



The Impact of Linguistics and Non-linguistics Elements on Undergraduates' Willingness to Speak: An Investigation of Factors that Promote or Inhibit Classroom Participation

Shenya Sumanawardhane^{1*}, Madhuka Wickramarachchi², Chameera De Silva³

National Institute of Business Management, Colombo 7^{2*}, University of Kelaniya, University of Colombo³

*info.shenya@gmail.com

Hesitant speakers in an English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom create severe issues and they affect the progression of the lesson. This study aims to investigate the reasons for English-speaking reluctance among undergraduate students in a Diploma English class at the National Institute of Business Management in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The study collected data from 30 undergraduate students through a questionnaire that addressed language anxiety, speaking reluctance, negative experiences with teachers, and self-perceived language proficiency. The study found that learners' anxiety is a significant reason for their speaking reluctance. Students reported feeling more nervous and anxious in speaking classes than in other classes, and negative judgments from teachers and destructive peer reviews significantly contributed to students' language anxiety. Additionally, students' self-perceived language proficiency was a significant predictor of language anxiety, with students who perceived themselves to have lower language proficiency being more anxious and hesitant to speak in English. The study also found that teachers' negative behavior and lack of support significantly contribute to students' English-speaking hesitance. Negative behavior from teachers, including scolding and lack of encouragement, was found to be a significant factor leading to students' language anxiety and reluctance to speak in English. Furthermore, inadequate management of speaking activities by teachers was found to be a noteworthy factor in students' negative experiences, leading to language anxiety and English-speaking reluctance. The study highlights the importance of teacher support and positive behavior in promoting students' participation in speaking activities and reducing language anxiety. The study recommends that educators recognize the impact of their behavior and attitudes on students' language anxiety and adopt positive approaches to support students' language learning.

Keywords:foreign language teaching, language-anxiety, negative experiences, teacher's role, undergraduates

