Exploring the Roles of Student-Teacher Interaction Mechanism in Enhancing Students' Academic Performance in English Spoken Skill

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Abstract

Efficient classroom interaction between teachers and students played a significant role in facilitating language learning. Appropriate classroom interactions need to be applied by teachers to develop students' confidence in their quest to be proficient in the English language, especially English spoken skills. This study intends to explore the roles of student-teacher interaction mechanisms in enhancing students' academic performance in English-spoken skills in classroom situations in the south of Iraq. A total number of two hundred students from four different selected secondary schools were recruited for the research using purposive sampling techniques. The data was collected through a questionnaire and students' academic performance scores in spoken English. The data was also analyzed descriptively and referentially using percentages and correlational analysis respectively. The findings indicated that there exists a statistically significant relationship between student-teacher interaction and student academic performances in English spoken skills. This finding implies that vital social and communicative skills could be learned through student-teacher interactions. Recommendations for improvement of English spoken skill through student-teacher interactions is provided.

KEYWORDS: Student-teacher interaction, Academic Performance, English spoken skill

استكشاف أدوار آليات التفاعل بين الطالب والمعلم في تحسين الأداء الأكاديمي للطلاب في مهارة التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية

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يؤدي التفاعل الحيوي بين المعلمين والطلاب في الفصل الدراسي دورًا مهمًا في تسهيل تعلم اللغة. يحتاج المعلمين الى تطبيق التفاعلات الصفية المناسبة و ذلك من اجل تنمية ثقة الطلاب في سعيهم لإتقان اللغة الإنجليزية، وخاصة مهارات التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف أدوار آليات التفاعل بين الطالب والمعلم في تحسين الأداء الأكاديمي للطلاب في مهارات التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية في المواقف الصفية في جنوب العراق. تم تخصيص مائتي طالب للبحث من مدارس ثانوية مختلفة مختارة باستخدام تقنية اخذ العينات القصدية. تم جمع البيانات من خلال استبيان ودرجات الأداء الأكاديمي للطلاب في اللغة الإنجليزية المنطوقة، كما تم تحليل البيانات وصفيًا ومرجعيًا باستخدام النسب المئوية والتحليل الارتباطي على التوالي. أشارت النتائج إلى وجود علاقة ذات دلالة مهمة بين تفاعل الطالب والمعلم والأداء الأكاديمي للطلاب في مهارات التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية. تدل هذه النتائج إلى أنه يمكن تعلم مهارات التواصل و

المهارات الاجتماعية الحيوية من خلال تفاعل الطالب والمعلم. تقدم الدراسة توصيات مهمة لتحسين مهارة التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية من خلال تفاعل الطالب والمعلم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التفاعل بين الطالب والمعلم، الأداء الأكاديمي، مهارة التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية

Introduction

The field of applied linguistics concentrate more on the appropriate ways in which language is learned. It involves methodologies for teaching and learning languages. Student-teacher interaction is of such ways of mastering second language. The roles of social interactions in enhancing language learning and cognitive development have long been extensively discussed in the literature. Panhwar, Ansari, and Ansari, (2016) posit that developmental learning is one of the cores of social processes that take place in collaboration with individuals who are more knowledgeable This means that the more you cordially collaborate or associate yourself with intelligent individuals the more you have the potential ability to acquire and develop yourself cognitively (Serpell, 2017). Chalkia (2012) further emphasizes the need for shared construction of knowledge through interactions. Therefore, student-teacher interaction is believed to be highly important in teaching and learning English as a second or foreign language. It is also perceived to be crucial for determining whether class learning objectives could be achieved or otherwise.

Numerous importance was attached to interaction because it is perceived to be a means of exchange of opinions, ideas, views, perceptions, and feelings among students and teachers (Akhtar, Hussain, Afzal, & Gilani 2019) For effective students' academic growth it is believed that there should be a strong cordial relationship between students and teacher. The worthiness of these relationships translates into positive learning outcomes (Downey, 2008). Students could maintain cordial relationships with society, peers, friends, and teachers and these relationships could affect their academic performances (Cazden, 2001).

English is used as an instrument of educational impact in Iraq, the language is globally learned as either a foreign, second, or additional language (Bello, Yap, Chan, &Nimehchisalem, 2020). It functions as an official language in many former British colonies or is learned as a foreign concurrently with the learners' first languages. The language is mostly learned in official settings like schools and colleges through class settings. The language nowadays is learned in many countries including Iraqi as either a foreign second or an additional language (Tayyeh, Dehham, & Muhammad, 2021). The language has spread widely across the world not only as the most spoken but also the most important language. As the major language of communication, commerce, medicine, and education, it has

attained status that cannot be simply ignored and such importance necessitates many non-native speakers to acquire it including Iraqi students to be able to communicate. The current study intends to evaluate the roles of student-teacher interaction in enhancing students' academic performance in English-spoken skills in different secondary schools.

Reviews of Related Literature

In any learning environment, teachers play significant roles in molding the lives of their students. Therefore, effective teachers have high hopes for their students, they remain conscious of the kind of existential connection that they need to establish with their students to gain their trust (Warren, 2021). They resort to an understandable student-teacher interaction as they are aware that this strategy is effective for instruction and learning procedures. It stimulates students' involvement, motivation, and positive learning outcomes (Wubbels & Brekelmans, 2011).

It has been indicated that establishing a positive relationship between teachers and students significantly reduces students' absence from school. The interest and engagement of the students are significantly maintained through creating a conducive learning environment (Liberante, 2012). Students are more secure and have a sense of belonging in their classrooms and they are more productive in their educational pursuits. Through maintaining and building a positive student-teacher relationship academically motivated students are recruited (Eisenring & Margana, 2019). This phenomenon has received scholarly attention in numerous published literature (Lee, Lacey, Van Valkenburg, McGinnis, Huber, Banner, Strycker, 2023; Sert, 2019; Yuan & Yang 2023). Brazelton Green and Flourish (2000) opined that developing a sound positive teacher-student interaction assists in the development of students' psychological health, cognitive thinking, and societal growth. The enhancement of students' academic success lies in the positive relationship between students and teachers.

Positive student-teacher relationship is promoted through different strategies. These strategies include but are not limited to teachers being active listeners, their facial expressions should match with their verbal cues; they should have the ability to identify students' upsets and worries and how to approach students during their upsets and worries times (Zhang, 2012). There should a mutual respect between the students and teachers.

Therefore, interaction in classrooms is a practical reality that enhances progress in language skills. This practice is found to be profoundly effective in helping learners to be competent enough for critical thinking and sharing of views among

students and teachers (Zhu, Zhao, Sun, Huang, Cheong, Liao 2025). It is an essential component of teaching procedures that positively affect learning. The word interaction has received different scholarly interpretations. Hall (2022) defined interaction as a process of reciprocal action engaged among two or more individuals and it could be verbal or nonverbal. Loewen and Sato (2018) see interaction as students' classroom participation in which a high degree of interpersonal communication skills is exhibited. It includes information exchange between teachers and students or among the students themselves. A definition of interaction was also given by the Cambridge advanced learners' dictionary as "when two or more people or things communicate with or react to each other" Additionally Brown sees interaction as "the heart of communication; it is what communication is all about." Therefore, as long as there is a coming together of people, they must communicate and interact whether in classroom settings or otherwise.

Advantages of Effective Classroom Interaction

Scholarly pieces of evidence have indicated that classroom interaction is used as a tool for building knowledge and as well as a means of enhancing language skills. Learners become active in the class once interactive activities are engaged (Davletova, 2022; Pagano 2021; Sun & Wu, 2016). Interaction helps both in and outside the classroom settings. Therefore, it is recommended that both teachers and students should engage in learning and teaching process, especially in language speaking skills. It also helps assist teachers to have maximum control in their teaching process by managing who should talk, to whom, on what topic, and in what language (Johnson, 2013).

 Classroom interaction as a productive teaching approach helps in managing language learning classrooms. Balanescu (2019) opined that "Interaction is face-to-face communication with particular prosody, facial expression, silence, and rhythmical patterns of behavior between the participants". It, therefore, provides armful opportunities for receiving and producing feedback which solely depends on the input provided by both the students and teachers. Though interaction between teachers and students is more pronounced in classroom situations, it can also transpire between or among students themselves. Receiving inputs from peers has a significant role in better classroom performances through conversational approach and turns-taking than being passive in the class (Delamont 2017).

Lastly, interaction between students and teachers determines the success of classroom situations for learners. It does not only promote English speaking skills but also fosters the development of other social skills such as respect for others and

politeness that are prerequisites for successful societal integration. This research intends to see the effectiveness of this phenomenon in the Iraqi context using students from different schools to improve students' performances in English communication skills.

English Speaking Skills

English speaking skill is a productive skill exhibited by many students and other English users to buttress their proficiency in the language. It is as important as the other language skills as it represents the culmination of knowledge and as a means of sending and understanding an indispensable volume of communication (Rao, 2019). Therefore, it could be understood that with the lack of effective and proficient speaking skill, communication and sending of messages are blurred while confusion and misunderstanding prevail. Speaking skills help students improve diction choices, it equips students to express their ideas, emotions, stories, requests, and classroom discussions (Mega & Sugiarto, 2020). Speaking skill is seen by many as a means of imparting ideas, knowledge, and information (Karpovich, Sheredekina, Krepkaia & Voronova 2021; Fitriani, 2022; Meinawati, Harmoko, & Rahmah 2020; Sun, Lin, You, Shen, Luo 2017). Even outside the classroom settings speaking skills are proven to be an additional advantage for job seekers. Baker and Westrup (2003) opined that good English-speaking skill is associated with greater chances of employment, education, and promotion.

It is against this background that scholars see the need for the learners of English especially in Arab contexts to equip themselves with it to be able to communicate, fluently, and productively. Despite its importance and suitability for enhancing students' academic performance in many studies, Iraqi learners of English as either a second or foreign language struggle with it as many find it difficult to express themselves effectively in spoken form. Their speech is affected by unnecessary stoppages and a lack of suitable words and expressions to use. This study aims to investigate how student-teacher interaction as a mechanism will enhance students' academic performance in English-spoken skills using Iraqi students as participants.

Methods

The study is designed to add to the ongoing discussion on how interactions among student-teacher can improve student academic performance in English spoken skills. Specifically, the study is meant to:

1. To examine the perceptions of students on student-teacher interactions
2. To explore the relationship between students' academic performance in English spoken skills and student-teacher interactions.

Participants

Two hundred (200) students (N= 200) were purposely selected from four secondary schools in the south of Iraq. The students' age ranges start from 25-30, a detailed description of the participants' profiles is pictorially presented below.

Table 1. Participants' profiles and the location of the research

	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Students			
Gender	Male	125	62.5%
	Female	75	37.5%

Data collection

A correlation design was adopted in this research, to achieve the purpose of exploring the roles of student-teacher interaction mechanisms in enhancing students' academic performance in English spoken skills, a numerical data was also collected from the participants to assist in interpreting the relationship.

Research Instrument

Two different instruments were used in this research. These instruments are, a questionnaire and students' academic performance in English spoken skills. A detailed explanation of these instruments is provided below.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire which the study applies has been developed by Wubbels, Brekelmans, den Brok, and Tartwijkin (2006) was adopted and used as the research instrument. The questionnaire is termed (the QTI questionnaire on teacher-student Interaction) and it has been widely used in many types of research for assessing student- teacher interaction for improvements in learning outcomes.

 The adopted version of the questionnaire has 48 constructs containing eight categories based on the Leary Model with a five-point Likert scale starting with never (1) to always (5). Scholarly pieces of evidence from published literature have indicated a consistent agreement on the validity and reliability of this questionnaire. However, the validity of the questionnaire was locally measured through expert evaluations and opinions as suggested by Ishaque and Zaman (2022). It was later modified to incorporate the experts' views and opinions. The contents validity of the modified questionnaire was also run using Lawshe 1975

provisions and it was found to be 0.80 which is considered to be valid. Furthermore, Cronbach's Alpha was run for reliability, based on the result the Cronbach's Alpha value of .77 was found this coincides with the reliability criteria set in Devellis (2012) therefore, it was considered reliable.

Table 2. Sample Description of the QTI questionnaire

Scale	Description	Sample Item
The extent to which the teacher ……		
Teachers' leadership attitude	Organizes, leads, determines procedures, gives orders, and structures the classroom situation.	This teacher teaches with compassion and love and has mastery over his/her subjects.
Teachers' helping behaviors and friendly attitude.	He/she is so considerate with confidence friendship and trust when dealing with his/her students.	This teacher guided us in our classroom assignments.
The magnitude of teachers' understanding attitude towards students	This teacher is highly associative, he understands students' situations, and he is incredibly accommodating.	This teacher has profound trust in his students.
Students' responsibility freedom	Allows students independently to discharge their work. Students have freedom under his care to exercise their responsibilities.	We as students our choices and decisions in class.
Teachers' uncertain attitude	His behaviors are highly uncertain. He usually keeps a low profile	This teacher appeared to be uncertain
Disqualified Teachers' dissatisfied attitude	He criticizes students and always showcases unhappy mode. His dissatisfactions towards students are apparent.	We look suspicious at the sight of this teacher.
Teachers' admonitive attitude	Furnishes and forbids, he gets offended, irritated, and easily gets angry.	This teacher is easy to be prostrated.
Strict attitude of teachers'	He enforces rules strictly and expects total adherence	Strictness is the routine habit of this teacher

The scale measured in the questionnaire as depicted above includes Leadership, Helping/Friendly, Understanding, Student Responsibility/Freedom, Uncertain, Dissatisfied, Admonishing, and Strict.

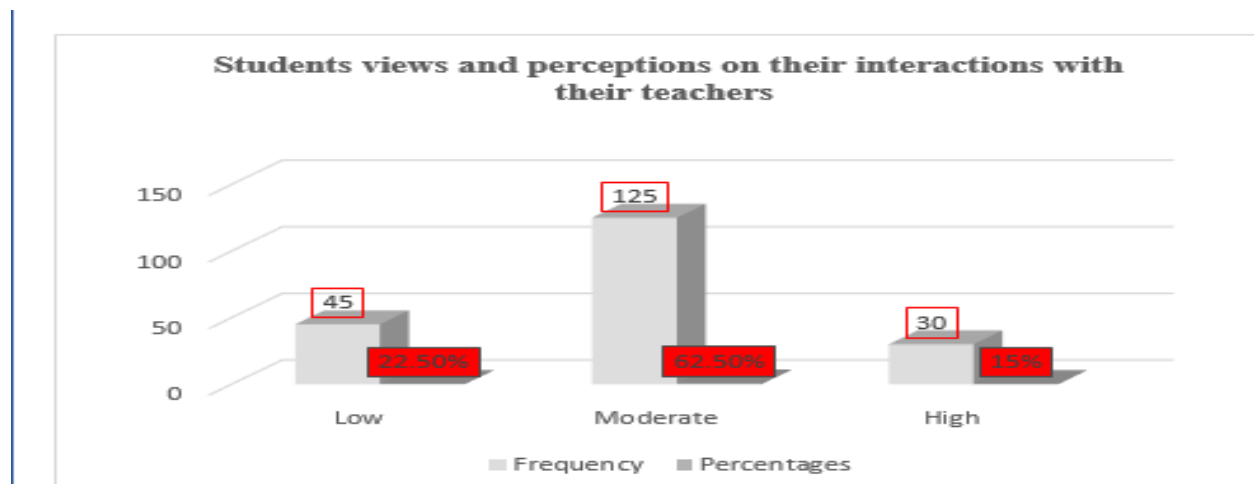## Students' Academic Performance in English Spoken Skill

Investigations into possible factors that could potentially influence students' academic performance has been the area of interest for many researchers in the field of applied linguistics where second language learning is an issue. Research by Hanson (2019) shows that different factors could affect students' academic performances which could be genders, race or level of his social awareness. The findings of Menninga, Van Geert, Van Vondel, Steenbeek, and Van Dijk (2021), suggested that family income could also affect students' academic performances. Despite the availability of numerous research on the effect of several factors on students' academic performance, little is known on secondary school students in Iraq more precisely on student-teacher interaction. This study uses the students' scores obtained from class activities on English spoken skills and correlate it with student-teacher interaction to see if there is any positive, moderate, or high relationship between the variables.

Data Analysis

The data collected was quantitatively analyzed using a statistical package for social science (SPSS) in stages. In the first stage, the data was screened for identification and removal of outliers, followed by descriptive analysis in which student's responses were analyzed to obtain frequencies and percentages.

Results and Discussion

The results of the study are presented based on the objectives stated above, the first objective is to examine the perceptions of students on student-teacher interactions and the result is presented in figure 1.

Based on the figure 1. above it has been revealed that less than half of the participant indicated a low level of interaction with their teachers 45(22.5%). Moderate student-teacher interaction was also reported by more than half of the participants 125(62.5%) while only 30(15 %) reported a high level of interaction with their teachers. This finding indicated that most of the students demonstrated a moderate range of interactions with their class teachers.

To answer the second research objective whether there exists a correlation between students' academic performance in English spoken skills and student-teacher interactions each of the construct of the questionnaire was correlated with students' academic performance. The results are presented in tables. Before running the correlational test, all the criteria set by researchers for the interpretations of correlational studies were explored, this current research uses a criterion suggested by Cohen (1988) that the coefficient values range from .10 to .29 is considered a weak correlation, and moderate correlation is achieved when it ranges from .30 to .49 while coefficient values range from .50 to 1.0 is considered strong correlation. Therefore, a Pearson correlation test was run for each construct and the outcome of the results was presented below.

Table 3. A correlation between Teachers' leadership attitude and students' academic performance in English spoken skills

Variable		
Teachers' leadership attitude	Students' Academic Performance in English Speaking Skills	
	Pearson Correlation	0.10

| | Sig (2-tailed) | 0.05 |
| | N | 200 |

Based on the outcome of the study as depicted in table 3, above, it has been revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between students' academic performance and the leadership attitude of the teachers (N=200; r-.10). The relationship appeared to be highly significant $p< 0.05$. This result shows that as long as the interaction level among students and teachers increases, their academic performances also increase.

Table 4. A correlation between strict attitude of teachers towards their students and the students' academic performance in English speaking skills

Variable		
Strict attitude of teachers	Students' Academic Performance in English Speaking Skill	
	Pearson Correlation	-.02
	Sig (2-tailed)	0.60
	N	200

The table 4. portrays the relationship between strict attitude of teachers towards their students and the students' academic performance in speaking skills in a negative way., $r = -.02$. the relationship appeared to be negligible and highly insignificant $p = 0.60 \geq 0.05$.

Table 5. A relationship between Teachers' uncertain attitude and Students' Academic Performance in English speaking skill

Variable		
Teachers' uncertain attitude	Students' Academic Performance in English speaking skill	
	Pearson Correlation	0.03
	Sig (2-tailed)	0.55

	N	200

A positive correlation between teachers' uncertain attitude and the students' academic performance in English speaking skill is demonstrated in the above table 5., $r = 0.03$, however the magnitude of the relationship appeared to be very small and the relationship was found to be insignificant $p = 0.55 \geq 0.05$.

Table 6. Teachers' freedom attitude and Students' Academic Performance in English Speaking Skill

Variable		
Teachers' freedom attitude	Students' Academic Performance in English Speaking Skill	
	Pearson Correlation	0.05
	Sig (2-tailed)	0.20
	N	200

A positive relationship between Teachers' freedom attitude and students' academic performance in speaking skills was displayed in the table 6 above, $r = 0.05$, however, the relationship appeared to be weak as well as insignificant as $p = 0.20 \geq 0.05$.

Table 7. Teachers' admonitive attitude and Students' Academic Performance in English Speaking Skill

Variable		
Teachers' admonitive attitude	Students' Academic Performance in English Speaking Skill	
	Pearson Correlation	0.03
	Sig (2-tailed)	0.45
	N	200

It was found that there exists a positive correlation between teachers' admonitive attitude and students' academic performance in speaking skills as illustrated in table 76. $r = 0.03$, as depicted in Table 5 above. However, the degree of the relationship was found to be weak $p = 045 \geq 0.05$.

Table 8. Teachers' dissatisfied attitude and Students' Academic Performance in English Speaking Skill

Variable		
Teachers' dissatisfied attitude	Students' Academic Performance in English Speaking Skill	
	Pearson Correlation	-0.17
	Sig (2-tailed)	0.63
	N	200

Based on the table it has been indicated that a relationship exists between Students' Academic Performance in English Speaking Skill and Teachers' dissatisfied attitude $r = -017$, however the direction of the relationship appeared to be negative as indicated by the negative sign. Additionally, the strength and magnitude of the relationship it was found to be moderate $p = 0.72 \geq 0.05$.

Table 9. Teachers' helping behaviors, friendly attitude, and Students' Academic Performance in English Speaking Skill

Variable		
Teachers' helping behaviors and friendly attitude.	Students' Academic Performance in English Speaking Skill	
	Pearson Correlation	0.55
	Sig (2-tailed)	0.01
	N	200

The outcome of the result showed that a positive correlation exists between there is teachers' helping behaviors and friendly attitudes and students' academic performance in speaking skills, additionally, the strength of the relationship was found to be strong and significant p 0.01 which is equal to $\alpha = 0.05$, this outcome

gusted that the behaviors of the teachers positively affect the students' academic performance in speaking skill.

Table 10. The magnitude of teachers' understanding attitude towards students and Students' Academic Performance in English Speaking Skill

Variable		
The magnitude of teachers' understanding attitude towards students	Students' Academic Performance in English Speaking Skill	
	Pearson Correlation	0.13
	Sig (2-tailed)	0.03
	N	200

Table 10. reveals that a positive and significant correlation emerged between teachers' understanding attitude toward students and students' academic performance in speaking skills $p = 0.03 \leq \alpha = 0.05$. However, in terms of the strength of the relationship, a moderate relationship was recorded which suggested that the teachers' understanding attitude toward students moderately influenced the academic performance of the students.

Table 11. the Overall students –teacher interaction and Students' Academic Performance in English Speaking Skill

Variable		
Overall students –teacher interaction	Students' Academic Performance in English Speaking Skill	
	Pearson Correlation	0.12
	Sig (2-tailed)	0.05
	N	200

The outcome of the correlational analysis in table11 shows that there is a correlation between the overall student-teacher interaction and the students' academic performance in speaking skills. A positive and significant relationship was found as $p = 0.05$.

مجلة دراسات في الإنسانيات والعلوم التربوية	تموز 2025	العدد 10
Journal of Studies in Humanities and Educational Sciences	July 2025	No. 10
Print ISSN 3006-3256 Online ISSN 3006-3264		

Discussion of the Results

This study is meant to investigate students' perception on students-teacher interaction and whether there is any correlation between student–teacher interaction and students' academic performance in English speaking skill using selected secondary schools in the south of Iraq. The study arrived at a positive and moderate correlation between the variables under investigation.

The findings arrived in this research coincided with the findings reported in Hussain, Ahmad, and Hussain (2022) where it was reported that student-teacher interaction is a catalyze for students' life-long learning. It has also concurred with other research findings reported in the literature. For example, Gkonou, 2021; Xie and Derakhshan, 2021; Collie, Martin, Flesken, & McCourt (2024) have indicated the connection between student-teacher interaction and speaking ability. They opined that when there is positive student–teacher interaction, an effective classroom environment is created. The class will be more enjoyable to both teachers and students. students will be more empathetically motivated to be engaged with the learning experiences, curriculum contents, and any other related activities in the school. Other studies in which similar findings were reported include (Longobardi Iotti, Jungert, & Settanni 2018; Henry & Thorsen, 2018; Martin & Dowson, 2009; Roorda. Koomen, Spilt, & Oort, 2011; White, 2013; Claessens, van Tartwijk, van der Want, Pennings, Verloop, den Brok, & Wubbels, 2017). Students-teacher interaction established rapport and help students to deal with any learning challenges, strengthen them to be eager to learn. This area is more pronounced in the literature than otherwise.

Conclusion and recommendation

Based on the outcome of the results, it has been revealed that during acquiring English as a second language, interaction greatly influenced and affected the performances of students. Therefore, interaction is a useful strategy and if it was effectively used, it will accentuate understanding in English classroom situations. This phenomenon will help facilitators to be able to identify actual difficulties students encounter in their quest to be proficient in second language spoken skills. Consistent engagement between students and teachers prompts class facilitators to respond quickly to students' needs. Additionally, in English spoken classrooms student-teacher interaction should be made a compulsory component of the class for effective learning outcome.

This research outlines several recommendations for policymakers, school administrators, teachers, and students for effective learning to prevail more especially in English spoken skills.

مجلة دراسات في الإنسانيات والعلوم التربوية
تموز 2025
July 2025
Journal of Studies in Humanities and Educational Sciences
Print ISSN 3006-3256   Online ISSN 3006-3264
العدد 10
No. 10

1. English teachers should be provided with training on effective classroom management, communication strategies, ability to build positive student-teacher relationship, and this gesture will strength educators to be skillful and will foster better interactions.
2. Policies that promote respects inclusion and safety should be created and implemented; these will aid in building relationship between students and teachers.
3. Let there be an implemented student –to –teacher ratios in our schools as this will sustain more personal interaction with each student, it will help English teachers to tailored support that will enhance qualitative classroom outcomes.
4. A system in all institutions of learning should be established for regular feedback from students on their classrooms experiences. This will, pave ways of understanding areas that need more attention and improvement in classrooms situations.
5. With the proliferation of technological advancement, teachers of English as a second language should apply modern tools that facilitates better English communication and engagement.

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