

Psychological Barriers as Hindrance in Communication: A Case Study at the University of Swat

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ABSTRACT: This study examines the impact of psychological barriers on communication among university students, with a particular focus on BS English 5th-semester students at the University of Swat. Psychological barriers such as anxiety, lack of confidence, fear of mistakes, nervousness, and discouragement are identified as significant obstacles to effective communication in English as a second language. The research is framed within Stephen Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which explains how emotional variables interfere with language acquisition and communication. A quantitative approach was adopted, and data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 30 students, comprising 15 male and 15 female participants. The responses were analysed using Microsoft Excel and presented through pie charts for clarity. The findings reveal that most students experience psychological barriers that hinder their communicative competence. Lack of confidence, nervousness, and fear of being humiliated emerged as the most acute problems. Furthermore, external factors such as the presence of highly proficient peers and discriminatory teacher behaviour contributed to students' feelings of inferiority and reluctance to participate in communication. These barriers not only limited students' fluency but also affected their motivation and overall learning outcomes. The study suggests that supportive classroom practices, encouragement from teachers, appreciation from peers, and a positive societal attitude toward English learning can play a critical role in reducing psychological barriers. Creating a more inclusive and motivating learning environment is therefore essential for enhancing students' confidence and enabling them to communicate effectively.

KEYWORDS: Psychological Barriers, Anxiety, Learning, Acquisition

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Introduction

Language is a tool of communication that plays a pivotal role in expressing ideas. Language makes human beings different from other creatures. Linguists and educationists have been trying to find out some authentic definitions of language in order to make it different from culture and other related concepts. In the Oxford online dictionary, language is defined as "The method of human communication, either spoken or written, consisting of the use of words in a structured and conventional way. 'A study of the way children learns

language', Oxford Dictionaries online (2018). Collins dictionary (2018) defines language as "A language is a system of communication which consists of a set of sounds and written symbols which are used by the people of a particular country or region for talking or writing" Collins dictionary, 2018).

In Pakistan, English is considered a second language, which has been an interesting area of research on how psychological barriers act as a hindrance in learning a second language (English). A plethora of research has been conducted on how psychological barriers prevent people from learning a second language.

Learning Versus Acquisition

There are two independent means of learning a second language for learners. One is acquisition and the second one is learning Krashen, 1982, p. 2). The acquisition process and the children's ability to acquire their first language are similar, if not identical. According to Krashen, language acquisition is a subconscious process: those who are acquiring the language are not aware all the time of the fact that they acquire language along with its grammar, but they do have knowledge of the fact that the language they are learning is used for communication. Also, the one who is acquiring the language is not aware of the rules of that particular language, which is being acquired. Language learning is the second way used to expand competence in the target language. Moreover, learning is a conscious knowledge of the target language. Knowledge of a language includes the rules of that language (Gass & Slenker, 2013).

The History of English in the Subcontinent

The British ruled and controlled the world, and their influence was increasing day by day, and they were making new colonies. During the 18th century, the sub-continent was one of the conquered colonies. During the British rule over the sub-continent, the Britishers inculcated in the minds of people that English was the language of education and a way to success. The people of the sub-continent adopted English as an official language in offices, courts, and educational institutions. Despite the native languages of the areas now called Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India, the native people thought English was a superior language and adopted it in offices and in academia. Because of the increasing influence of the colonizers and their language in international politics, the colonized people of the sub-continent thought that, for better living, the English language is indispensable. Therefore, the importance of the English language in the sub-continent began with the process of colonization and continues to this day. Still in Pakistan, the English language is being given importance; it is being considered the language of the high social and educated class.

Psychological Barriers

The world has become a global village, and English has become its language. The importance of the English language is increasing day by day; every single businessman who wants to do his business on an international level and every student who wants to continue his/her further studies needs to be a proficient speaker of the English language. That's why English has significance in today's world; its learning has become necessary. But for many students, it is difficult to express themselves in English clearly and fluently because of psychological barriers. Psychological barriers include anxiety, shyness, and lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, fear of being humiliated, and fear of failure. All these barriers hinder students from speaking fluently and correctly.

Anxiety

Anxiety is a sort of feeling when speaking or learning a target or second language. It is a feeling of inferiority, tension, and stress about learning a second language. Anxiety is one of the significant psychological barriers that prevent students from speaking the second or target language. A huge number of second language learners experience this particular barrier while speaking the target language. According to Horwitz (2011), one-third of second language learners experience anxiety when in the process of second language learning. "Anxiety is the feeling of tension, apprehension related to second language learning" (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994, p. 290).

Lack of Confidence

Lack of confidence is the feeling or belief that one cannot do things or does not have the capability to do things. Lack of confidence is another psychological factor that prevents students from having the courage to speak a foreign language fluently and correctly in front of an audience. It hinders students from communicating in a target or second language.

Fear of making Mistakes

It is also one of the psychological barriers because of which students have the fear of making mistakes in communication, which is why most of the time they remain silent and do not take part in communication.

Statement of the Problem

The capability of a student to interact fluently and accurately is largely dependent on psychological barriers such as lack of confidence, shyness, fear of making mistakes, fear of being humiliated, and anxiety. The current study reveals the interplay between these psychological barriers and the speaking ability of a student.

Significance of the Study

1. Firstly, it is useful for students and teachers to find the effects of psychological barriers in communication.
2. Secondly, it is useful for students to overcome their obstacles in order to deal with the public.
3. Thirdly, it is helpful for teachers to diagnose problems of the students speaking English and to solve such problems.

Research Objectives

1. To reveal how psychological barriers work as a hindrance to spoken English communication.
2. To reveal the causes and find a solution to overcome psychological barriers.

Research Questions

1. How do psychological barriers work as a hindrance in communication?
2. What are the causes of psychological barriers, and how can they be overcome?

Literature Review

External and Internal motivations have been discussed and explored during higher studies using different contexts in which different theories are constructed. Among such theories, the theory of Deci and Rayan

(1985) demonstrates both external and internal motivations. They assumed that if learners are sufficiently internalized and self-determined, it can lead to intrinsic motivation. According to many other studies, it is demonstrated that in order to get external motivations like grades and scores, internal motivation is frequently muted.

Horwitz (2001), after conducting much research, presented a scale (FLCAS), which is abbreviated as the foreign language classroom anxiety scale, in order to find L2 anxiety in the classroom. According to this research, language learners are affected by anxiety. The result of much research has shown a negative nexus between achievements and anxiety. In addition, according to the research of Yazigi (1991), learners are greatly influenced by psychological factors. His thesis highlights extensively both psychological factors and other factors, such as social and geographical differences. In his study, some of the aspects were found to be positive, such as attitudes of both English and French people, as well as their attitudes towards their languages and cultures.

Bongaerts (1999) discusses extensively both external and internal motivations in his study, which shows that while learning a second language, external motivation has less effect than internal motivation. The relationship between learning a language and attitudes has been shown in several experimental studies, such as the above-mentioned study about language learning. Attitudes like social, political, and geographical, the attitude towards that country and its language also play a pivotal role. Polat (2007) conducted research in Turkey in order to find out how the learning ability of an individual learning another language is affected by motivational factors. The purpose of the research was to know about several psychological factors, like anxiety, lack of confidence, shyness, and some other factors, such as social, political, and geographical factors. The participants were Kurdish speakers who spoke Turkish like the native speakers of Turkish. The researcher demonstrated that it was psychological factors that helped Kurdish speakers to gain the native accent of the Turkish language and speak like them. The research was conducted in Erzurum, a city in Turkey, in which 133 students from high schools took part, with varying ages from 13 to 18 years. The students who participated were 53 percent girls and 47 percent boys. Questionnaires were used in order to collect quantitative data, and for qualitative analysis, some of the students were interviewed, and they were asked different sorts of questions. The data was collected with the help of questionnaires, and students were interviewed. The analysis of the collected data proved that the motivations of students were high towards the Turkish language.

Henter (2014) carried out a study at Transylvania University, Romania. In this particular study, 92 students were selected from the department of psychology and educational sciences, and 39 students were selected from some other departments. The proficiency of English and level of anxiety were examined by means of ATMB (The Attitude/Motivation Test Battery) test, and apart from it, another English test was also used. During the study, effective factors were studied, and a line of comparison was drawn between the students of the English major and the students of psychology and pedagogy. The result showed that 59 percent of students got more than 10, which was the maximum score, showing the interest of the students in the English language. The results of the psychology and pedagogy students showed a correlation with those of English major students. According to the result, the motivation of English major students was more than that of psychology students. The students who were having English as their major were found to be more motivated and less anxious compared to the other students. It shows that anxiety does affect students' performance.

Another study was conducted by Zheng (2008) in which he discussed the nexus between language learning and anxiety and its cause and impact on second language learning. He examined how language learning is affected by anxiety. According to this research, introversion and extroversion are two states that result in the rise of anxiety. He claims that extroverts are less anxious and introverts are more anxious. He also examined that the anxiety of the students can be aggravated by the conflict between students and the teacher's choice of words in the classroom. During the study, the negative attitude of the students, the reluctance to take part in the conversation, and their avoidance of work were symptoms of anxiety. While learners with a high level of proficiency were less anxious.

In the Pakistani context, a study was conducted at Bahudin Zakirya University, Pakistan, by Sultan (2012). The aim of the study was to measure the level of anxiety in Bahudin Zakirya University's students. There were 157 students with an average age of 23 years who participated in the study. Among 157 students, 69 were girls and 88 were boys from various departments of Bahudin Zakirya University. The study examined the perceived competence of both genders. Data was collected by means of using two instruments, i.e., Horwitz (1986, p. 117) Foreign language class anxiety scale (FLCAS) and the perceived competence scale. The students with high perceived competence were found to be less anxious, and the students with low perceived competence were found to be more anxious. The study also demonstrated that females have less perceived competence than males. According to the study, females are more anxious than males while speaking a foreign language. The conclusion of the study shows that gender differences are another factor contributing to the level of anxiety.

Juhana (2012) has conducted research about the same problem, where he has discussed in detail the psychological barriers that make the students unable to speak fluently in English. Students were interviewed, the classroom was observed, and questionnaires were used in order to collect the data. The researcher has discussed the causes and solutions. The researcher suggested motivation from the teacher as a remedy to the problem.

Haidara (2016) has researched human psychology and language speaking. The research has been centered in Indonesia in order to know about the negative impact of psychological barriers on Indonesian students' English-speaking performance. Twenty students took part in the research. The students were interviewed and observed in order to diagnose the problem. The study demonstrated that psychological barriers hinder students from speaking English fluently. In the conclusion of the research, some suggestions were proposed as expected remedies to the problem.

Vemuri et al. (2013) have carried out a study in which they have highlighted the conundrums faced by the students who are learning a second language, and they also suggested some of the possible solutions to the problem. Data was collected through questionnaires, and 150 students were the participants. Among 150 students, 66 were males and 84 were females. The research paper has elaborated on the obstacles that learners face when speaking a foreign language. The study suggested that attitudinal barriers should be removed from both male and female students.

Like the aforementioned studies, each of the researchers has tried their level best in order to find the impact of psychological barriers on second language learners, but still, there seems to be a lack of studies on the same issue in order to delineate the main psychological barriers that prevent students from speaking English fluently. In our country, Pakistan, English is considered a second language, which has become

indispensable for many people, especially for students who are getting higher education in universities, and they are facing severe problems while speaking English. Similar to the above-mentioned studies, research has been conducted in Pakistani rural and urban areas, but not particularly in this specific area of Swat.

Research Design

This research is quantitative because the ratio of the psychological problems that students face while speaking English is quantified. Questionnaires were distributed among the target population (Swat), and answers to the questions were obtained through the questionnaire.

Population

The population of the current research is the University of Swat, District Swat, KPK.

Sample

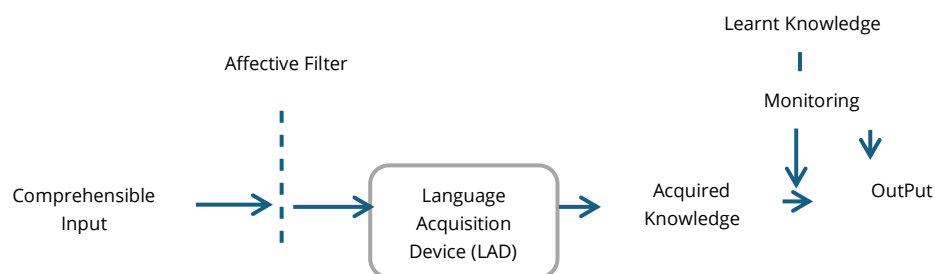
The size of the sample was thirty students. In the current research, thirty students of the BS English 5th semester have been taken from the University of Swat. The researcher is from the same area, so collecting data from the target population seemed easy. The participants willingly participated in the current research because they were asked before the distribution of the questionnaires.

Tools and Procedures

The data was collected through questionnaires in which students were asked to respond to different questions. Microsoft Excel was used to analyze the collected data with the help of pie charts.

Theoretical Framework

Stephen Krashen (1982) has presented the effective filter hypothesis, which deals with the affective filter, which is an obstacle that affects the acquisition of language. Affective filter is a screen that is influenced by variables like emotional variables that can hinder learning. This filter actually hinders input from reaching LAD, a part of the brain considered to be the language acquisition part of the brain. Krashen considers many variables, including anxiety, self-confidence, motivation, and stress, as a propelling force of the affective filter.



Analysis

Thirty students took part in this particular research, among them 15 were boys and 15 were girls. The students were selected from the BS English 5th Semester at the University of Swat. All the students were instructed before the distribution of questionnaires. They were briefed about different psychological factors like lack of

confidence, shyness, anxiety, and fear of making mistakes. Most of the students were found to face psychological barriers during their communication in English.

Table 1

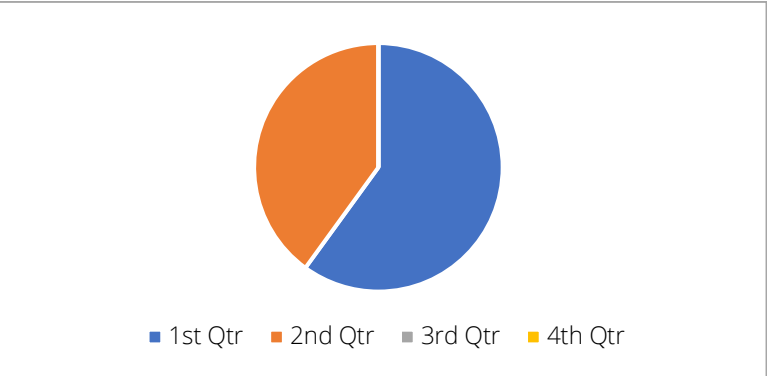
S	Statement	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	The teacher should not expect me to learn quickly and efficiently. I should be given enough time.	60%	40%	0%	0%
2	My language learning process suffers if my teacher wants quick and satisfactory performance.	56.66	20	16.66	6.66
3	A smaller margin for errors affects my learning process because I feel tense and worried all the time.	26.66	16.66	53.33	3.33
4	I suffer from low self-esteem when the teacher asks and appreciates the highly proficient.	36.66	30	26.66	6.66
5	I lose interest in the class when I am given insufficient time to learn, respond, speak, and rectify.	56.66	30	13.33	0
6	When I have the fear that my peers or my teacher may humiliate me for speaking incorrectly. I developed the belief that I probably can never learn in the best way.	56.66	23.33	16.66	3.33
7	I feel nervous, that's why I cannot recall the vocabulary items that I have learnt when I try to speak in English.	26.66	23.66	50	0
8	I speak more confidently in the absence of students with higher learning speed/proficiency.	16.66	40	30	13.33
9	The teacher's unawareness of my slow learning speed adds to my anxiety. It affects my learning of English.	46.66	20	10	23.33
10	The negative attitude of the conservative section of society towards English affects my attitude towards English.	26.66	26.66	20	26.66
11	The teacher's lack of knowledge of my personal problems affects my learning process of English in a negative way.	36.66	23.33	36.66	0
12	I have a feeling that if I am discouraged or humiliated, I would hardly reach the proficiency level I yearn for and have the capability of.	33.33	30	36.66	0
13	I believe that too much praise of one student demotivates other students.	46.66	20	35	10
14	The teacher should be aware of the fact that different students have different social backgrounds and learning speeds. One size cannot fit all.	30	50	13.33	6.66
15	A teacher should explain the learning material; otherwise, he/she will not be able to teach language (English) in a more desirable way.	63.33	23.33	23.33	0

The above table shows the ratio of the participants towards psychological barriers.

Analysis of the Collected Data

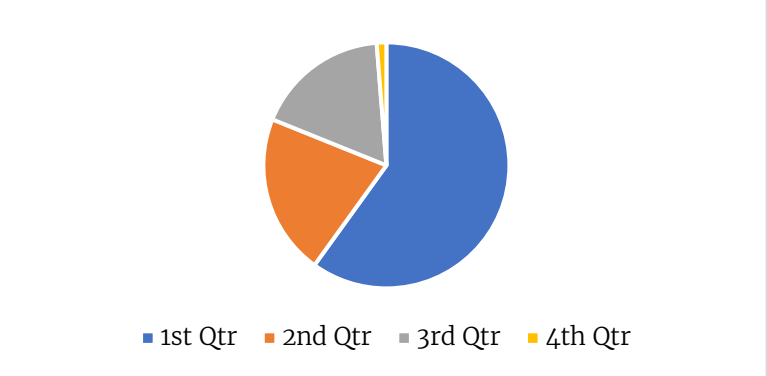
Students had to carefully fill the questionnaire because they were given four different choices, i.e., agree, strongly agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. They had to mark only one box. The above ratio shows that psychological barriers prevent students from speaking freely in the class. Each and every question is examined below:

Question no 1: The teacher should not expect me to learn quickly and efficiently; I should be given enough time



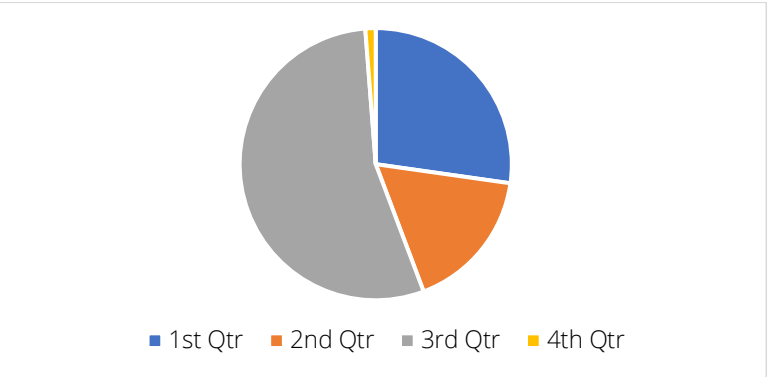
All the students agreed to the statement of the question that the teacher should not expect them to learn quickly and efficiently; they should be given enough time. These students have a high affective filter, which is the reason for their slow learning.

Question no 2: My language learning process suffers if my teacher wants quick and satisfactory performance



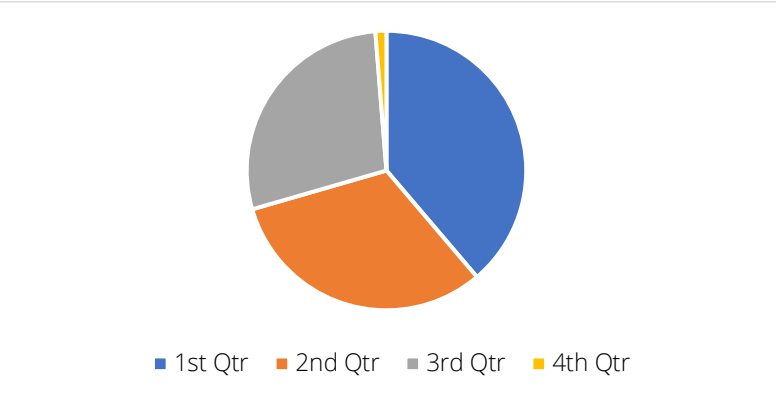
In response to this question, 56.66% students agreed, 20% of students strongly agreed, 16.66% students disagreed, and 6.66% strongly disagreed. This ratio shows that the language learning process of students can be both affected positively and negatively by the methodology and behavior of the teacher in the class. The response of students to this question made it clear that they should be given enough proper time in order to learn a second language.

Question no 3: A smaller margin of error affects my learning process because I feel tense and worried all the time



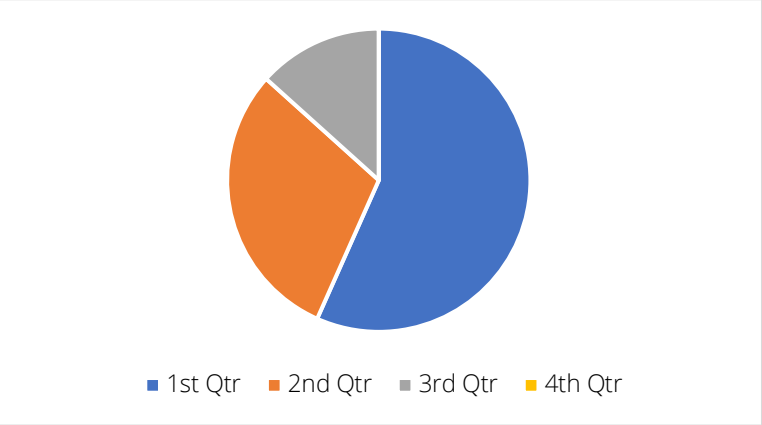
In response to this particular question, 26.66% students agreed with the statement of the question, 16.66% strongly agreed. But on the other hand, the majority of students came out in opposition to this question. 53.33% of the students disagreed, and 6.66% of the students strongly disagreed with the statement of the question. Although the majority of the students showed a negative response to the statement of the question, the fact is that there were still some students who felt tense because of making errors while speaking English, which affects their learning process because they feel tense and inferior when they are making errors.

Question no 4: I suffer from low self-esteem when the teacher asks and appreciates the highly proficient students



To this question, the response of the majority of the students was positive, and some of the students did not agree with the question. 36.66% of the students agreed, 30% strongly agreed, 26.66% disagreed, and 6.66% of the students strongly disagreed with the statement of the question. The opinions of the students or their reactions to the statement of the question show that there should be a congenial and convivial environment for learning a target language. Discrimination in the class can have a bad impact on the rest of the students, which also affects their learning process of the target language.

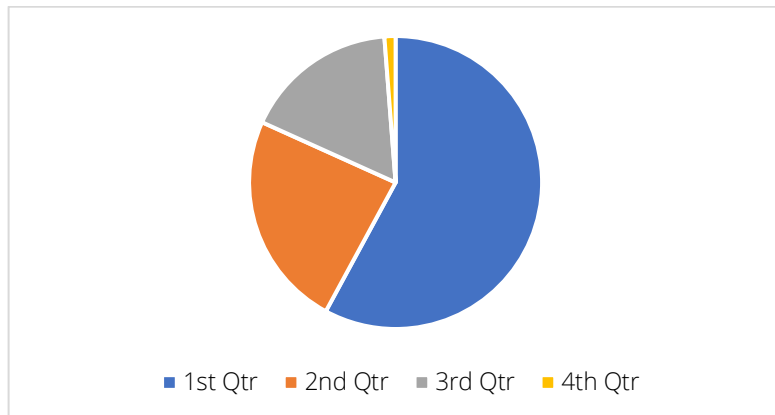
Question no 5: I lose interest in the class when I am given insufficient time to learn, respond, speak, and rectify



The response of the students to this particular question shows that learning a target language is a time-consuming process. Students need enough time for learning and speaking a target language. The response of most of the students was positive. 56.66% of the students agreed, 30% strongly agreed, and only 15.66% of the students did not agree with the statement of the question. According to the response of the students,

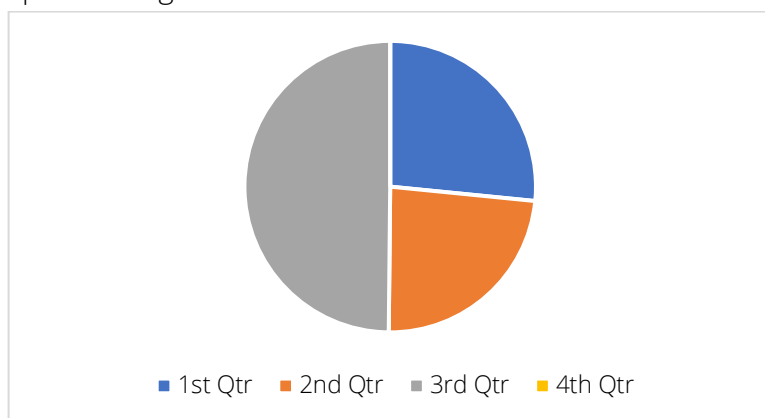
the interest in learning a target or second language is directly proportional to the time given to them for learning and speaking.

Question no 6: When I have the fear that my peers and my teacher may humiliate me for speaking incorrectly, I develop the belief that I probably can never learn in the best way



To this particular question, the reactions of the students are as follows: 56.66% of the students agreed, 23.33% of the students strongly agreed. And there were only a smaller number of students who did not agree with the statement of question 16.66% of the students disagreed, and only 3.33% of the students gave their opinion contrary to the statement of the question. The response of the students shows that anxiety affects their learning process of the target language. The fears of being humiliated by the teacher or peers have become a hindrance in communication, which prevents the students from speaking correctly and fluently. These factors have severe effects on the performance of students. The ratio of the response of the students shows that, because of such factors, it becomes difficult for the students to reach their goal in a timely manner. The interplay between psychological factors (fear of humiliation) is revealed in the response of the students to this particular question.

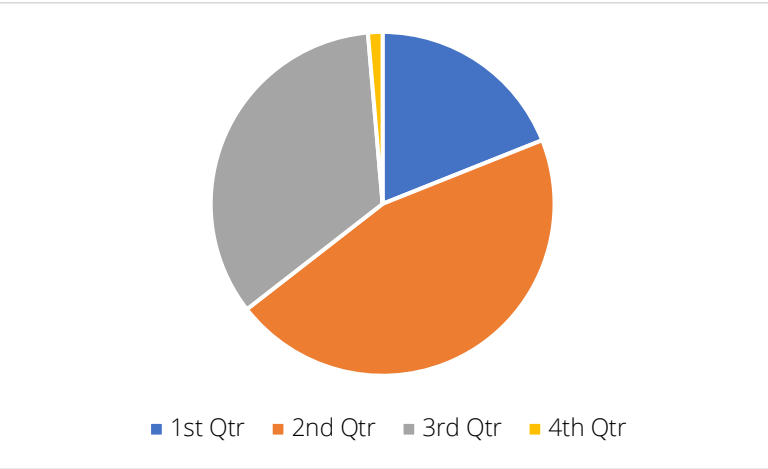
Question no 7: I feel nervous, that's why I cannot recall the vocabulary items that I have learnt when I try to speak in English



The response of the students to this particular question shows that anxiety and lack of confidence prevent students from speaking correctly and fluently. 26% of the students agreed, and 23.33% of the students strongly agreed. However, almost half of the students did not agree with the statement of the question. But

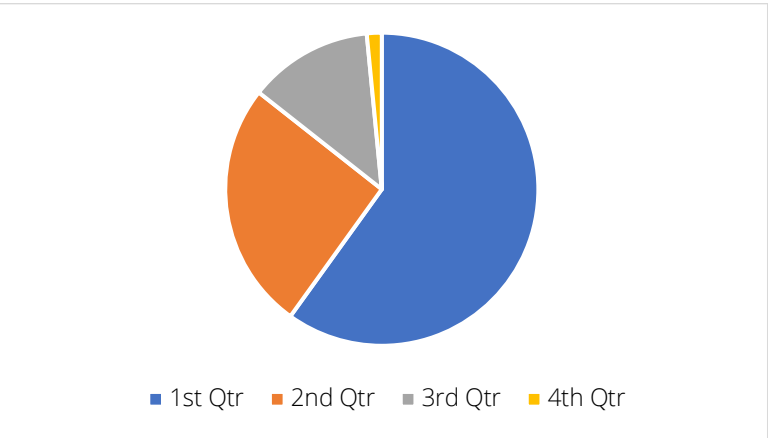
still, the fact is that lack of confidence and anxiety are the barriers that prevent students from speaking fluently in front of other people. Because of nervousness, they cannot recall the vocabulary items that they have learnt when they try to speak in English in front of people. So, this ratio shows the interplay between a psychological factor and the speaking ability of students.

Question no 8: I speak more confidently in the absence of students with high learning speed proficiency



The majority of the students responded positively to question 8. 16.66% of % students agreed, 40% of the students strongly agreed. On the other hand, 30% students of the students disagreed, and 13.33% of the students strongly disagreed with the statement ofthe problem. The calculation shows that students do not have the confidence to speak English in the presence of those students who are intelligent and have a higher learning speed/proficiency. Students considered themselves inferior in front of intelligent students,which results in a lack of confidence that hinders them from speaking fluently and correctly in the presence of students with higher learning speed.

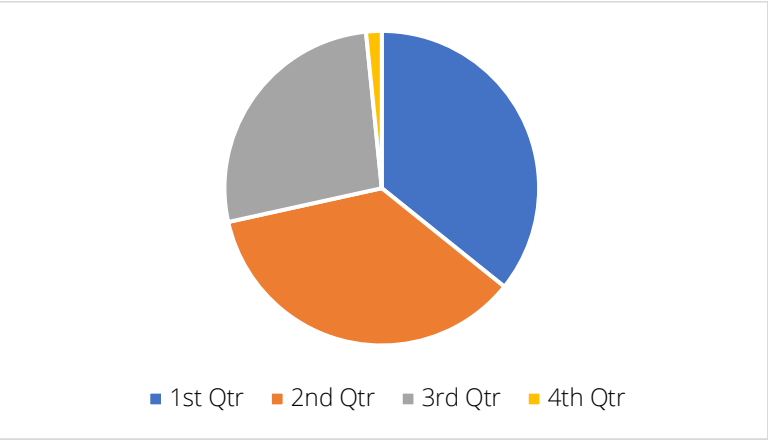
Question no 9: Teacher unawareness of my slow learning speed adds to my anxiety. It affects my learning process



In response to this particular question, 46.66% of the students responded positively, and they agreed with the statement of the question; 20% of the students strongly agreed. On the other hand, some of the students showed opposition and they did not agree with the statement of the question. 10% of the students disagreed, and 23.33% of the students strongly disagreed. The calculation of the ratio shows that the anxiety level of the

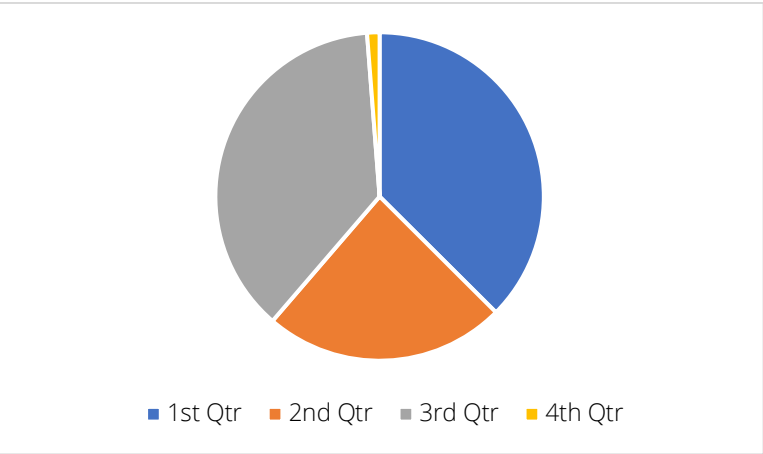
student is increased by the student's unawareness of their slow learning speed. The teacher's unawareness adds to the anxiety of the student. It affects the performance of students, which results in a very slow learning process. Like many other factors, the teacher's lack of knowledge of students' weaknesses and slow learning speed also prevents students from learning a second language.

Question no 10: The negative attitude of the conservative section of society towards English affects my attitude towards English



The negative attitude of the conservative section of society affects the attitudes and learning process of the students 26.66% of the students agreed with the statement of the question, and 26.66% of the students strongly agreed with the statement of the question. This shows that the negative attitude of the conservative class of society does affect the attitude of students towards English. Language: 20% of the students disagreed, and 26.66% of the students strongly disagreed. The greater number of students responded to the question in the affirmative, which shows that the reaction of the conservative section of society and their attitudes act as barriers and greatly affect the learning process of the English language.

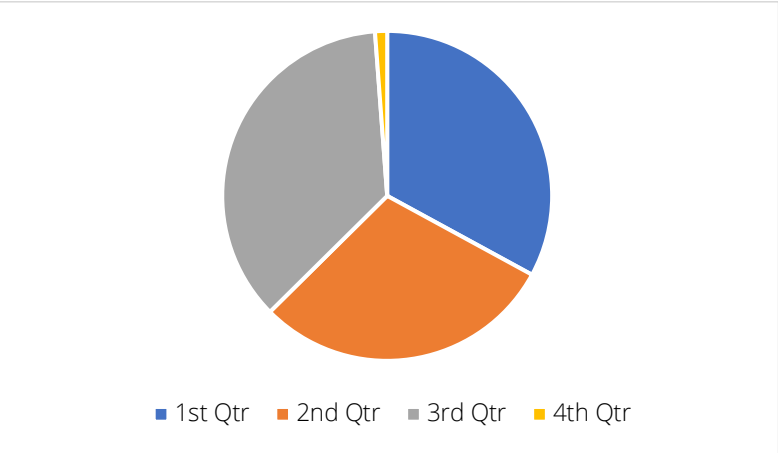
Question no 11: The Teacher's lack of knowledge of my personal problems affects my learning process of English in a negative way



Same to the above questions, the response of the greater number of students was positive, and they agreed with the statement of question 36.66% of students agreed, 23.33% strongly agreed, 23.33% disagreed, and only 16.66% of the students strongly disagreed with the statement of the question. According to the response

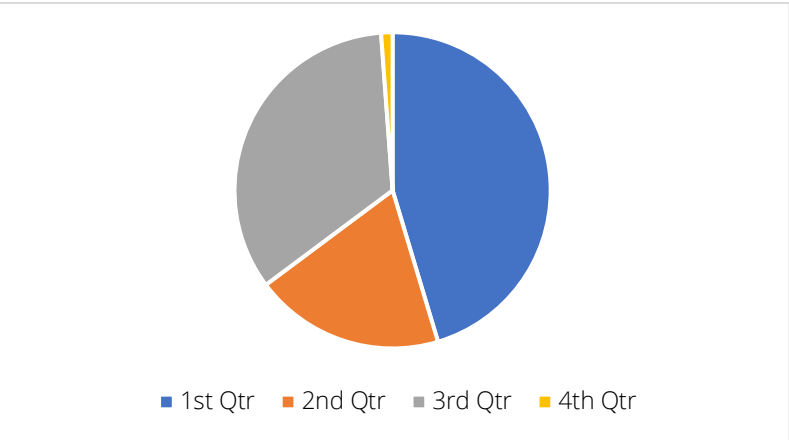
of the majority of students, their learning process of English is affected in a negative way because of the teacher's lack of knowledge of their personal problems. The problems of students regarding English language learning need to be addressed. According to the ratio, they may learn incorrect English language because of the teacher's unawareness of students' problems.

Question no 12: I have a feeling that if I am discouraged or humiliated, I would hardly reach the proficiency level. I yearn and have the capability of



The response of the students to question number 12 shows that anxiety does affect the learning process. 33.33% of the students gave their opinion in positive and found agreement with the statement of the question 30% of the students strongly agreed, and unlike the majority of students, some students found their views opposite to that of the statement of the question. 36.66% of the students disagreed with the statement of the question. The calculation of the ratio shows that the fear of discouragement and humiliation creates anxiety, and it affects the learning process. These factors hinder students from learning and speaking English fluently. These factors are the reason for the slow learning process, or such factors develop the belief of the students that they do not reach the desired proficiency level.

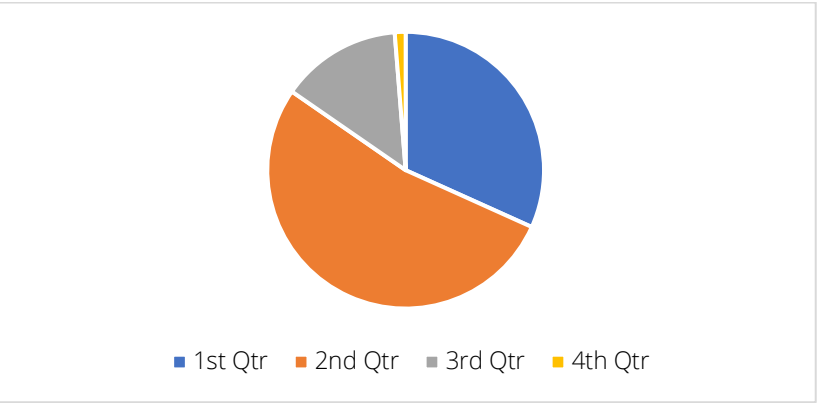
Question no 13: I believe that too much praise of one student demotivates other students



The response of the students to question number thirteen is in favor of the question. 46.66% of the students agreed with the statement of the question. 20% of the students strongly agreed. Apart from their agreements, there were some students who disagreed. 35% students disagreed, and only 10% of the students strongly

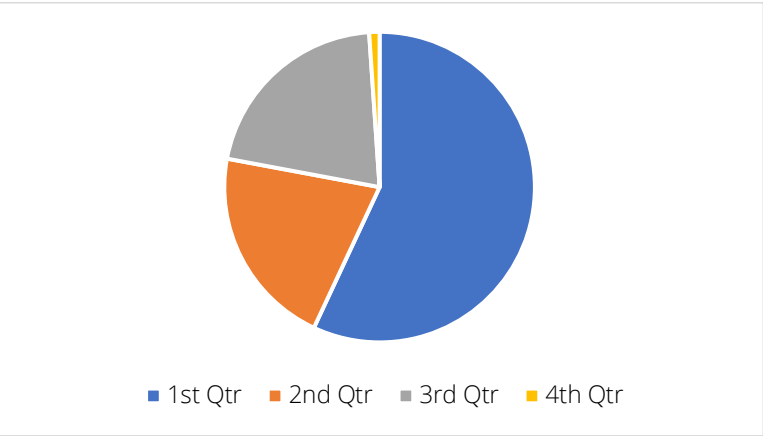
disagreed with the statement of the question. The ratio shows that most of the students are having the issue of the factor of jealousy, which results in demotivation. The response of the students to this particular question shows that they need such a conducive environment for learning a target language where they are treated equally. The response of the students to this question also shows that the behavior of a teacher affects the learning process of students.

Question no 14: The teacher should be aware of the fact that different students have different social backgrounds and learning speeds. One size cannot fit all



The response of the students to the statement of this particular question is positive 80% of the students agreed with the statement of the question. There were 30% students who agreed, and 50% of the students strongly agreed with the statement of the question. According to the response of 80% of the students, it is clear that students have different intelligibility levels and different learning speeds. The students with slow learning of the target language suffer more if the teacher teaches at a high speed or at a speed according to the level of those students who have a high learning speed. The response of the majority of the students made it explicit that high-speed teaching is one of the barriers that hinders students from reaching their target.

Question no 14: A teacher should explain the learning material. If not, he/she will not be able to teach language (English) in a more desirable way



In response to this particular question, almost all the students agreed with the statement of the question. 63.33% of the students agreed, 23% of the students strongly agreed, and only a small number of the students,

13.33% disagreed with the statement of the question. This huge amount of positive response to this particular question shows that students want to explain things otherwise; otherwise, they are not able to learn the language properly. In Pakistan, English is taught as a second language, and the students do not have much knowledge about the English language, which is why they need a teacher to explain everything in order to learn the language. The response of the students made it clear that if the teacher does not explain the learning material, they would not get things easily and clearly. The response of the students also shows that they want an energetic teacher who has a passion for teaching language.

Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight the significant role of psychological barriers in hindering effective communication among university students learning English as a second language. Lack of confidence, anxiety, fear of mistakes, and nervousness emerged as the most critical challenges faced by the participants. These barriers were further reinforced by external factors such as the presence of highly proficient peers and, in some cases, discouraging teacher attitudes. Such circumstances heightened students' sense of inferiority and led to reduced participation in communicative tasks. Within the framework of Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, the results confirm that negative emotions can restrict the natural flow of communication and limit opportunities for language learning.

The study underscores the importance of supportive classroom environments where teachers adopt encouraging strategies and provide constructive feedback instead of criticism. Encouragement from peers and recognition of students' efforts by teachers and society are essential to reducing anxiety and building confidence. By lowering the affective filter, students are more likely to engage actively in communication, which in turn enhances their linguistic competence.

Although the study provides valuable insights, it is limited to a relatively small sample of 30 students from a single institution, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. Future research should consider larger and more diverse samples across different universities in Pakistan to provide a broader understanding of psychological barriers in communication.

In conclusion, addressing psychological barriers is as important as focusing on linguistic proficiency. Creating inclusive, motivating, and supportive learning environments can help students overcome fear and hesitation, enabling them to communicate with confidence and succeed academically as well as socially.

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