

A Study on Factors Affecting English Speaking Skills among Diploma Students with Special Reference to Psychological and Linguistic Barriers

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Abstract: *English speaking skills are essential for diploma students in technical education as they prepare for academic advancement and industrial employment. Despite having theoretical knowledge of English, many students struggle to communicate effectively in real-life situations. This study investigates the major psychological and linguistic factors affecting English speaking skills among diploma students. The research is based on descriptive and qualitative analysis of classroom observations, previous studies, and student behavior patterns in technical institutes. Findings indicate that fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence, anxiety, limited vocabulary, grammatical errors, pronunciation difficulties, and mother-tongue interference are the most significant barriers. The study concludes that improving speaking skills requires both linguistic development and psychological support through communicative and student-centered teaching methods.*

Keywords: English speaking skills, diploma students, psychological barriers, linguistic barriers, communication skills, technical education.

I. INTRODUCTION

English has become a global language of communication, particularly important in technical and professional education. Diploma students in engineering and technology fields are expected to use English in presentations, interviews, group discussions, and workplace communication. However, many students face difficulties in speaking English fluently despite years of study. The problem arises due to a combination of psychological and linguistic factors. Psychological barriers such as anxiety, fear of judgment, and lack of confidence reduce students' willingness to speak. Linguistic barriers such as poor vocabulary, grammatical weakness, pronunciation issues, and mother-tongue influence further limit fluency. These challenges make

II. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The objectives of this study are:

1. To identify factors affecting English speaking skills among diploma students.
2. To analyze psychological barriers that hinder speaking ability.
3. To examine linguistic difficulties faced by students.
4. To suggest effective strategies to improve speaking competence.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study is based on a descriptive and qualitative research design. Data is collected from secondary sources including academic literature, classroom observations, and previous research studies on English language learning. The analysis focuses on common issues observed in diploma classrooms. The study examines both psychological and linguistic dimensions of speaking difficulties. Psychological aspects include anxiety, fear of mistakes, and lack of confidence, while linguistic aspects include grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and mother-tongue interference.



IV. FACTORS AFFECTING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS

English speaking ability among diploma students is influenced by several interconnected factors:

4.1 Lack of Practice and Exposure

Students have few chances to practice English beyond the classroom. Since their daily communication is mostly in regional languages, they fail to develop fluency in English.

4.2 Traditional Teaching Methods

Many classrooms still focus on grammar and writing rather than speaking activities. Lack of interactive learning reduces oral communication practice.

4.3 Learning Environment

A non-supportive or teacher-centered environment discourages students from speaking. Large class sizes also reduce individual participation.

4.4 Motivation

Students who understand the importance of English for career growth show better performance. Lack of motivation leads to poor participation in speaking activities.

V. PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS

Psychological factors play a major role in limiting speaking performance.

5.1 Fear of Making Mistakes

Students avoid speaking due to fear of grammatical or pronunciation errors. This fear reduces classroom participation.

5.2 Lack of Confidence

Even when students know English, they hesitate to speak due to low self-confidence and self-doubt.

5.3 Anxiety and Nervousness

Speaking in front of teachers or peers creates anxiety, resulting in hesitation, pauses, and incomplete sentences.

5.4 Fear of Negative Evaluation

Students worry about being judged or laughed at by classmates, which discourages active participation.

VI. LINGUISTIC BARRIERS

Linguistic difficulties also strongly affect speaking skills.

6.1 Limited Vocabulary

Students often struggle to express ideas due to insufficient vocabulary.

6.2 Grammar Difficulties

Incorrect sentence structures and tense usage reduce clarity in communication.

6.3 Pronunciation Problems

Lack of exposure to spoken English leads to incorrect pronunciation and reduced fluency.

6.4 Mother-Tongue Interference

Students often translate directly from their native language, resulting in unnatural English expressions and errors.



VII. DISCUSSION

The study reveals that English speaking difficulties among diploma students are caused by the interaction of psychological and linguistic barriers. Linguistic limitations such as poor vocabulary and grammar create hesitation, which further increases psychological issues like anxiety and fear. This creates a negative cycle: lack of language knowledge reduces confidence, and low confidence reduces practice, which further weakens speaking ability. Therefore, both aspects must be addressed simultaneously. A supportive classroom environment plays a crucial role in improving communication skills. Students perform better when they are encouraged to participate in interactive activities such as group discussions, role plays, and presentations.

VIII. SUGGESTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

To improve English speaking skills among diploma students, the following measures are recommended:

1. Encourage daily speaking practice in classrooms.
2. Use communicative teaching methods such as role plays and group discussions.
3. Establish English-speaking clubs and language laboratories.
4. Create a supportive environment where mistakes are treated as part of learning.
5. Focus on vocabulary building through reading and word exercises.
6. Train teachers in communication-based teaching methods.
7. Use multimedia tools like videos and audio materials to improve pronunciation and listening skills.

IX. CONCLUSION

English speaking skills are essential for diploma students to succeed in both academic and professional life. However, many students face significant challenges due to psychological barriers such as fear, anxiety, and lack of confidence, as well as linguistic barriers including vocabulary limitations, grammatical errors, pronunciation issues, and mother-tongue interference.

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