The Impact of Teachers' Attitudes on Students' English Speaking Anxiety in the Context of Kerala

Som Nepali

Department of Social Work, Rajagiri College of Social Sciences (Autonomous), Kalamassery, India

Email address:
nepalisom6@gmail.com

Abstract: This is a qualitative research study that descriptively discovered the effects of teachers' attitudes on students' English speaking anxiety, which was being addressed by determining the teachers' attitudes towards students in terms of their English speaking performance and English speaking anxiety, and students' feelings about their teachers' attitudes during their English speaking performance. An interview questionnaire comprised of open-ended questions was utilized to interview the 15 student and 6 teacher participants of this study, who are currently connected from the two prestigious universities in Kerala. The interview findings revealed the following effects of instructors' attitudes on students' English speaking anxiety: Teachers' student-friendly approach and interactive instructional strategies can alleviate students' English speaking anxiety, and teachers as stern and firm monitors of students' language use make students more aware of themselves, which drives them to be extensively scared of committing mistakes and not meeting their teachers' expectations. Out from the gathered verbal data and results, this study concluded that teachers are indeed major determinants of students' English speaking anxiety. Teachers' shown behavioural and instructional attitudes have a major role in increasing students' anxiety and apprehension in utilising the target language orally, which has an impact on their English speaking performance.

Keywords: English Speaking Anxiety, English Speaking Performance, Teachers' Attitudes, Students, Kerala

1. Introduction

The purpose of this study was to see if teachers' views had an impact on students' motivation and, as a result, English language learning [1-3]. When teachers use a positive pedagogical method, the data analysis indicated numerous favourable tendencies toward learning English. Some suggestions for future investigation were offered [4]. The use of English is no longer limited to native English speakers. As a foreign or second language, it is spoken in almost every country on the planet. The primary goal of this study is to look at the impact of teachers' attitudes on students' language acquisition [5, 6].

The information was gathered using a questionnaire and an interview to assess students' FLCA levels. According to the findings of the study, anxiety levels rise as a result of the impact of instructors and classmates [7]. The goal of this study is to determine the types of impacts that students receive from their teachers and friends. The study also attempts to discover the techniques that students use to cope with negative effects from teachers and other students in the language class [8-10].

Anxiety has a significant emotional impact in the learning of English as a Foreign Language [11]. Feelings of unease, irritation, nervousness, and concern are all symptoms of anxiety. It may have an impact on learning efficacy, motivation, and self-esteem. Anxiety is one element that impacts language learning and teaching success or failure [12-16]. It is a teaching technique that emphasises language as a tool for communicating meaning rather than as a structural and rule-based characteristic. The effort of students was defined by their Ideal Self and favourable sentiments about their immediate learning environment [17-19]. Self, on the other hand, was influenced by enforced societal ideal-self as well as unfavourable attitudes toward the learning environment. The learners' Ideal self and language learning attitudes were influenced by parental encouragement and religious interest [20, 21].

Therefore, on the other hand, the community is sceptical of the advantages, studying English becomes a burden, with teachers attempting to finish the curriculum and students putting up little effort in order to receive a passing mark. As

a result, the purpose of this study is to look at the epistemological and cognitive abilities of instructors and students when it comes to teaching and learning English [22-26].

2. Research Problem

This study determined the effects of teachers' attitudes on students' English speaking anxiety.

The following questions were addressed by this research:

1) What are the teachers' attitudes towards students in terms of?
2) English speaking performance.
3) English speaking anxiety.
4) How do the students feel about the teachers' attitudes during their English speaking performance?
5) What are the effects of teachers' attitudes on students' English speaking anxiety?
6) Based on the results, what output can be proposed?

3. Methodology of Research Design

This is a qualitative research study that made use of the descriptive method. The study of students' language anxiety requires a technique that can extract descriptive information from the variables in question, which are difficult to examine through empirical research.

3.1. Participants

The participants of this study were the teachers and students from the two prestigious universities in Kerala. A convenient sampling technique was employed wherein the researcher gathered 15 first year education students and 10 English teachers who were available online. All student participants were first year Education students from the two prestigious universities in Kerala with the following specific majors: BSNED and BSEd-English. There were 5 BSNED students and 10 BSED- English students, which made the sum of 15 student participants. All teacher participants were English teachers from the same universities with the students in order to yield more reliable and valid results. Generally, there were 6 teacher participants and all of them were teaching in tertiary level for 1-5 years.

3.2. Instrument

The study used interview questionnaire comprised of open- ended questions. Teachers' interview questionnaire was consist of six open-ended questions that targeted on the teachers' attitudes towards students in terms of English speaking performance and students' exhibited English speaking anxiety. The students' interview questionnaire, on the other hand, included nine questions on their behaviour or feelings toward teachers' attitudes during their English speaking performance, as well as the influence of teachers' views on their English speaking nervousness.

3.3. Procedure for Data Collection and Data Analysis

The study was based on the analysis of the interview questionnaires of the two groups of participants showing the three major areas: teachers' attitudes towards students' English speaking performance, teachers' attitudes towards students' English speaking anxiety, and students' feelings about their teachers' attitudes during their English speaking performance. 15 education students and 5 English teachers from the two universities in Kerala were chosen conveniently to answer the interview questionnaire that was sent via Facebook messenger. Then, the responses were analyzed qualitatively with accordance to the mentioned three major areas and collectively summarized the verbal data in relation to the effects of teachers' attitudes on students' English speaking anxiety, which was the main purpose of this study.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Teachers' Attitudes Towards Students' English Speaking Performance

All of the teacher participants claimed that they are just guide on the side during English speaking activities in the classroom, which means that students are in the limelight who take over the spot once it's their turn to speak. Parents, students, and teachers have all expressed their approval of teachers' replies to concerns about the usage of English during speaking performances by students in an English class [27]. A literary artist's success is based on both his thoughts and his expression. The writer's style shows his or her personality and objective. Raja Rao has accomplished this by creatively employing language rather than the 19th or 20th century western languages. Not all students are born good at speaking English, but rather they are trained to be good at it, according to Raja Ramachandran, a professor of English at the University of British Columbia. Students need external help to build their will to perform the language [28].

Teachers' attention and consideration on language learners' anxiety is indeed essential in order to provide them a succor in reaching the intended performance goals in the target language. When students are required to perform orally in class using the English language, teachers provide incentive and positive reinforcement to their students [29]. This is because they see that a pupil exhibits troubling behaviors as a result of internal reasons such as weak self-motivational skills or behavior problems [29]. Moreover, some teachers have accentuated the essence of the law of readiness wherein they give ample time to the students to think, to organize the thoughts they have in mind, and to get themselves ready before giving the floor to them [30-32].

4.2. Teachers' Attitudes Towards Students' English Speaking Anxiety

From the perspective of seven Chinese ESL students, this study investigates the nature of anxiety in asking questions in class. It explores the consequences, causes, and coping

mechanisms related to these students' worry. EFL/ESL instructors should be aware of their students' language anxiety, according to the recommendations [33]. One of the long running major issues in second language learning is the language anxiety, specifically the oral production. This kind of apprehensiveness is one of the major issues for the academic achievement of the students as it was found out in the study of that those students who have decreased their academic achievement showed a higher level of English language anxiety [34]. With regard to this, all of the teachers' responses in the interview with regard to the students' English speaking anxiety boil down on the power of radiating positive and relaxing energy to the students to instill a low-filtered ambiance to them [35]. In short, teachers touch the affective side of the students by motivating and encouraging them to express themselves freely using the language without pressuring themselves and minding the mistakes that they will be committed all along their English speaking performance. Since it is really inevitable that students will have a hard time to speak their thoughts with the use of English language alone, some of the teacher participants authorize their students to do a little bit of code-switching and then recompose their thoughts to let their students feel at ease when sharing their ideas orally in class [36]. All of the concerned teachers in the interview have shown positive and gentle attitudes in their answers when it comes to the way they address students' English speaking anxiety. Some teachers have expressed that they lighten the mood of the class by cracking some jokes or prompts to energize the students. Also, when it comes to instructional approach, majority of the teachers have written that giving tips and strategies in presenting orally using the target language is a useful way to help students alleviate their English speaking anxiety [37].

4.3. Students' Feeling About Their Teachers' Attitudes During Their English Speaking Performance

All of the student participants have professed that they can't help to feel anxious and nervous whenever they speak English in front of the class. Most of the students have acclaimed that their anxiety stems from the negative pressure they have set on themselves, their own preconceived judgment on their performance, and their fear of committing mistakes [38]. All of these aforementioned anxiety triggers have close contact to how teachers approach and set the vibe of the classroom since majority of the students responded in the interview that they just feel these emotions depending on how they see their teachers – if they are strict, unapproachable, intimidating, approachable, easy- going, calm, and etc. Henceforth, teachers' well-set, unwavering expectations for behavior and performance induce the students to see them as strict and such, which causes them to feel the emotional triggers of their English speaking anxiety [39]. Moreover, the student participants have included their bad experience with their English teachers who gave them negative feedback and pointed out their mistakes in an inappropriate way, which lowered their confidence and

created their fright in speaking English in a crowd. In short, students are so sensitive to the teachers' actions and behaviors that even their facial expressions and gestures are perceived by their own understanding and interpretation. High school students created the Student Observation of Teachers and Teaching Techniques tool. The instrument is made up of 32 components. It has a high level of internal consistency and dependability. Significant connections have been discovered between variables like the amount of books pupils read and the number of days they were absent [40].

4.4. Effects of Teachers' Attitudes on Students' English Speaking Anxiety

The results of the conducted interview have yielded that teachers are major determinants of the students' anxiety towards using English orally, thus the following are the summarized effects of teachers' attitudes on students English speaking anxiety taken from the interview results:

1) Students get agitated during their English speaking performance when they perceive their teachers as strict, perfectionist, and such.

Students feel disturbed during their oral performance because they are intimidated by the reaction and thinking of their external circles and one of these are their teachers [41]. Though the participants are education students, they can't still cease to feel anxious and afraid during their speaking activities and it's because the triggers of these disturbing emotions are emerging not only from themselves, but also from extrinsic factors – which they have no control.

2) Teachers' student-friendly approach and interactive instructional strategies help alleviate students' English speaking anxiety.

The student participants have admitted that it is not just the presence of their teachers that can disturb their anxiety, but also the kind of strategies and activities they employ in class. About 95% of the student respondents have claimed that individual English speaking performances are quite more fearsome to them compared to pair and group performances for the reason that their teacher's attention and focus is not directed to the only one student. Also, majority of the student respondents find fun activities during the language instruction effective in appeasing the negative and disturbing emotions they feel during speaking [41]. In addition, all of the student respondents have retorted that their teachers' approachable vibe and their genuine motivation and encouragement can immensely help them to conquer their anxiety when speaking orally in English [41]. The positive attitude of the teachers created a positive influence on students' attitudes all throughout the language learning since students consider their teachers as model figures, who played a massive role in building their motivation and positive mindset towards learning English [42].

3) Teachers as stern and firm monitors of students' language use make students more conscious of themselves that drives them to be extensively scared of committing mistakes and not meeting their teachers' expectations.

All of the students in the interview have responded that one of the major causes of their English speaking anxiety is because they are afraid of receiving unwanted corrections from their teachers [43]. But, students should not be afraid of making mistakes while learning because errors are part of their learning process and corrections from the teachers are part of their teaching process [43]. It is the responsibility of the English teachers to correct students, but in an appropriate and gentle manner – that's why there is a constructive feedback that gives corrective measures, support, and encouragement to the students as a way to heighten their learning and improve their performance [44]. Henceforth, some student participants have suggested that teachers should give corrections in a manner that they will not be put in embarrassment. The goal of this study is to find out how EFL pre-service teachers feel about English pronunciation and teaching pronunciation. A qualitative research design and a semi-structured interview style were used to conduct the study. The participants had a generally good opinion about pronunciation, according to the study [45, 46].

5. Conclusion

This is a qualitative research study that examines the impact of teachers' attitudes on students' fear about speaking English. Students' nervousness and apprehension in using the target language verbally is exacerbated by teachers' demonstrated behavioural and instructional attitudes. The researcher developed a list of effective teaching strategies as a consequence of the study. Teachers' demonstrated behavioral and instructional attitudes have a significant role in increasing students' anxiety and apprehension in utilizing the target language verbally. The students' English speaking performance suffers as a result of their unfavorable attitude toward language use. There is a significant relationship between language anxiety, students' motivation and, as a result, English language learning [1-3]. The study discovered that in English lessons, teachers' engaging and communicative skills build a good picture of the instructor in the minds of the students. Effective teaching methods and a good attitude are the most common factors in students' successful class performance.

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