English Speaking Challenges Encountered by Iraqi EFL Learners: Difficulties & Potential Solutions

تحديات التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية التي يواجهها متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق: المشكلات والحلول

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Abstract

As for the general EFL teaching and learning, it may be pointed out that students face numerous challenges when learning English which is their second language and in their context as learners in Iraq. The contextual factors that hinder EFL learning concern the nation's cultural, educational, and social political characteristics that define the learning environment. This paper explores challenges faced by Iraqi EFL learners during English speaking and more focus on linguistic, cultural and educational factors. Disparities of phonetics, the deficiency of a sufficient amount of vocabulary, and cultural requirements regarding the use of gestures, ton, and formality are critical issues. These difficulties are followed by conventional teaching techniques and no contact with real English as it is spoken in the world. These are some of the possible remedies: using CLT approach, integrating real materials in the classroom, focusing on the pronunciation and creating receptive learning atmosphere. That is why technology is effective, prompting cultural sensitivity, and offering teacher preparation needed for language learning. These complexities' handling by the Iraqi EFL learners will help them gain more confidence, develop themselves as great English communicators, and even improve their speaking skills..

خلاصة:

هناك العديد من الصعوبات والتحديات التي تواجه متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، وخاصة بالنسبة للطلاب في البيئات غير الناطقة بالانجليزية كالعراق. وتؤدي العديد من العوامل كالثقافية والتربوية والاجتماعية وكذلك السياسية في البلاد، والتي تؤثر على بيئة تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، إلى تفاقم هذه التحديات. تسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على الصعوبات التي يواجهها متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق عند التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية، مع التركيز بشكل خاص على الفوارق اللغوية والثقافية والتعليمية. وتعد الفوارق الصوتية، ونقص المفردات، والتوقعات الثقافية المحيطة بلغة الجسد، والرسمية، واللياقة، من المشاكل المهمة. وتتفاقم هذه الصعوبات بسبب استراتيجيات التدريس التقليدية ونقص الممارسة الحقيقية لتحدث للغة الإنجليزية. ومن بين العلاجات المحتملة اعتماد تدريس اللغة التواصلية، ودمج المواد الحقيقية، والتركيز على تعليم المحادثة، وإنشاء بيئات تعليمية مشجعة. كما يتطلب اكتساب اللغة الفعّال الاستفادة من التكنولوجيا الحديثة المتوفرة حاليا، وتعزيز الكفاءة الثقافية، والإعداد الجيد للمعلمين. ويمكن لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية العراقيين اكتساب المزيد من الثقة، وأن يصبحوا أكثر كفاءة في التواصل باللغة الإنجليزية، وتعزيز قدراتهم على التحدث من خلال معالجة هذه القضايا المعقدة بأساليب مركزة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: صعوبات التحدث بالانكليزية، العراقيين متعليمي اللغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية، تعلم اللغة الإنكليزية.

November 2024 Jumada Al-awwal 1446
Special Issue: Imam Ja'afar Al-Sadiq University: The Seventh International Scientific Conference

786

Introduction

English is the most preferred language of communication in the current internationized world because it fosters culture, business and fast and Convenient communication. There are many challenges to fluent English oral comprehension for the Iraqi EFL students: These are deemed to be mainly related to language, culture and education (Ghafar, 2022)

Most of the learners speak Iraqi Arabic which in terms of phonetics, syntax and vocabularies differs from English. Arabic also has complex consonant clusters, apart from the fact that its vowels do not sound anything like English's phonetics which implies that pronunciation is somewhat difficult (Alah, 2024). Some of the realities that are quite apparent from the above chart is that Arabic lacks some of the phonemes or sound machining that the English language has including 'p' and 'v' sound hence, the times that the Iraqi learners are more likely to pronounce incorrectly especially in oral communication. These phonetic differences are first barriers which hinder comprehensibility and fluency of spoken English (Yeaqub, 2018).

Other than language barriers, one major factor contributing to poor learning of spoken English by Iraq students is cultural differences. Liu, (2016) suggest that assertive communication behaviors, which are appropriate in Western cultures impose restrictions due to social expectations because of respect to the elderly and elders as well as superiority hierarchal relations. There are potential problems of politeness which can be challenging for Iraqi students in setting appropriate power dynamic in conversations when practicing in talking to one another using good English. Moreover, written English is often accorded greater importance than spoken English in societal perception about the language which can be problematic for assessing oral fluency in learning context.

Younus (2020) stated that previously grammar and writing skills have been emphasized more in Iraqi educational institutions than the speaking skill, and the previous traditional teaching strategies also supported this view, as Martin (2022), and Algarawi (2022) indicated. On the one hand, the methods based on rote learning tend to focus on grammatical adjustments and often ignore the communicative

787

November 2024 Jumada Al-awwal 1446
Special Issue: Imam Ja'afar Al-Sadiq University: The Seventh International Scientific Conference

competence have paramount importance when it come to actual communication. The problem of limited exposure to leading global communication resources is that it does not allow for the subsequent growth of oral English proficiency due to the absence of effective and authentic practice within English-speaking environments (Yudintseva, 2023).

This concern calls for an all-round approach that may be on linguistic, cultural and pedagogical aspects. Phonological accuracy and confidence, based on Darcy (2018), may be enhanced by selected phonetic emphases through vocal drill and communicative practicing. The super ordination of participation and the full-fledged utilization of learning-communicative strategies can be promoted if learners interact within situations that relate to communicative tasks salient for their autonomy. Incorporated by events in attaining the objective along with the strategic availability of multimedia resources; it indeed forms the best setting for learning proficient speaking.

Employment of English as a foreign language has therefore become a basic core requirement for Staff and Students in the faculty, government, and other diplomatic relations as Iraq moves towards globalization and commodification. In so doing, this paper is a significant step toward revealing the linguistic, cultural and educational barriers that hamper Iraqi EFL learners' achievement and contributes to establishing an effective generation and boosting of the L2 learning community to be ready to give their best in global interaction.

To sum up, it proves possible to list the following difficulties that Iraqi EFL learners experience in their attempt to achieve fluency in spoken English due to language, cultural, and definite instructional disparities. With the support of IBLA, inclusive teaching methods, use of technology and fostered respect of other cultures, which are the common challenges among Iraqi students, they can smooth over these barriers and open new opportunities for themselves, their studies, as well as their further professional activity within the globalization process. This paper encourages understanding of the difficulties encountered by Iraqi EFL students in learning fluent spoken English comprehending particular susceptible elements of foreign language communication alongside significant elements of the processes required in attaining efficiency in spoken English.

November 2024 Jumada Al-awwal 1446
Special Issue: Imam Ja'afar Al-Sadiq University: The Seventh International Scientific Conference

788

Background

This is due to some political events for instance, instability the wars Iraq has gone through in the past have had a huge impact on educational system. English remains as one of the core learning subjects mandatory to be taught to the Iraq school starting from the primary level up to the tertiary level regardless of these factors (Saed & Jafar, 2015). However, there are numerous factors that determine the extent of success that English teaching will achieve. The above teacher competency, resources, and policy education to education these are some of the fundamental components of education.

In order to find out what caused problems in spoken English among the Iraqi EFL students, it is necessary to go beyond purely linguistic situation in Iraq and consider some educational and sociolinguistic background. This background rationale of this section is therefore to give the reader an appreciation of these contexts and therefore the basic issues that give rise to the value speaking difficulties that confront the Iraqi students.

On official level Iraq uses Arabic for official business, education and other day-to-day activities; however, people speak many languages, mostly Arabic but other languages as well. The dialect of Modern Standard Arabic that is referred to as Iraqi Arabic is very different from English in the aspects of phonology, syntax and lexicon (Khalaf & Mohammed, 2022). For example, phonetic system of Iraqi Arabic completely does not include some English sounds including the "p" and "v" sounds, and this leads to the common problems of pronunciation. Moreover, Arabic syntactic pattern is quite different from English simple SVO and quite simple verb forms due to conjugation and SVO order. To the Iraqi learners of English, these are the preliminary barriers because in order to accomplish all those sounds and grammar rules in the mean time while speaking the language, they need to learn anew (Al Abdely & Thai, 2016).

In the past and up to the present, the main focus in the education system of Iraq was on reproduction, grammar drilling and mastering particularly in foreign language acquisition. According to a study carried out within Iraq, in the English language education usability and oral fluency is considered more important than grammatical accuracy and written finesse (Bdaiwi abd Sayer, 2023). While this method

789

prepares the pupils in the grammatical rules and vocabulary in detail, the helpful speaking skills may be neglected. In addition, the essentially low quality of spoken English provided by the learners is explained by a combination of factors including large classes, inadequate resources, and contacts with native English speakers. Some aspects of communicative competence needed for successful verbal communication may not be given adequate attention in the curriculum, as and often a curriculum load is read/write only.

With regard to the subject of interest –language learning experience of the Iraqi EFL learners, culture is found to play a certain part. Iraqi culture especially among students respects are high or extreme that whenever older persons come close they are shown a lot of reverence it will therefore be a bit difficult for students to be a re frolic and engage in say outgoing heated discussions and interactions (Khirbeet, 2024). There are social norms and etiquette which may make or hinder a student to encourage him /her to participate in class discussions or to be in a position to present in front of a group. Likewise, literal speaking English too has not received the deserved focus in the social setting on account of cultural semantic values which do not relate spoken English to written English.

Fight and insecurities that shaped socio-political history of the Iraqi state have therefore affected education. Persistent conflict over the years has resulted into deterioration of school infrastructure, restricted access to quality teaching aids and context in which language learning could be made a low priority (Qarawee, 2012). These effects have widen the difficulties for the Iraqi EFL students because they hinder equal learning chances and students barely could make round and comprehensive language learning.

However, there are some challenges which slow down the effective teaching of English in Iraq as following Despite these obstacles some facilitating factors are as follow Technology and multimedia teaching aids, web contents and other forms of media based learning tools have turn into a new face to learning. For learners who take the opportunity to learn Iraqi language, they can practice their speaking skills with a native language speaker while others are also able to learn the real use of English by using the social media, video conferencing as well as the language learning applications. When integrated into the current system

of education, these technologies has an influence of negating some of the aspects that hinder use of English spoken languages.

As a result, this paper has highlighted some of the challenges that Iraqi EFL learners experience in order to learn spoken English, which are arising from; linguistic factors, cultural barriers, educational system and sociopolitical factors. These contexts must therefore be understood because this would create more focused strategies to assist the Iraqi learners overcome these challenges. Through such application of advanced technology integration and teaching for all approaches, the educators and policymakers will be in a unique vantage point to foster the right enabling environment for the Vietnam Iraqi students to learn spoken English effectively in order to help impact the world basically.

Importance of Speaking Skills

Obviously, speaking is a part of assimilating any particular language; that is relevant, for instance, for carrying out one's interactions in society at the worldwide level or for communicative purposes more generally (Byram and Wagner, 2018). They get to improve on their academic performance jobs, and character in Iraqi EFL learners, all through speaking Even though general skills are crucial in Speaking what is required in Speaking is much more complex because Speaking demands practice, confidence and language skills in the language.

Fluency in English is very useful in the present world for instance for the Iraq EFL student. English should be spoken fluently with no interference for an individual and society because the language avails numerous opportunities in the areas of education employment, and means of interacting with different societies. In this section of the study, a rationale for the English speaking profiles for the Iraqi EFL learners will be highlighted by pointing at how the English speaking profile affects the learners' academic and employment opportunities as well as the aspect of intercultural communication.

In as much one claims to have achieved their goal in their academic endeavors it is said and believed that their achievement is complimented on their fluency in English especially in college education where the language of teaching is English. Most of the universities adopt English as the medium of communication and/or

791

November 2024 Jumada Al-awwal 1446
Special Issue: Imam Ja'afar Al-Sadiq University: The Seventh International Scientific Conference

instruction or as the second language; thus, it is essential to speak English without having any flaw within doing lectures, discussions, and presentations. Education for example can give beautiful chances to the Iraq students who have good writing English to find different letters, journals and books, most of them produced and compiled in English language. Such materials include research papers, text books and online course (Huesein, 2012). Hence, the other components in the course will enable the Iraqi learners to work with the others, engage in the academic discourse, and achieve academic accomplishment by improving spoken English.

That is why the use of English is becoming more and more obligatory as the requirement to advance in the career in Iraq. The economy of the nation is gradually integrating to the global economy, attracting MNEs and encouraging international partnerships. Employment with these MNCs require employees, or the Iraqis in this web looking for jobs with these firms, to be able to speak English proficiently with stakeholders, clients, and colleagues who can speak English and other languages (Badry & Willoughby, 2016). Moreover, the English language proficient is often required in positions that come with better paying demands such as those in the technological sector, the finance, oil and gas sector and the healthcare sector. Getting proficiency in spoken English, the Iraqi EFL learners can enhance their employment prospects, earn decent pay, get better job opportunities in their own country as well as in other countries.

It will be necessary to note that one of the core concerns of cultivating mutual intercultural relations and exchange is English language proficiency. Also, the functional English broken makes it easy for the Iraqis to be able to first eliminate language barriers in their ability to interact with the global community, and also act as a means of reducing barriers inherent in cross-cultural interactions. It would also be especially important for a nation such as Iraq, which is ready and keen to start presenting to the world the progress it has made in culture, history, and new inventions. The ability to take part and fully comprehend what is relayed in near real time English in international conferences, cultural exchanges and cooperative, global citizenship, and inter-culturality between Iraqis is made possible.

Due to the use of English as the medium in most areas such as

internet and communication; the technological advancement has made it easier for people to access information and technologies (Al Kady, and Ahmed, 2018). Many of the websites on the Web are in English even if they are social networks, resources for distance learning, news portals, or various technical descriptions. These are the languages that Iraqi EFL students can use for learning , professional development and even following up with the world news if they master the English language. It also allows people from Iraq to speak, respond, contribute, and engage and engage in discussion in global and on newjad.com discussions.

More specifically while, Arguing from the model, Kavlu, (2016) determined that a higher proficiency level of Iraqi EFL learners can promote national development. English is very important in the case with Iraq: overseas investors, allies, joining the global society, repairing and reconstructing broken down structures and an economy in the process of developing. The labor force is best presented as English speaking manner and is useful for Iraq's economy to adapt innovation, grow and progress sustainably in the international market.

In other words, it could be suggested that knowing some English is indeed a rather important factor for the performance of the Iraqi EFL students. Since proficiency in spoken English facilitates educational achievements, employment opportunities, Intercultural relations purposes, as well technological as well as Information processes. Thus, if Iraq pays due attention towards spoken English confidently then it will be ready with its students for achieving successful future to move ahead for the development of the country along with becoming an active member of the international world.

Speaking Difficulties Encountered by Iraqi EFL Learners
Pronunciation Challenges

Arabic and English are different language in terms of phonemes that gave Iraq EFL students many pronunciation challenges in terms of pronunciation. These may cause a lot of problem in both form and content of communication hence specialized training and prompt practice are needed.

This is one of the difficulties of phonemics in the book as some phonemes that exist in Iraqi Arabic but are missing from the English language are absent. For example, Arabic lacks the phonemes /p/ or /v/

793

November 2024 Jumada Al-awwal 1446
Special Issue: Imam Ja'afar Al-Sadiq University: The Seventh International Scientific Conference

and often results in confusion and /b/ being used instead and /f/ being substituted. Consequently, 'pat 'and 'bat' and 'very' and 'ferry' may have the same meaning to Iraqi learners. In addition, one should mention that English has more opportunities for the vowels compare to Arabic language. This may cause the learner to mispronounce words and or have more difficult differentiating between such minimal pairs as ship and sheep.

Consequently, the irregularity of certain phonemes also becomes a problem: As for consonant clusters there are even more complicated. I found that there are no High complex syllable structures of composite consonants which are very frequent in English for example as they exist in Arabic (Al Azmi, 2019). Sometimes, unstable phonetically vowels may be inserted between clusters; for example, the word "spring" may be altered into something like "suhrping". They do not take much floor space, and even as for tone and stress distribution it is absolutely different. First, since Arabic is a syllable-timed language, and English is a stress-timed language which makes the rhythms and intonation of the Iraqi's speech very alien.

Moreover, learners often encounter challenges with regard to the formation and identification of English phonemes because of the apparition of the Arabic phonological pattern at the same place. This phonetic interference can lead to the developmental of persistent pronunciation errors and make speech hard to understand (Alznaidi, 2019). Thus, to address these challenges, the Iraqi EFL learners need to do extra practice on challenging sounds, be exposed to the natural language behavior and, therefore, use phonetic-training aids to enhance their pronunciation standard and smoothness of the flow.

Phonological Differences

These phonological problems that the Iraqi EFL learners encounter are in most cases as a result of differences between Arabic, the L1 and English. Younus (2020) has found that all these variations exist in several crucial areas of pronunciation and that's why it is quite difficult to speak as fluently as a native English speaker.

It is there for example, possible to note the difference in the phonemic constants of the two languages. for example Arabic has more than one consonants than English and emphatic consonants /q/, /ʕ/. By

says a th and nt Iraqi students may find it rather hard to be aware of these sounds and may replace them with phonemes more easily distinguishable by the English ear. This cause, may result to pronunciation difficulties that may influence comprehension skills as noted by Mashaqba and Huneety 2022).

It is also worthy to notice slight differences of the types of vowels that exist in Arabic and English. Whereas English has many vowels and a lot of diphthongs, Arabic has a limited number of vowels and where vowels are short/long is important. It is observed that Iraqi students have many times difficulty in writing and pronouncing these vowels even comprehending them when spoken.

Since Hassan & Esling (2011), in studying emphatic feature in IA (Iraqi Arabic) questions and problems from Intonation and Stress. Cross cultural pragmatics. Unlike English which, as any teacher would inform you, requires accurate stressing and an intonation imperative for apposite meaning and attitude, Arabic is primarily stress-timed language whose stressing could shift drastically. While speaking English, students from Iraq might face the problem of the irregular placing of stress in English words and sentences. Furthermore, while Arabic is different with English in all sorts of aspects, including phonetics that is the range of possible sounds within syllable and word. First, Arabic, unlike English, allows consonant clusters and secondly, the Arabic language will be seen to have unique syllable structures. Some specific features: Iraqi learners may have problems with correct pronunciation of the consonant clusters and syllable structures correctly.

All these phonological variations aim at focusing the challenges that the Iraqi EFL learners face when learning better English pronunciation. Some of the resultant successful approaches that can be used to ameliorate the mentioned impediments so as to achieve higher levels of phonological precision and efficiency in English usage include: phonemic tutoring, drilling of those distinctions that are noticeable by the taught learners, and mimicking of the real-world speech in English .

Vocabulary and Expression

The main problem of low production of Iraqi EFL learners is reflected in too little a word balance that has an impact on the clarity

795

November 2024 Jumada Al-awwal 1446
Special Issue: Imam Ja'afar Al-Sadiq University: The Seventh International Scientific Conference

and organization of their thinking. According to Hameed (2022), this has been attributed to a number of things including restricted practice opportunity of English outside class and memorization rather than practical use. For this reason, students may develop a rather limited vocabulary and experience a certain difficulty in choosing what to say in language practices.

Linguistically, Arab and Iraqi EFL learners face some specific and particular difficulties in learning English in the vocabulary and expression level consequently to the differences between Iraqi Arabic and English. Of course, due to all of these difficulties it may be harder for them to enunciate and communicate properly in many different contexts. First and foremost, we can mention that one of a major issue is the difference between the Arabic vocabulary and the English one (Mahdi, 2015). In English, there are many terminology and idioms common which cannot be translated into Arabic properly and use inappropriately. This is especially true for phrasal verbs, colloquial and idiomatic expression where most of them originate from cultural contexts, which are alien to the Iraq learners (Alfaori, 2017). It is equally important to distinguish between figures of speech that are universal, and those for which one may 'not know where the bucket is coming from'; such as saying that one will 'kick the bucket', or 'spill the beans,' for instance.

Second, there are certain differences between Arabic and English, albeit at the morphological level to be more particular out. Whereas English has many structures of a fixed word formation, Arabic is a morphological language which consists of root-and-pattern morphemes. For this reason, there are likely to be slurred speech and, therefore, unnatural ways in which Iraqi students could use English words in their writings and conversations, particularly with regard to irregular tenses of the verbs, plural forms of words, as well as compounded words.

Further, lexical vistas might be expected due to interlingual lexical influence form Arabic upon English as a foreign language learning. It could well be the case that Iraqi students, when translating an Arabic phrase or word, may get it wrong, either by using the English equivalent inappropriately or by constructing a wrong English phrase or word for the Arabic phrase or word. Hence, the Arabic phrase "Inshallah" (God willing) should not be used in the English contexts

November 2024 Jumada Al-awwal 1446
Special Issue: Imam Ja'afar Al-Sadiq University: The Seventh International Scientific Conference

796

since it is improper, which I shall explain in detail later under pragmatic and culture differences put forwarded by AlHindawi (2014).

Also, it is found that Iraqi students face a lot of difficulty in handling homonyms and synonyms in English. For people it is often problematic to differentiate between homophones and homographs, that is words which resemble each other phonetically but differ in meaning and on the other hand words which share similar meaning but differ in spelling and pronunciation. For instance, such distinctions as tree covering (bark) and dog sound, as well as the difference between the noun 'advice' & verb 'advise' requires knowledge of English terminologies.

Finally, absence of real life English can hinder this process of growing one's vocabulary base inasmuch as one can learn new words. Iraqi students, as a result, could be using text based English vocabulary, which in real-life English may not be the only or most commonly used language. Greater understanding of terms and their proper employments may be achieved through improved emulation of real-life situations, social communications, and television programs in English.

Anxiety and Lack of Confidence

Iraqi EFL students most always increase their level of tension and also diminish their self-esteems as they learn English, in the process enhancing the impact of the language on their learning. All these are the causes of the above mentioned emotional and psychological obstacles: We pointed to the issue of language, culture, and education being barriers.

First of all, one of the factors for anxiety identified among the Iraqi students is fear of making a mistake. That is why the language academicians, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary of our university is different from the Arabic language and English language, and the students always feel that they should not say wrong words and pronunciation, else they will be laughed at. As a result of this fear, a person may choose to avoid speaking during a class discussion, or in general avoid talking, and lack of practice is an issue that hampers the probability of practicing for language gain (Naeem & Saad, 2020).

Second, it might be attributable to the existing educational system in Iraq especially in terms of the students' guarantee of master the English language. In traditional methods used in teaching there is more focused

797

November 2024 Jumada Al-awwal 1446
Special Issue: Imam Ja'afar Al-Sadiq University: The Seventh International Scientific Conference

on translating and memorization aspects than on communicative aspect. When students are conversing with other English speakers or they are at times when they are expected to use English at the workplace or other interacting situations, this might not prepare them fully for their interpersonal communication and hence leading to frustration of the student and hence inferiority complex and self doubt.

There are other factors too that play their part and that is culture. As per the above said cultural values, students' might refrain from speaking or asking questions in English, for being mocked at by other students and teachers back in Iraq? This should reduce further the likelihood of a student volunteering to speak in class further it will affect his/her efficiency in interpersonal relations.

Fear and anxiety can also be attributed to poor practice of real use of English language and contacts with natives of the language. So students who are very limited in writing and speaking English language in an environment that is favorable and no pressured encountered with different communication environment stress when they are in the real life communicational situation (Chahrazad & Kamel, 2022). Therefore, lack of self-confidence could also be rooted at base, due to negative past experiences that people get- for instance- sarcastic remarks or laughter. These experiences may lead to what could be regarded as an effector to see to it that not only is language learning rendered stagnant but fear of failure is also introduced thus creating a mentality that leads to failure.

Chen (2024) has suggested that in order to solve these problems, a diversified strategy should be adopted. An important teaching General consideration is the creation of a positive learning climate. Teachers are able to use encouraging words, emphasize on the importance of communication as opposed to such facets as accuracy, and offer students many opportunities to apply in conditions when nobody cares about mistakes. It should therefore be noted that some exercises such as stress relieving drills like role play or group work can help the student build confidence gradually. In addition, representing students English-media including TV and newspapers, and engaging in conversations with native speakers can give students more exposures in the real world and reduce their anxiety.

November 2024 Jumada Al-awwal 1446
Special Issue: Imam Ja'afar Al-Sadiq University: The Seventh International Scientific Conference

798

Cultural Differences

Nameni (2020) supported the provided hypotheses that there are significant differences as far as communication styles & expectations between Iraq & English speaking countries. This may be challenging to Iraqi students to adapt to the more lit & informal communication ways of the English Speaking Societies. Also, gestures, & when using formal & polite language the last might be affected by the cultural roots.

For the EFL learners, thus, mannerism, polarity and formality and politeness conduct the speaking interactions affecting the learning of the cultural norms and practices. More specifically, these norms define how one should decently speak in particular contexts, and different degrees of cultures of both English-speaking and Iraqis cause discomfort as well as misunderstanding (Kambash, 2020).

First of all, cultures are different in the politeness measure they use. Guilty as per receipt of nominal contact with the face of the person although even touching him while talking They are however very polite and seldom any harsh words or overacting with the other person and they would bow very often than is required in front of strangers and elders as well as anyone of authority. As on the other hand, general and simple forms of expressions are permissible in almost all the cultures of English, particularly inanimate and business cultures (Al Jaid & Ghazanfari, 2023). Students in Iraq may also fail to meet these standards and may rather be aggressive or, conversely, overly polite.

One more area where life patterns are different is formality degree. Äwara: Hearsay => Peculiar to Iraq Posh language is respected! Respected =2nd party of the conversation. As a show of respect common greetings and formal names, ranks and positions beside names are often utilized. For instance, while English-speaking cultures may have more informal attitudes toward using formal language generally, and especially, in acquaintances and among friends. In interaction, Iraqi students may struggle to achieve the correct measure allowing them to be appropriately informal or formally polite.

It is also important that the use of signs is also important when communicating with other persons – this is undoubtedly an area that largely varies depending on the region in which a person lives. Some postures, some looks, some touch mean certain things in Iraqi culture (Bdaiwi and Sayer, 2022). For instance, when one stare for a long time

it is interpreted as confrontation or impoliteness whereas in many subcultures of english speaking societies it is seen as confidence and good listening. Similarly, it might be rather challenging to tell Iraqi learners that some signs being used in English-speaking countries are different. These are the nonverbal cues by which I communicate and if the send and receive are out of step, there can be cue misunderstanding or cue slurs when someone feels they are being impolite.

There are also differences in utilization of space and contact. Touch here however may be more acceptable in this culture and people especially friends and families are often affectionate. There are fewer types of touch and maybe even less hugging in English-speaking cultures and personal space is cherished. For these reasons, Iraqi students may not know what appropriate behaviors are within the different social contexts.

To be able to respond adequately to these challenges there is needed an adequate language instruction approach that had better contain intercultural sensitivity. This way teachers can help the Iraqi students for example by showing them how the people of the English speaking world is expected to behave. Most of the strategies and method like simulation, role-play, and conversation that is associated with culture can also be used to actively engage in building up flexibility as well as culturally sensitive (Abdulateef & Ali, 2023). However, using the learner with native speakers and content from English media can serve as a reinforcement as to how formal, polite, and non verbal cues may be achieved in the English language. Thus from the aforesaid cultural awareness, Iraqi EFL students will be in a better position to deal with speaking situation as an appropriate and confident manner necessary in a English speaking country.

Educational Challenges

In Iraq, the skill of talking and especially listening is often inferior to writing and grammar in most traditional methods (Attaby, 2019). As a result of this imbalance, the students seldom get a chance to engage in speaking in real life situations/practical scenarios if you wish. This may explain why speaking ability development is compromised through point and lecture based training instead of interactive exercises. Iraqi EFL students experience the following difficulties related to speaking:

November 2024 Jumada Al-awwal 1446
Special Issue: Imam Ja'afar Al-Sadiq University: The Seventh International Scientific Conference

800

The findings further show that the ability or otherwise of students in speaking English as a second language largely depends on the teaching strategies. The enhancement of speaking skills often suffers from traditional methods of training and aversion from communicative skills. Therefore there is need to modify towards more student engaged and active methods (Ahmed, 2021).

First of all, a very large percentage of grammar-translation teaching methods that rely on rote learning of new words and grammatical rules are incorporated into Iraqi EFL classrooms. This method most often results in the student who possesses a good strong theoretical background is lacking in practical speaking. On the one hand, L2 students can write grammatically accurate sentences on paper even if they cannot produce the same sentences when speaking. In order to address this, teaching strategies need more of what (Ghafar, 2022 calls) communicative language teaching (CLT), this focuses on speaking as well as listening skills and makes great expenditure of using language in contexts.

Second, learners struggle with speaking because Practice in small classes where traditional classroom manner of teaching dominates does not allow for much practice in speaking. One of the most prevalent approaches is the teacher's approach in which the teacher explicates a concept all the time and the students absorb the information. There is also limited place for the comprehensively active, speaking foreign language use in this organization. Activities such as role plays, group discussions and pair work which put the learners at the center of learning will help make them become better speakers besides making learning more fun.

A fourth challenge relates to exposure to real usage; most ML algorithms are trained using artificial data, or data generated from artificial contexts. The English applied in textbooks is often not the same as the English adopted by a native converser in his or her everyday interactions. Podcasts, videos and face-to-face interactions are genuine resources that can help in endeavoring to close this gap. Another source [too] can be conversation with other native speakers using examples of Internet forums or simply language partners.

Another challenge is the probable underemphasize of intonation, and pronunciations in conventional teaching methods. Problems with oral

801

November 2024 Jumada Al-awwal 1446
Special Issue: Imam Ja'afar Al-Sadiq University: The Seventh International Scientific Conference

production prevent smooth communication and make the speaker less confident at the same time. There is evidence that students can be helped to produce more natural and comprehensible inputs in classroom learning through phonetic practice, pronunciation techniques and listening workout (Hussein & Albakri, 2019).

Secondly, there should be founded, the classroom environment that should not be associated with lots of pressure, or stress. students may be reluctant to make contribution for a plenty of reasons including fear to be laughed at, or fear of saying something wrong. Based on (Rosyadi & Alfarisy, 2022) it is found that mistakes are to be discussed as opportunities for improvement, and the teachers needed to encourage and support the learners. Motivating students with positives feedback and appreciation will help boost their morale in fully participating in activities such as roles activity whereby students are trained on public speaking.

Technology should be brought in the teaching of language since it enhances speaking practice. Other speaking practice can be delivered through such activities as use of interactive software, online speaking society, and language learning applications. Virtual reality systems have already become quite popular as innovative language learning tools because it creates realistic scenarios in which students can practice speaking. Specific speaking difficulties that the Iraqi EFL students encounter can be better managed by the teachers through focusing more on improving learner, cooperation and technological instruction. By making use of this profound and inclusive approach, learners will be empowered to increase their self-confidence and gain the correct voice moniker and other valuable speaking skills and better facilitate spoken discourse in English.

Potential Solutions

The following solutions could be integrated in a comprehensive approach to tackle the speaking problems that Iraqi EFL learners encounter:

Improving Instruction in Pronunciation

By integrating phonetics to the curriculum, different that is linked to the English language especially pronunciation of the chief elements or characteristics of sounds could be taught to students. Other leaning

802

November 2024 Jumada Al-awwal 1446
Special Issue: Imam Ja'afar Al-Sadiq University: The Seventh International Scientific Conference

tools such as audio clips, phonetics, and applications can also help the students gain the much needed practice and drummer and even feedback. Some difficulties can be solved through further spelling out of the differences between Arabic and English phonemes (Al Zoubi, 2019).

Practice with Stress and Intonation

It is proposed that stress and intonation patterns should be incorporated into the exercises focusing on the development of learners' speaking skills. This includes imitating native speakers, the use of speeches on cassettes and discs, stress and intonation exercises.

Increasing Expression and Vocabulary through Contextual Learning

From the above discussion it is clear that one way of enhancing lexical acquisition is through the use of contextually reinforced speaking-listening and reading activities. There are new words and phrases introduced in content and use of English and perception of media learners are often encouraged to read different texts, watch the English-language media, and speak to the native speakers.

Taking Stress Out and Increasing Self-Assurance

Decreasing anxiety and encouraging approaching risk in speaking can be done only in a supportive classroom environment that will not punish or criticize the learners (Zondag, 2020). Helpful criticism can be offered by teachers, little victories should be pointed out, and peer support should be encouraged. Group works/activities also help the learners to feel that they belong and also share information with other learners.

Including Speaking Exercises

There are many speaking activities which can be squeezed into the curriculum so the students can attempt and develop their confidence. Almost all types of studies can be taught through role play, debate, presentation and any other form of discussion that involves group discussion where the students can effectively practice on speaking skills in as near real life situations as can be made. Other encouragement includes talking the student into speaking competitions and the Language clubs also plays a big role in encouraging the students to develop the needed skills.

803

November 2024 Jumada Al-awwal 1446
Special Issue: Imam Ja'afar Al-Sadiq University: The Seventh International Scientific Conference

Enhancing Instructional Methods

As postulated by (Diego, 2012), improving on teacher training of English teachers improves the quality of teaching and the oral growth of students. Effective pronunciation lessons, effective classroom management, and recent progressive learning approaches can help educators attain effective habits that would nurture interesting and fruitful classroom environments.

The Use of Technology

Using the technology in the learning-teaching process makes it possible for students to speak more and receive more materials. Supplementing traditional approaches, there are applications for language acquisition, resources for pronunciation practice, and conversation practice partners who are virtual examples – these will provide learners with further practice and feedback opportunities (Parveen, 2016).

Conclusion

Describing the main speaking difficulties faced by the Iraqi EFL students and providing some solutions for them is the aim of this article. To help the students can come across some of the challenges and improve speakers of the English language, teachers can learn them and help in overcoming those challenges. The current study revealed that Iraqi EFL learners encounter numerous speaking difficulties that are influenced by phonology, lexicon, grammar, psychology, and education. In order to eliminate such barriers, there is a clear need for the following approach as follows: Grammatical mistakes, vocabulary, educational practices, anxiety and intonation. The strategies outlined here indicate that teachers can help improve the speaking skills needed by the Iraqi EFL students for effective globalized communication.

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805

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808

November 2024 Jumada Al-awwal 1446
Special Issue: Imam Ja'afar Al-Sadiq University: The Seventh International Scientific Conference