnaire, to better understand the students' challenges in GCUH effective oral English communication. The integration of the findings and a discussion of the same was the goal of this conclusion, which attempted to relate the findings with the theoretical underpinnings of communication apprehension in ESL contexts. Quantitative results indicated that anxiety while speaking English is attributed to poor vocabulary and guilt from committing grammatical mistakes. Furthermore, more than two-thirds of respondents indicated that their reticence to communicate in English is due to weak linguistic ability. This denotes a self-confidence barrier-critical self-linguistic that affects a considerable number of students.

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