| Shahida Naz[*] | Zahoor Hussain[†] | Malik Adnan[‡] |

Communication Barriers in English Language Classroom: A Study of Teachers' Perceptions in Pakistan

Abstract:

This study was an effort to explore the barriers of communication faced by the teachers and students in the English language classroom that cause problems in knowledge sharing. Effective communication is necessary to make teaching effective and successful as if the information is conveyed in a poor way would not result in effective teaching. Researcher through this study tried to explore what kind of communication barriers are faced by teachers and students while learning in the classroom. A questionnaire was used for data collection from teachers of English working at secondary school level in tehsil Shujabad of district Multan, Pakistan. Researcher through this study has identified various critical types of barriers of communication, including the psychological, content, semantic, physical and environmental barriers and the strategies to overcome these barriers. This research study provides relevant information on communication barriers and what procedures are needed to be followed to overcome them.

Key Words:

Teaching English, Teacher-Student Relationship, Communication Barriers

Introduction

Effective communication occurs when messages are not distorted during the communication process and serve the purpose for which the communication was planned or designed. However, if the desired effect is not achieved, the barriers must be explained in order to find out why the communication is ineffective (Ozmen, Akuzum, Zincirli, & Selcuk, 2016). Data overload, emotions, language, silence, fear of communication, selective perceptions, anxiety and gender differences etc. are the factors involved in it. Communication barriers cause delayed communication process (Fojkar, 2005).

Communication is one of the most important systems to be developed in all areas. It does not matter how good the communication system is, how well it is formed and well developed, there are obstacles in communication systems, whether it is an organization, family, communal network, enterprise, etc. the connection between (Ndethiu, 2019). Obstacles in communication systems are very undesirable, everyone wants their work to be done smoothly without obstacles, for example, when a person discusses a topic of life with someone or two friends, he talks sincerely and rings a doorbell, or someone enters, in most cases dissatisfied. There are many reasons for these barriers to occur, many of them are one of the reasons, for example, if an important work is going on and a doorbell rings and someone enters immediately, it can occur for some reason and the phone system malfunctions, internet failure or accidental There are as many factors that can be physical barriers as any barrier (Usman, 2019; Pathan, 2013).

Everything you need to know about various communication barriers: there are many communication barriers that tend to distort the messages between the sender and the recipient, causes misunderstandings and conflicts between members of the organization (Santalova, Lesnikova, Nechaeva, Borshcheva, & Charykova, 2018). Managers often remind that communication is one of the most important problems. However, communication problems are a sign of more fundamental problems.

[*]Assistant Professor, Department of Applied Linguistics, Government College University Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: shahidanaz@gcuf.edu.pk

[†]Lecturer, Department of English, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Punjab, Pakistan.

[‡]Assistant Professor, Department of Media Studies, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan.

For example, poor planning can lead to uncertainty about a firm's direction. Similarly, a poorly structured organizational structure cannot clearly explain organizational relationships. The barriers in the surrounding or in the environment are the physical barriers. Obstacles caused by different languages or differences in language can cause communication problems. Semantic barriers are problems caused by different meanings of words. Obstacles or problems caused by stress or psychological problems are psychological barriers. These obstacles are difficult to accept and overcome. We often encounter differences in communication due to differences in social status or cultural barriers. These are socio-cultural barriers (Moral, de Leonardo, Perez, Martinez, and Martiun, 2020; Joseph & Rahmat, 2020).

Language enables a person to understand the content he wants to express. When two individuals communicate with each other and use a common language understood by all individuals, goals will be achieved, and the communication process will be effective (Block, van Ingen, de Boer, & Slootman, 2020).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify communication barriers and their differences, as found in teaching English at the secondary school level. Communication skills within the teaching profession are applied in the teacher's classroom management, pedagogy, and classroom interaction. In addition to this, communication skills are important to attract students' attention, develop their motivation, and actively engage them in the teaching and learning process. Effective classroom communication ensures effective learning. Thus, this work aims to identify barriers faced by teachers and students to communicate.

Research Questions

Research questions were as given below:

1. What are the communication barriers faced by teachers and students in the English language classroom at the secondary school level?
2. How do the communication barriers faced by male and female teachers' are different.

Importance of the Study

Teachers, first of all, are not aware of the obstacles in their communication a complete violation of distorted or worse communication. Transmissions of knowledge don't leave any space as our exam-oriented academic system generally requires increase interpersonal and interpersonal communication skills. Once it becomes clear, we can try to understand the attitude of teachers and solve the problem. Then to ensure that students identify the obstacles they may face. This would allow them helps to eliminate gaps that impede greater ease and effectiveness in the communication teaching-learning process.

Methodology

The main focus of the present study was to find out the communication barriers in the English language classroom: a study of teachers' perceptions. As the study was survey-based, so, the quantitative research design was used to collect the data. All teachers from public secondary schools of Tehsil Shujabad were treated as the population of the study, whereas 56 teachers from public secondary schools of Tehsil Shujabad were selected as the sample of the study through a simple random sampling technique. 90.3%. Fifty questionnaires were returned properly and were analyzed. A self-made questionnaire by researcher comprised of four key areas of communication barriers (i.e. interaction/interpersonal barriers, psychological barriers, physical or environmental barriers and language and semantic barriers), was used as an instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was comprised of 25 statements with the categorization of 4 factors. Respondents were asked to rate the priority of their institutions on a five-point scale ranging from least to highest priority.

Collected data were analyzed through frequency, percentage, and mean score for each statement and each factor.

Results and Discussion

Demographics reflect experience, occupation, type of employer, and gender of respondents. Moreover, this applies to the research question of the difference in communication barriers between both sexes and male and female.

Table 1. Demographic Variables of Respondents

Demographic Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	32	64.0
Female	18	36.0
Professional Qualification		
B.Ed	17	34.0
M.Ed	8	16.0
ELT	14	28.0
None	6	12.0
Other	5	10.0
Teaching Experience (in years)		
0-2	10	20.0
3--4	17	34.0
5--6	6	12.0
7--8	4	8.0
Above 8	13	26.0

Table 1 shows that the participation of teachers of both sexes is approximately equal. In addition, the difference in responses was calculated as a percentage of the number of responses, which increased the reliability of the results. Other demographic data may show that experienced teachers are professionally competent, but there are some barriers to communication. Almost 75% of teachers are professionally trained, and 28% are trained in English. Stumbling in the face of obstacles shows that they either did not try to overcome these problems or were not aware of the disadvantages of communication barriers in English language teaching. The general responses of English teachers are given below for a statistical display of communication barriers.

Table 2. Perception of Teachers about Interaction/Interpersonal Barriers

Item No.	Statement		SA	A	N	DA	SDA	M	SD
1	Students were found equally proficient in the sudden tests.	*f*	7	4	14	8	17	2.52	1.403
		%	14.0	8.0	28.0	16.0	34.0		
2	Students' irresponsive attitude irritates teachers.	*f*	14	13	8	10	5	4.22	.708
		%	28.0	26.0	16.0	20.0	10.0		
3	Students are not enough confident to ask questions.	*f*	11	12	10	10	7	3.20	1.370
		%	22.0	24.0	20.0	20.0	14.0		
4	Students maintain eye contact with teachers during studying in a classroom.	*f*	19	14	11	4	2	3.88	1.136
		%	38.0	28.0	22.0	8.0	4.0		

Item No.	Statement		SA	A	N	DA	SDA	M	SD
5	All students in class are equally intelligent.	*f*	1	2	5	10	32	1.60	.969
		%	2.0	4.0	10.0	20.0	64.0		
6	Students ask questions after lecture.	*f*	16	13	11	6	4	3.62	1.276
		%	32.0	26.0	22.0	12.0	8.0		
7	Students in class have fixed seating.	*f*	10	13	13	4	10	3.18	1.395
		%	20.0	26.0	26.0	8.0	20.0		
8	Students take to listen about teachers' experience,	*f*	33	14	2	1	0	4.58	.673
		%	66.0	28.0	4.0	2.0	0.0		
9	While asking questions, students feel uncomfortable.	*f*	8	13	11	8	10	3.02	1.378
		%	16.0	26.0	22.0	16.0	20.0		
10	Students have clear aim of their life.	*f*	10	4	16	13	7	2.94	1.316
		%	20.0	8.0	32.0	26.0	14.0		
	Average		25.8	20.4	20.2	14.8	18.8	3.27	1.162

Table 2 examines teachers' perceptions of interpersonal barriers. Student retention is poor because 50% of respondents (as opposed to 22%) think that students' performance in surprise tests is not the same. They cannot memorize for a long time or have an increasing or decreasing practical learning. This is a psychological barrier that can be addressed through practical performance-based activities or the use of tools and realities in the classroom. Student participation in class is 54% as suggested by respondents, but 58% of teachers say that students ask questions after class. This shows that although communication occurs, it is insignificant because it is proved by the answer of statement 13, so 94% of respondents think they are interested in explaining students' personal experiences. Classes are not at a homogeneous level of intelligence, as 84% of teachers think that students do not have the same intelligence level, and 0.06% thinks otherwise.

Table 3. Perception of Teachers about Psychological Barriers

Item No.	Statement		SA	A	N	DA	SDA	M	SD
3	I know the socio-economic status of my students	*f*	15	17	9	8	1	3.74	1.121
		%	30.0	34.0	18.0	16.0	2.0		
4	The know about my students' preferences	*f*	13	12	11	10	4	3.40	1.294
		%	26.0	24.0	22.0	20.0	8.0		
12	My students do share personal issues with me	*f*	11	13	11	9	6	3.28	1.325
		%	22.0	26.0	22.0	18.0	12.0		
16	Teachers discuss things with students over phone	*f*	8	9	13	4	16	2.78	1.475
		%	16.0	18.0	26.0	8.0	32.0		
17	Students have mobile phones	*f*	5	7	5	9	24	2.20	1.429
		%	10.0	14.0	10.0	18.0	48.0		
18	Students' parents contact their teachers over phone	*f*	17	11	7	8	7	3.46	1.460
		%	34.0	22.0	14.0	16.0	14.0		
20	Students participate in co-curricular activities	*f*	22	16	8	3	1	4.10	1.015
		%	44.0	32.0	16.0	6.0	2.0		
	Average		26	24.3	18.3	14.6	16.8	3.28	1.302

Table 3 examines teachers' perceptions of psychological barriers. One psychological barrier is the teachers' aggressive attitude, which is proved by the response of more than 5%, so more than 50% of teachers are upset

by students' poor response. It leads to those strategies which cause an obstacle in the language learning process, involving students in participatory activities after providing sufficient relevant information. The other side of the barrier is shown in the results of the responses. Although most respondents know their students' personal preferences, as well as their social and economic backgrounds, they are unable to manage this in the classroom because about 56% of students ask questions after the lecture. Moreover, if added to a neutral reaction, it is strengthened. Due to these barriers, students do not ask questions in class because they are shy and timid, as shown in the absence of questionnaires in the table, with 54% and 64% responding to shyness in questioning. In addition, 42% of students who answered the questions felt uncomfortable with 28% of the respondents who answered neutrally. Being less motivated was another important factor shown through the reaction to the statement about having a definite goal in life. The response about statement number 23 showed that 72% of students had no set goals (including a neutral answer, no goals, or no communication between teachers and students). The study supported that psychological barrier arise in the human mind, and communication does not always result in understanding. Psychological factors that can hinder a meaningful communication include emotions (both positive and negative emotions can act as a barrier if left unchecked); biased attitudes (for example, prejudice against certain communities or groups of people), closed mind (when one person refuses to accept another's opinion or opinion); social or occupational status (status becomes an obstacle when a person is very conscious, regardless of whether his status is more or less); impatience (listening without attention and empathy), etc. (Polishchuk, 2017; de Vries, Rietkerk, & Kooger, 2020).

Table 4. Perception of Teachers about Physical or Environmental Barriers

Item No.	Statement		SA	A	N	DA	SDA	M	SD
11	Students' attention level is same in every weather	*f*	5	4	8	22	11	2.4	1.21
		%	10.0	8.0	16.0	44.0	22.0	0	2
2	Students participate in the classroom.	*f*	16	11	16	6	1	3.7	1.11
		%	32.0	22.0	32.0	12.0	2.0	0	1
24	Students are asked to stay silent during lectures.	*f*	19	14	11	3	3	3.8	1.17
		%	38.0	28.0	22.0	6.0	6.0	6	8
	Average		26.7	19.3	23.3	20.7	10	3.3 2	1.16 7

Physical barriers are evident in the 10% response, which is why 72% of students maintain their seats in the classroom (including a neutral response, indicating that the teacher pays little attention to the living room). Explains in detail that there are back-to-back fronts in the classroom that not only create anxiety or physical obstruction but also do not stop at a given lecture. A good strategy is to ask students to avoid making noise of their peers while sitting with like-minded peers. In general, Pakistan and the region of work have a variety of seasons in which cold and hot weather play an important role in ensuring environmental friendliness. In difficult weather conditions, the language learning process is affected by the limited facilities and infrastructure in so many educational institutions in the area. This physical or environmental barrier stems from climate and weather changes as it is shown in response to question number 11, with 64% of respondents acknowledging that student attention level towards studies does not remain the same in different weathers. 66% of students have cell phones that cause physical barriers in the classroom use or noise-induced concentration. A huge crowd of students makes noise and whispers. More than 80% of respondents had more than 40 students who violate the classroom decorum as well a causes physical abuse. The silence of 66% of the teachers in the answer is further confirmed by the answer. Large classrooms are difficult to manage, and as a result, the lack of the latest devices, such as most AV aids and projectors, language labs, sound systems, and video playback infrastructure, creates a physical barrier to communication as results shown 66% of classrooms sound system,

62% without a projector and 72% were without any video payment mechanism. Moreover, where such tools are available in institutions, they are neither used effectively nor used (without touching).

Table 5. Perception of Teachers about Language and Semantic Barriers

Item No.	Statement		SA	A	N	DA	SDA	M	SD
14	Students understand better if instructions are given in mother tongue	*f*	29	13	2	6	0	4.30	1.015
		%	58.0	26.0	4.0	12.0	0.0		
15	Spelling mistakes are common in students' creative writing.	*f*	23	23	1	2	1	4.30	.863
		%	46.0	46.0	2.0	4.0	2.0		
19	Students speak English while talking to me.	*f*	7	15	11	11	6	3.12	1.256
		%	14.0	30.0	22.0	22.0	12.0		
22	When low-frequency words are used students understand the lecture better.	*f*	5	8	14	13	10	2.70	1.249
		%	10.0	16.0	28.0	26.0	20.0		
25	The dramatization (performance/acting) of plays in the syllabus is carried out.	*f*	10	11	13	8	8	3.14	1.355
		%	20.0	22.0	26.0	16.0	16.0		
	Average		296	28.0	16.4	16.0	10.0	3.51	1.147

Another area of barriers is a language or semantic barriers, which are gaps between what is said and perceive. This is a significant gap found in the context of foreign language learning, especially in areas such as the region where people have little interest in English. 80% of respondents did not know how to use the low-frequency words 28% of participants have a neutral answer or did not agree that students understand lectures in which difficult vocabulary is used. 82% agreed that the use of Punjab and Urdu is useful for students to learn easily. This communication barrier affects students' production, writing skill, as well as their speaking skills. Thus, 92% of participants agreed that to the idea of students making spelling and grammar mistakes when they are doing creative writing, which hindered language learning. Results showed that there were significant communication barriers found. The argument can be drawn from Answer 29, where 80% of teachers were not found eligible for teaching four language skills when the test of IELTS / TOEFL. B.Ed., M.Ed.'s professional skills were taken, and ELT are usually taught in programs with at least four skills because they are unable to maneuver communication barriers despite maintaining all their professional degrees. The previous studies supported that the new emphasis on semantic correction in semantic-focused instruction develops students' semantic domains and supports the motivation to learn the target language (Waseem, Naveed, & Aziz, 2015; Kellog & Raulerson, 2007).

Table 6. Communication Barriers in Male and Female English Teachers

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value
Interaction/Interpersonal Barriers	Male	32	39.19	6.072	11.508	.000
	Female	18	21.33	3.325		
Psychological Barriers	Male	32	19.00	4.649	-9.548	.000
	Female	18	30.00	1.940		
Physical or Environmental Barriers	Male	32	7.91	2.115	-10.573	.000
	Female	18	13.61	1.145		
Language and Semantic Barriers	Male	32	14.53	4.273	-8.004	.000
	Female	18	22.94	1.626		

Table 6 explores the difference between communication barriers of male and female teachers. In case of interaction/interpersonal barriers of female teachers (M = 21.33, SD = 3.325) are significantly lower than male teachers (M = 39.19, SD = 6.072) is a significant p-value 0.000. Psychological barriers of male teachers (M = 19.00, SD = 4.649) are less than female teachers (M = 30.00, SD = 1.940) is a significant different at .000. The physical or environmental barriers of male teachers (M = 7.91) is less than that of female teachers (M = 13.61, SD = 1.145) is significant p-value is .000. Language and semantic barriers of male teachers (M = 14.53) is less than female teachers (M = 22.94, SD = 1.626) a statistically significant p-value 0.000.

Table 7. Correlational Analysis of Communication Barriers in the English Language Classroom

Variable	α	M	SD	1	2	3	4
(1) Interaction/Interpersonal Barriers	.71	21.80	5.36	-	-	-	-
(2) Psychological Barriers	.81	18.84	4.72	.659**	-	-	-
(3) Physical or Environmental Barriers	.72	14.78	3.36	.360**	.487**	-	-
(4) Language and Semantic Barriers	.78	17.75	4.31	.251**	.378**	.495**	-

*Note. α is the average difference between the two variables; *** p <0.001; ** p <0.01.*

The results in Table 7 that, at the point of importance, the component with a higher average, such as interaction/interpersonal barriers, psychological barriers, physical or environmental barriers, language and semantic barriers was in favor of behavior is statistically significant average differences with all other components except interaction/interpersonal barriers (M = 21.80, SD = 5.36), p-value .003, psychological barriers (M = 18.84, SD = 4.72), p-value = .000, physical or environmental barriers (M = 14.78, SD = 3.36), p-value = .001, language and semantic barriers (M = 17.75, SD = 4.31), p-value = 0.027.

Conclusion and Recommendation for Future Studies

It is concluded on the basis of results and findings that there are four major categories of communication barriers faced by teachers and students while teaching English, called physical, psychological, personal/interpersonal ones. Psychological barriers hinder students' learning it includes lack of motivation. Most students do not have a clear purpose in life, which makes them lazy. As a result, students are less likely to participate in barrier-based lessons in English classrooms, and language skills are associated with communication skills because they are dynamic and need to participate. There is a great need for students' interactive faculties to instill language ideas, which is a completely social and communicative phenomenon. Teachers become impatient and angry at students' irresponsible behavior. The psychological development of students is detrimental to the pedagogical practices that need to be known by him in order to be able to solve problems effectively and to develop appropriate strategies to engage students in learning.

The findings show that students interact if teachers motivated them in joint learning activities because they are clear. Most of the lessons are planned for homogeneous and students with mixed abilities. It also requires experience on the part of English teachers to deal with students and also keep them interested in learning. Most commonly found barriers to communication were the physical and psychological ones. The use of native language in English reflects the traditional language teaching method. There is no proper infrastructure of English language classrooms due to inconsistencies between existing systems and targets. Although male teachers are relatively more qualified, they face a large influx of students in most classrooms. This figure can only grow to hundreds, where leadership is an art. Thus, teachers often have to silence students, as the results show. However, they do not have professional skills like reading, writing, listening and speaking.

When there are barriers to communication in an English learning classroom speaking skills are not improved quickly in an effective way. In most cases, female have better provisions than male.

The study suggests that an in-depth analysis of the communication barriers in English language teaching is needed for a more clear picture of the situation. This extensive research will provide guidelines for all teachers and curriculum designers to develop an appropriate strategy to overcome these problems. The existing curriculum and examination system should be redesigned to suit students' different needs.

References

Blok, M., van Ingen, E., de Boer, A. H., & Slootman, M. (2020). The use of information and communication technologies by older people with cognitive impairments: from barriers to benefits. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *104*, 106173.

de Vries, G., Rietkerk, M., & Kooger, R. (2020). The hassle factor as a psychological barrier to a green home. *Journal of Consumer Policy*, *43*(2), 345-352.

Fojkar, M. D. (2005). Effective classroom interaction and communication strategies in learning English as a Foreign Language. https://researchgate.net/publication/ 279999107_ Classroom_ Interaction _and_ Communication_ Strategies_ in_ Learning_ English_ as_a_ Foreign_ Language.

Kellogg, R. T., & Raulerson III, B. A. (2007). Improving the writing skills of college students. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, *14*(2), 237–242. https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03194058.

Ndethiu, S. M. (2019). Effective classroom communication. https://researchgate.net/ publication/ 338253705_ Effective_Classroom_Communication.

Ozmen, F., Akuzum, C., Zincirli, M., & Selcuk, G. (2016). The Communication Barriers between Teachers and Parents in Primary Schools. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, *66*, 27-46.

Pal, N., Halder, S., & Guha, A. (2016). Study on Communication Barriers in the Classroom: A Teacher's Perspective. *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies*, *6*(1), 103-118.

Pathan, A. K. (2013). Major Linguistic Barriers of Oral Communication in English as Perceived by the Tertiary level ESL Students. *Language in India*, *13*(3), 170-185.

Polishchuk, O. S. (2017). Communication barriers faced by English language learners at a university level: Factors and solutions.

Santalova, M. S., Lesnikova, E. P., Nechaeva, S. N., Borshcheva, A. V., & Charykova, O. G. (2018, April). Information hindrances and communication barriers in project interactions. In *International Conference Project "The future of the Global Financial System: Downfall of Harmony"* (pp. 273-281). Springer, Cham.

Usman, T. (2019). Barriers to Effective Communication. http://www.uet.edu.pk/export/ sites/UETWebPortal/qec/qec_intro/downloads/Barriers-to-Effective-Communication.pdf.

Waseem, F., Naveed, A., & Aziz, S. (2015). Does schooling make a difference in English Language Proficiency? A comparison of Pakistani undergraduate students coming from English and Urdu medium schools. *European Academic Research*, *3*(8), 8628–8652.