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Challenges in EFL Learning

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Abstract : This article defines the rapid growth of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education and the common challenges faced by students nationwide. Despite the increasing emphasis on EFL instruction, many learners struggle to achieve fluency and proficiency due to psychological barriers, over-reliance on teacher support, a narrow focus on specific outcomes, and fear of making mistakes. The article underscores the importance of a comprehensive and dedicated approach to language learning, highlighting strategies such as consistent practice, self-study, and engaging with native media. It also discusses the role of effective time management and psychological resilience in overcoming these challenges. By addressing these issues and implementing the recommended strategies, students can enhance their language learning process and achieve higher levels of English proficiency.

Key words : EFL learning, language acquisition, language proficiency, psychological resilience, speech production, learning strategies, time management, language errors, student motivation.

1 Introduction

Learning foreign languages is becoming increasingly common these days, and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) instruction is growing rapidly in our nation. Many students and learners are acquiring knowledge and skills in various courses at lyceums and universities, learning centers where subjects are often taught in a foreign language. EFL learning has become a significant focus in our country. However, many young people approach language learning with a narrow focus on specific outcomes, such as performing well in entrance exams, obtaining language certificates, or developing basic conversational skills. EFL In order to increase their proficiency in the English language, learners make every effort to read, write, listen, speak, and acquire vocabulary. They also make an effort to understand spoken and written language rather than just utterances. The latter typically relate to spoken output in general. They've all necessary skills to accomplish their goals, but a lot of them still fail or fail badly! It appears that they face obstacles that keep them from succeeding, and these obstacles need to be looked into and researched.

Based on my teaching experience, It is believed that without the assistance of the students, it is challenging to recognize these issues and make the necessary discoveries. To guarantee that our students are in appropriate teaching-learning environments and that their actual learning is supported, we must first identify. Since students are the center of both the learning process and the problem, they should be involved in its solution. Therefore, in order to ensure that our students are in appropriate teaching-learning situations and support their real learning, we must first identify these difficulties and then work with them to find solutions.

2 Methods

This limited approach results in a superficial attitude towards the language, hindering their ability to fully grasp its unique expressions and complexities. Consequently, they often fall short of their expectations in mastering the language. This failure can negatively impact their motivation to learn foreign languages, leading them to believe that complete proficiency is unnecessary because it is not their native language. However, this perspective on language learning is fundamentally flawed.

Some other Factors that Affect Language Learning

Unqualified teachers

This factor is the primary one that affects language learning. The difficulty in determining whether an English teacher is qualified to teach is caused by the fact that many communities are English language learners, and anything a teacher says, produces, pronounces, writes, etc. will be taken as true even if it isn't. Because each teacher is teaching them something different from the other, students begin to mix things up as a result. The primary cause of this issue is the inaccurate translations produced by educators from their original tongues.

Unappropriate environment

The environment has an impact on language learning as well. The location of the school, the furnishings, the lighting, and the air conditioning are not relevant issues at this moment, even though they all have an impact on language acquisition. However, the idea here is about the constrained environment, which indicates that students only take care and pay attention to use the language correctly inside the classroom to satisfy their teacher, rather than practicing the language outside of it because it is not necessary.

Lack of Students responsibilities

Students often do not take studying English seriously, believing that they can use incorrect grammar and pronunciation outside the classroom just as they would on exams. They think that casual conversation in daily life does not require perfect grammar to be understood, so they neglect proper language usage, which ultimately hampers their learning. Additionally, EFL learners tend to limit their English study to classroom time and rarely dedicate extra time to it. After class, they often ignore the importance of practicing pronunciation, essay writing, and expanding their vocabulary.

2.1 Overcoming Challenges in Achieving English Language Fluency

Speaking may be the hardest ability for students to master, according to Tom et al.; this is especially likely to be the case for students who don't have a strong foundation in the English language [1]. Furthermore, speaking is the most difficult of the four English language skills to learn [2]. Speaking abilities are extremely difficult to master for a few reasons. For instance, students' fear of making mistakes and receiving negative feedback from their EFL classmates might cause anxiety and low self-esteem [3]. Students' decreased propensity to freely participate in oral activities is another aspect .

Achieving fluency and a deep understanding of a foreign language requires a serious, comprehensive approach. Only through such dedication can learners fully appreciate the language's intricacies and communicate effectively in the future.

Speaking skills, as well as any other skills, do not form by themselves: for their formation, it is necessary to apply special strategies and activities that are eventually designed to form and develop the learners' ability to navigate in the natural communicative situations. They are considered as an important component of teaching and learning process. It should be noted that designing effective speaking activities is rather challenging in comparison with activities for listening, reading or writing. First of all, we need to define what is "effective speaking activity." The main features of successful speaking activities are the followings:

- ✓ Students speak a lot. Students spend the most of the time allocated for the activity being engaged in speaking;
- ✓ Equal participation. Each student has an opportunity to take part in the discussion. All students speak in relatively equal degree which means not enabling several student to dominate;
- ✓ High motivation. Students want to talk, because they are interested in the topic of discussion, and they have something to say;
- ✓ Available language level. The students' level of language enable them take part in the speaking activity. Students express their ideas, thoughts in a clear language, at an affordable level .

However, another challenge faced by young learners beginning to study languages is their fear of making mistakes while learning and using the language. While striving to avoid errors can foster a sense of responsibility towards the language, it also slows down the learning process and can hinder the student's ability to fully develop their speaking skills. Language learners often try to avoid grammatical mistakes during conversations, which can distract them and cause confusion about the content of their thoughts. This confusion can prevent listeners from

fully understanding the intended message. It is important to remember that mistakes and shortcomings are natural in any new endeavor. Pronunciation issues and grammatical errors can be resolved through consistent practice and continuous self-improvement.

Common mistake made by new foreign language learners is becoming overly reliant on their teacher's support and neglecting self-study. While it's beneficial to rely on the teacher's explanations and assistance, avoiding independent work or not putting in enough effort to solve minor language learning challenges can gradually slow down the learning process and reduce overall progress. It's important to remember that foreign language skills cannot be built solely on the speech of one person, as teachers' speech in a foreign language often differs significantly from that of native speakers. To mitigate these issues, learners should engage with movies, podcasts, and radio broadcasts in the target language. Additionally, many new learners struggle with the overwhelming abundance of foreign language programs and often fail to select the most suitable ones for their needs, which hampers their training effectiveness.

Choosing the Appropriate Materials

The multitude of language learning programs available to them overwhelms many beginning students, making it difficult for them to select the ones that best meet their needs. Appropriate resource selection is essential for training that works. To stay interested and motivated, learners should look for programs that fit their interests, learning style, and competency level.

Techniques for Enhancement

Take into account the following techniques to improve language learning:

Frequent Practice: It's all about consistency. Participate in speaking, listening, reading, and writing exercises on a regular basis.

Diverse Exposure: To comprehend distinct accents, settings, and cultural quirks, listen to a variety of media in the target language.

Peer Interaction: To get practice conversing with peers, take part in conversation groups or language exchange programs.

Goal-setting: To keep motivated and focused, set clear, attainable goals.

Feedback and Reflection: To pinpoint areas for growth, consider your learning path and ask teachers and peers for constructive criticism.

Fluency in any foreign language, even English, demands commitment, practice, and a calculated approach. Students can greatly enhance their language proficiency by overcoming their fear of making mistakes, studying independently, and choosing the right learning materials. A good language learning journey requires varied exposure, consistent practice, and effective speaking exercises. By using these techniques, students can gain the competence and self-assurance necessary to speak clearly in every situation.

3 Result

In our nation, many learners converse in English, yet despite being proficient in reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar, some struggle with speaking as well. Even after several years of EFL study, they may not achieve high levels of spoken proficiency. This raises the question: why do language learners face difficulties in speaking English despite having a good vocabulary and understanding of grammar? There are several reasons for this.

- ✓ Firstly, students often fear speaking.
- ✓ Secondly, they may feel awkward talking to peers in class.
- ✓ Thirdly, despite having a solid vocabulary and grammar foundation, learners may struggle to articulate their ideas clearly and quickly.
- ✓ Finally, fear of making mistakes can prevent them from speaking. Overcoming these barriers is crucial for improving spoken language skills.

Psychology can assist in overcoming these obstacles. Numerous scholars assert that success is largely dependent on psychological factors. Firstly, learners should believe in themselves and not pay attention to negative opinions from others. Without self-belief, learning or starting something new is incredibly challenging. Secondly,

learners must develop a success-oriented mindset. Managing emotional states is vital, as poor emotional states can lead to failure, while positive ones can lead to achieving goals. For instance, consistent feelings of tiredness, boredom, or depression can hinder the ability to study English effectively, affecting concentration and memory, and leading to unstructured or lazy study habits. Learners must master their emotions, staying active, excited, and passionate about speaking English.

Additionally, learners should find ways to make language learning enjoyable. This includes imagining, smiling, and laughing while studying or speaking English, and listening to English podcasts and native speakers with enthusiasm. Maintaining a positive state can significantly enhance their speaking abilities. Furthermore, listening to energetic and exciting music before or during English classes can reduce anxiety and foster a more optimistic outlook towards language learning challenges.

Finally, students should read and listen to a lot of stories in English, as stories often contain useful vocabulary and structures. Revisiting and reviewing stories can help students speak more fluently and confidently. Engaging in conversations with teachers, friends, and others using newly acquired vocabulary is also crucial.

Despite of counting several issues, it is vital to remember that language is dynamic and ever-changing. Natural speech often includes discrepancies between intention and output. Slips of the tongue, which are mistakes involving the sounds or words of a language, provide insights into the speech production process. These errors can be categorized based on the units of speech they affect (such as phonemes, words, or phrases) and the mechanisms causing them (such as exchanges, substitutions, anticipations, or perseverations). Analyzing speech errors reveals that speech production occurs in stages, where content words and function words are accessed at different points, with some interaction occurring between these levels of processing. It is important to note that the occurrence of slips of the tongue is not random. In particular, some sorts of errors that could occur do not (e.g., we do not observe function words exchanging with content words). This order is the basis for explaining how and why errors arise in terms of a model of speech production. The basic idea is that for an error to occur, the two elements of the error (intended and actual outcome) must be simultaneously active at the same level of processing. For example, words exchange with words, but content words only exchange with other content words, and function words with other function words; content words do not exchange with function words, or vice versa. This finding is extraordinarily robust: in my corpus of several thousand speech errors, there is not a single instance of a content word exchanging with a function word.

4 Discussion

According to psychologists, effective time management is important for language learning. Expert time management, according to psychologists, is crucial because it keeps students from being manipulated by time limits. Learning a language improves one's capacity for interaction with a wider variety of people in addition to making communication easier.

Many scholars agree that learning a language is a first step in learning more about the outside world. By using psychological concepts to overcome learning challenges, one can improve knowledge and communication abilities and ultimately have a richer life. Furthermore, three main elements are necessary for kids to enhance their written and spoken communication skills: reading a lot, paying attention to language, and being exposed to appropriate and expressive speech. The standard of the speaking environments and the structure. The quality of speaking conditions, along with the organization of children's speech experiences, significantly influences language acquisition and proficiency. Teachers play a crucial role in this process by providing exemplary speech models, guiding students in error correction, and fostering improvement in both oral and written communication abilities.

Additionally, the discussion underscores the importance of students managing their time effectively. Failure to do so may result in time managing the individual, hampering language learning progress. Considering time management as a fundamental aspect of language acquisition is paramount, as language skills serve as a conduit for meaningful interaction and understanding in a globalized world. Recognizing the symbiotic relationship between language knowledge and broader world knowledge, individuals can leverage psychological insights to overcome learning challenges and lead a more fulfilling life enriched with knowledge and communication proficiency.

In developing students' oral and written speech skills relies on three key factors:

- ✓ Attention to vocabulary, extensive reading by students, and the correct and expressive speech of those around them, i.e., speaking conditions.
- ✓ The organization of children's speech experiences.

The principles of correct writing do not develop automatically. Teachers must exhibit perfect speech, guide students in correcting their mistakes, and encourage the improvement of both their oral and written communication skills. Furthermore, students should always manage their time. Time will manage you if you don't manage it.

Additionally, as everything has to do with time, learners should consider time management. Acquiring language skills is a great way to communicate with a wide range of people. "Language knowledge is a sign of world knowledge," according to many scientists. People should use psychology to find solutions to their issues. We are aware that a life with greater knowledge is preferable.

5 Conclusion

In summary, while there are common obstacles to learning foreign languages, such as fear of mistakes and over-reliance on teachers, a serious and comprehensive approach, along with effective psychological strategies, can lead to successful language acquisition and fluency. Learning foreign languages presents several challenges, such as fear of mistakes, over-reliance on teachers, and superficial approaches to learning. These obstacles can impede language acquisition and fluency. However, by adopting a serious and comprehensive approach, learners can overcome these barriers. Effective strategies include managing psychological factors, engaging in independent study, and immersing oneself in the target language through various media. Understanding that language is dynamic and prone to errors can also help in the learning process. By maintaining a positive mindset and consistent practice, learners can achieve their language goals and enjoy enriched communication with a broader range of people. Embracing these methods can transform language learning into a rewarding and successful endeavor, fostering a deeper appreciation and mastery of foreign languages.

In conclusion, learning English as a foreign language might be difficult, but EFL students can overcome these challenges and succeed in their language learning objectives with persistence and the appropriate techniques. Students can improve their English language proficiency and self-assurance by concentrating on vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, speaking fluency, listening comprehension, and writing. It's critical for EFL teachers to be aware of these difficulties and assist their pupils in overcoming them.

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