

The Relationship between Iraqi EFL Preparatory School Students' Affective Learning Strategies and Speaking Performance

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Abstract:

Speaking is the most crucial skill among the four skills since it is the one that every student needs to communicate with other students in the classroom and the teacher for the purpose of sharing ideas, feelings, and thoughts. On the other hand, students' capability to learn to speak is mainly related to their beliefs in their abilities and their own inner potentials since it determines whether they feel being efficacious or not.

The purpose of this study is twofold: firstly, finding out Iraqi EFL Preparatory school students' affective learning strategies and speaking performance and secondly, identifying the correlation between Iraqi EFL Preparatory School students' affective learning strategies and speaking performance. Accordingly, the sample of the present study consists of (360) students from Iraqi EFL preparatory schools, selected randomly from Baghdad governorate during the academic year 2021/2022. To achieve the aims of the present study, two instruments are used; affective learning strategies questionnaire and a speaking test which is constructed by the researcher himself. The findings reveal that the students have a moderate level of speaking performance. Concerning affective learning strategies, they use these strategies at the different levels. Furthermore. The findings also indicate that participants' affective learning strategies are statistically correlated with their speaking performance.

Keywords: Affective Learning Strategies, Speaking Performance.

I. Introduction :

One of the ultimate aims for being able to communicate is to speak the FL. Speaking in a FL, however, is more difficult than speaking in one's native tongue. students must become fluent in speaking as well as other language skills, including vocabulary

development, pronunciation, grammar, and many others. In addition, students are more susceptible to stage fright when speaking in front of an audience and with all eyes on them (Normawati & Muna, 2015).

Speaking presents a challenge for students. Due to factors including the speech requirements, the students' competence level, and self-image issues, EFL students commonly find speaking challenging. Other factors that could affect SP include shyness, the environment of the class, and the irrelevance of the material. For EFL, the combination of all these factors results in a speaking problem (Harmer, 2011).

For some students, speaking English as a FL can be difficult. Students that have a negative attitude toward learning might not use ALSs elements. Students who do not have positive attitudes toward learning may not activate ALSs. If students activate such attitudes will result in greater linguistic achievement if they are accompanied by ALSs, and that will enable the students to take advantage of educational opportunities, presuming that those variables are interlocking with one another in the human brain (Bagheri & Andi, 2015).

The problem of the present study is best expressed through answering the following question:

Is there a correlation between Iraqi EFL Preparatory school students' affective learning strategies and their speaking Performance?

II. Literature Review

2.1 Speaking Performance

Speaking Skill is an everyday means that human beings need to connect with each other and to express about their feelings and ideas into uttered words. Speaking is "an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information" (Florez, 1999, p. 1).

Speaking is to produce specific words that explain people ideas. It is a procedure of forming and exchanging meaning by generating of verbal and non-verbal symbols in a different of contexts (Alexander, 1992).

Speaking is to utter words, to express thoughts by words, to utter speech, discourse, or argue, to talk, to mention, to tell them by writing, to communicate ideas in any matter" (Webster Dictionary, 1984)

However, speaking can be determined by the two fundamentals functions of the language (i.e., interactional and transactional). The transactional language is a real or relative information and deals with the exchange of that information. On other hand, interactional language is utilized build and keep social relationships (Brown & Yule, 1991).

To be understood. Speaking involves understanding the psycholinguistic and interpersonal factors of speech production, the forms, meaning, and processes involved, and how these can be developed (Bygate, 2003).

2.1.1 Functions of Speaking Skills

Speaking is definitely significant basically in everyday communication and in human interaction, when somebody talks, he/she has got to distinguish what to say about and understand the idea of what he/she is talking about. With the goal of finding the diverse functions of speaking, many language scholars have tried to find out the role of speaking in human exchange (Luoma, 2004).

Richards (2008, p.21) says that "in workshops with teachers and in designing my materials, I exploit an expanded three-part version of Brown and Yule's framework: talk as interaction, talk as a transaction, and talk as a performance. Each of those speech activities is quite distinct in terms of function and requires different teaching approaches". The elaboration of those roles is:

1. Speaking as interaction: to construct a right exchange, students need to have the ability to speak in the first moment. Being unable to utilize the language with full of self-confidence, students avoid like situations that obligate them to use the language to speak which every time start and end rapidly since they feel awkward and lose words (Willis, 2021). Rivers (2018) states that managing the art of speech as interaction is very difficult and not all language students have the capacity to deal with speaking as a priority. Though, students who are in need for communication skills, when they recognize these skills are not sufficient this makes them feel anxious when they try to produce where they become hesitant and loss of the right words in contexts that need them to interact soundly.

2. Speaking as transaction: this kind of speech function emphasizes on what is said and specifically on the message that is forwarded, which may be a priority in its meaning. This type of speech needs a certain level of linguistic accuracy to construct the letter in a meaningful manner; this level is normally held when students form such exchange (King & Ng, 2018). Students use variety of interactive tasks to internalize "talk is associated with other activities. For example, students may be engaged in hands-on activities (e.g., in a science lesson) to explore concepts associated with floating and sinking. In this type of spoken language, students and teachers usually focus on meaning or on talking their way to understanding" (Jones, 2000, p.14). Speech as a daily-life transaction raises a crucial issue connected with the use of different kinds of interactional activities, which is the average of linguistic accuracy that learners obtain when finishing these activities. The main assumption is that the form will be taken care naturally via the learner and by the teacher (Krebt, 2017).

Melrose (2015) argues that grammar basically is the main resource for learners to depend on when they start forming meaning, but yet, the main focus is on accomplishing the task rather than practicing grammar. He also provides two kinds of speaking to discriminate between them which are:

a) situation in which data is forwarded and received (e.g., asking someone for directions). There is no need to focus on accuracy, provided as the information is communicated or understood clearly .

b) Transactions that emphasize products and works such as restaurant meals. Students need to be capable to obtain the social links in transactional and interactional languages as well.

3. Speaking as performance: Richards (2007) states that SP is identified as the public speaker is capable to narrate facts in a classroom presentation, formal reports, and speeches in front of the audience through the use of this type of speaking. Speech as performance be likely to be within the sort of monolog instead of interlocutor basically follows up a recognizable form (e.g., a speech of welcome). In the same way, it is usually valued stable with its strength on the listener, which is unlikely to occur with speaking as an interaction or transaction. according to Jones (2000), Speech as performance has a common building while the language used is an expected one. The language learners need to cover all the needed data (which are the importance of topic as well as textual knowledge) in the text since there isn't sufficient contextual support. And since meaning is really crucial, more priority is specialized to grammar and accuracy.

Richards (2008) determines the main kinds of speech as performance which are:

1. Concentrate on the message and participation
2. Building and ordering scheduled
3. Significance of both accuracy and form
4. Language is like to written one
5. Usually in the shape of monologue

2.1.2 Fundamentals of Speaking Skills

Speaking can be considered the foremost challenging skill that is learned by students to be utilized accurately and fluently, learners want to be careful of and know some basics to improve and promote this skill (Bada et al., 2011). Thordores (2001), suggests four points of the fundamentals of speaking skill.

2.1.2.1 The Connected Speech

To be a fluent speaker of the FL, learners must form not only divided phonemes of speech, but also connect their speech fluently. The speakers of the FL need the ability to construct single phonemes for the FL, as well as improve fluent linked speech. Thus, teacher need to work on developing their connected speech (Crystal, 2011).

2.1.2.2 An Expressive Devise

Beyond producing speaking in certain dialogue with others is the fundamental idea to tell feelings and ideas that mean exactly to convey the meaning that leads the hearer of the discussion to understanding. A communicative device is an adaptation of speech, stress, and volume of words to express feelings. Employing such a device gives learners the ability to shift meaning. Speakers have to be able to regulate at least some of such supra-segmental attributes and strategies in the same way in so far as if they intend to become completely well- communicators (Sebeok, 2001)

2.1.2.3 The Lexis and Grammar

Natural speech is demonstrated by using a wide range of most familiar lexical phrases, especially when performing specific language functions. Teacher should therefore support or offer a different of phrases for various functions, for example, agreement, disagreement, or the expression of surprise, shock, or approval. In different speaking contexts, such as a job interview, teachers can form them, in an ideal manner, with some useful phrases that they can generate at different stages of connection (Römer, 2017).

2.1.2.4 Negotiation of Language

The good language speaker get benefit from the negotiating language students use to search for clarifications and to explain the structure of what they are saying. When pupils hear someone else talking most often need to "seek for clarification". Teachers' role is very important, they can provide the students phrases like the following:(I'm sorry) I didn't quite catch that. (I'm sorry) I don't understand. What exactly does X mean? Could you explain that again, please? (Lzard. 1977, p. 112)

2.1.3 Students' Problems with Speaking Activities

Several problems are discussed below:

1-Native language: This Problems is valid basically for classrooms where the great number of students are speaking the same language. During SP activities, EFL tend to "switch" to their native language because, as they report, they do not of expose sufficiently to a FL. Student immediately when he feels does not have an appropriate word or structure, it is easier for him to carry out his message in his mother tongue. Furthermore, it feels "unnatural" for him to communicate among with his classmates in a FL (Kecskes & Papp, 2000, p. 2).

2-Inhibition: SP activities often stimulate students to express themselves in front of their teacher or classmates. Some learners may think such situation is difficult. They become sensitive about committing mistakes, not getting right expression. Consequently, they feel afraid of humiliation and mocking (Pawlak et al., 2011).

3-No ideas to share: Students claim that they always cannot retrieve or think about the specific meaning on a particular topic. They claim that they do not have the right information of the topic; they are uninterested or have no thought to share with (Helman, 2009).

4-Problems of participation: In SP activities, just one learner may talk at a time and the great number of students in classroom are not interested to speak or to contribute to SP activities. Speaking time to students is very limited. Moreover, some learners tend to dominate the discussion, whereas the rest of students may do not tend to speak, or they speak very little (Keith & Lundberg, 2016).

2.2 Affective Learning Strategies

Affective language learning is defined “as a new paradigm, far beyond language teaching” (Arnold, 2000:p.12). The term affect is mainly connected to emotions, feelings, moods, and attitudes, in a wider range influencing language learning. The affective aspect is not in opposition to the cognitive aspect; therefore, both of them are essential domains of learning (Scovel, 2000). “Emotions are in the very centre of human life and both of them may be the most influential aspect of learning process” (Oatley & Johnson-Laird, 1996, p. 122).

The concept affect is defined as a neurophysiological state consciously accessible as a simple primitive non-reflective feeling most evident in mood and emotion but always available to consciousness (Russell & Barrett, 2009, p. 806). Extremes as feeling good or bad, energized or enervated, pleased, or displeased, tensed or relaxed, energetic or tired. Affect factors impact reflexes, perception, cognition, and behaviour and are influenced by many causes intrinsic and extrinsic, but Individuals have no direct access to these causal connections (Russell, 2003, p. 145).

Oxford (1990) defines the concept of affective by saying affective refers to emotions, attitudes, motivations and values. Accordingly, the affective domain is impossible to describe within definable limits. It spreads out like a fine-spun net, encompassing such concepts as self-esteem, attitudes, motivation, anxiety, culture shock, inhibition, risk taking, and tolerance for ambiguity. There are three main groups of ALSs exist: LAS, ESS and TETS.

2.3. Taxonomy of Affective Learning Strategies

2.3.1 Lowering Anxiety Strategies

Learners often experience anxiety when speaking a new language. To lower anxiety, learners can rely on different procedures such as: progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or meditation, music, laughter. Using progressive relaxation reduces the tension by relaxing the muscles of the body. Deep breathing means making a deep breathing not just from the lungs but also from the diaphragm. It is an effective integrative body–mind exercise for tackling with stress and emotional conditions (Oxford,1990).

2.3.2 Encouraging Self Strategies

These strategies can be defined as the way in which student motivates and encourages themselves to learn. ESS contains variety of sub-strategies such as “positive statements, taking risk wisely, and rewarding yourself”. Making positive statements is used to increase learner’s self-confidence in acquiring a new language. Learner is able to say or write a positive statement to evaluate his performance. The second is “taking risks wisely”. It means learner takes a plausible risk in acquiring FL even they make errors or have troubles by making a positive self-talk. Concerning “rewarding yourself”, it means the reward comes from learner themselves. For example, learner can reward themselves for good work by watching a favourite TV program (Oxford, 1990, pp. 156-167).

2.3.3 Taking Emotional Temperature Strategies

These strategies mean student's self-assessment of their feelings, motivations, and attitudes in learning FL. TETS are a set of strategies like listening to your body, utilizing a checklist, writing a language learning diary, and discussing your feelings with someone else. Listening to your body means “paying attention to the signals of the body”. Both positive and negative feelings make different effects for the body. The positive sensations are happiness, interest, calmness, and pleasure whereas the negative sensations are tension, worry, fear, and anger (Oxford, 1990).

III. Methodology

3.1 Population and Sampling

The whole population of the present study includes (360) Iraqi EFL preparatory school students in Baghdad government. The sample consists of (360) students who have been randomly selected from the population of this study and distributed. During the academic year 2021/2022.

3.2 Instruments

The following instruments have been used in order to collect the required data:

- 1- Affective Learning Strategies Questionnaire (LSQ);
- 2- Test Constructed by the Researcher Himself.

In order to obtain the required data, the researcher developed a questionnaire according to (Oxford 1990; Villardón-Gallego et al., 2013 & Al-Bahadli, 2020) The questionnaire comprises three sub-domains, (55) items are distributed into:

1. **Lowering anxiety strategies:** these strategies are related to students’ internal psychology and their fear specifically when they try to speak FL. In order to reduce their anxiety, students can use “progressive relaxation, deep breathing or mediation “. These strategies consist of (13) items.

2. **Encouraging self strategies:** these strategies are related to how students motivate and encourage themselves; students can use variety of strategies like making positive statements, taking risk wisely, and rewarding yourself. These strategies consist (15) items.

Taking emotional temperature strategies: these strategies are related to students' self-assessment of their feelings, motivations, and attitudes in learning FL. It consists (27) .

To find out students' SP, the speaking interview has been constructed by the researcher and applied for the sample after applying the first instrument, pictures of variety of cartoon characters have been used which the students seem to have a previous knowledge and familiar with.

3.3. Reliability

A group of (40) (not included in the main sample) are randomly selected from Iraqi EFL preparatory schools in Baghdad government is used to conduct the pilot administration of the instruments. The pilot administration is carried out in order to achieve the following goals:

- 1.Examine the clarity of the items on the scale and the questionnaire.
- 2.Check the time participants take to respond.
- 3.Determine the reliability of the scale and the questionnaire

The reliability of the LSQ is proven by re-administrating them on the pilot sample two weeks after the first administration. Then the Pearson correlation coefficients of the first and second scores are calculated, and the correlation coefficients are shown in Table 1

Table 1

Reliability Coefficients of Affective Learning Strategies Questionnaire Using Pearson correlation coefficient

Affective Learning Strategies Questionnaire	Reliability Coefficient
Lowering Anxiety Strategies	0.84
Encouraging Self Strategies	0.86
Taking Emotional Temperature Strategies	0.87

Concerning SP test, the equation (Kuder Richardson 20) is used to extract the reliability. The reliability coefficient of the test is (0.82) which is considered as a good and adequate result.

IV. Results

4.1 Results Related to the First Aim

To achieve the first aim of this study, the two instruments (ALSsQ, and SPT) are applied to the sample of study. Then each variable score is assigned an arithmetic mean and standard deviation, and a t-test for one sample is employed to assess the significance of the difference between the arithmetic and theoretical means for each instrument. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Arithmetic Mean, Standard Deviation, and T- Test Values of Affective Learning Strategies and Speaking Performance

Affective learning strategies	Sample	Correlation coefficient	T – test value		Significance
			Calculated	Critical	
Lowering Anxiety	٣٦٠	٣١,٣١٤	٧,٢١٧	٢٦	١٣,٩٧١
Encouraging self	٣٦٠	٣٧,٩٦١	٨,٠٣٥	٣٠	١٨,٧٩٩
Taking Emotional Temperature	٣٦٠	٧١,٣٣٦	١٤,٠٩٨	٥٤	٢٣,٣٣١

The results indicate that the sample arithmetic mean of LASs score is ٣١.314 with standard deviations score is 7.217 and theoretical means score is 26. The computed t-values score is ١٣.٩٧١, all of which are greater than the critical - value 1.96. It is found out that there is a statistically significant difference at 0.05 level of significance with a degree of freedom 359. It indicates that Iraqi EFL preparatory students use LAS. Concerning the arithmetic mean of ESS score is 37.961 with standard deviation score is 8.035 and theoretical mean score is 30 . The computed t-values score is 18.799, all of which are

greater than the critical value 1.96. It indicates that there is statistical significant difference at 0.05 with a degree of freedom 359. It indicates that EFL preparatory students use ESS. According to the arithmetic mean of TETS score is 71.336 with standard deviation mean score is 14.98 and theoretical mean score is 54. The computed t-value score is 23.331, all of which are greater than the critical value 1.96. It is found that there is statistical significant difference at 0.05 with a degree of freedom 359. It indicates that Iraqi EFL preparatory students use TETS.

Table 3

Arithmetic Mean, Standard Deviation and T-Value of Speaking Performance Test.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Theoretical Mean	Freedom Degree	t-test		Sign. (0.05)
						Comp.	Crit.	
Speaking Performance	360	15.192	5.532	15	359	0.657	1.96	Insig.

The result indicates that the arithmetic mean score is (15.192) and the standard deviation is (5.532). In order to find out the significance of the difference between the arithmetic mean and the theoretical one which reaches (15) degree, t-test for one independent sample is used. It is found out that there is a statistically significant difference at (0.05) level of significance. The calculated t-value (0.657) is found to be higher than the critical T-value of (1.96), and with a degree of freedom (359) and this indicates that Iraqi EFL preparatory school students have a mid-level of SP according to the rubric scoring of Brown (2001).

4.2 Results Related to the Second Aim

To achieve the second aim. Students' responses to the ALSsQ and SPT test are analyzed using Pearson's coefficient, and the findings are as shown in Table 4

Table 4

The Correlation Between Affective Learning Strategies and Speaking Performance

Affective learning strategies	Sample	Correlation coefficient	T – test value		Significance
			Calculated	Critical	
Lowering Anxiety	٣٦٠	٠,٣٤٤	٦,٨٨٠	١,٩٦	Sign.
Encouraging self	٣٦٠	٠,٣٠٦	٦,١٢٠	١,٩٦	Sign.
Taking Emotional Temperature	٣٦٠	٠,٣٥٨	٧,٣٠٦	١,٩٦	Sign.

1. The value of the correlation coefficient between the LAS and SP are found at range (0.344) . In order to determine the significance of the correlation, test is used and the computed t- test value is found at range (6.880) all of which are greater than the critical - value (1.96) at the level of significance (0.05) and the degree of freedom (358). and this means that the relationship between LAS and SP is a statistically significant inverse relationship, meaning that whenever students have LAS the better speakers they will be .

2. The value of the correlation coefficient between the ESS and SP are found at range (0.306) . In order to determine the significance of the correlation, test is used and the computed t- test value is found at range (6.120) all of which are greater than the critical - value (1.96) at the level of significance (0.05) and the degree of freedom (358). and this means that the relationship between ESS and SP is a statistically significant inverse relationship, meaning that whenever students have ESS the better speakers they will be.

3. The value of the correlation coefficient between the TETS and SP are found at range (0.358) . In order to determine the significance of the correlation, test is used and the computed t- test value is found at range (7.306) all of which are greater than the critical - value (1.96) at the level of significance (0.05) and the degree of freedom (358). and this means that the relationship between TETS and SP is a statistically significant inverse relationship, meaning that whenever students have TETS the better speakers they will be.

Accordingly, the question, which is about whether there is a correlation between Iraqi EFL preparatory school students' affective learning strategies and their speaking test , is answered.

V. Discussion of Results

This study indicates that Iraqi EFL preparatory school students have a moderate level of SP. Concerning ALSs, they develop these strategies in all three of their categories (Lowering Anxiety Strategies, Encouraging Self Strategies and Taking Emotional Temperature Strategies). In addition, Furthermore. The findings also indicate that participants' ALSs are statistically correlated with their SP.

VI. Conclusions

The following can be concluded from the current study:

- 1- Iraqi EFL preparatory school students have a moderate level of Speaking Performance.
- 2- Iraqi EFL preparatory school students develop LASs, ESSs, and - TETSs at the same different levels.
- 3- Iraqi EFL preparatory school students' ALSs are statistically correlated with SP.

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المخلص:

يعد التحدث من أهم المهارات اللغوية الأربع لأنه المهارة التي يحتاجها كل طالب للتواصل مع المعلم والطلاب الآخرين في الفصل بغرض مشاركة الأفكار والمشاعر .من ناحية أخرى، ترتبط قدرة الطلاب على تعلم الكلام بشكل أساسي بمعتقداتهم في . وإمكاناتهم الداخلية حيث إنها تحدد ما إذا كانوا يشعرون بالفعالية أم لا الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو جانبين: أولاً ، معرفة استراتيجيات التعلم الوجداني وإداء التحدث لدى طلبة المدارس الإعدادية العراقيين دارسي اللغة الانكليزية لغة أجنبية ، وثانياً ، تحديد العلاقة بين استراتيجيات التعلم الوجداني و أداء التحق لدى طلبة المدارس العراقيين دارسي اللغة الانكليزية لغة أجنبية ، وأخيراً، تحديد الاستراتيجيات السائدة لطلبة لأعدادية العراقيين دارسي اللغة الانكليزية لغة أجنبية بين استراتيجيات الاصغاء . وبناءً على ذلك تم اختيار عينة من (٣٦٠) طالب وطالبة بشكل عشوائي من كلية المدارس لاعدادية في مدينة بغداد في العام الدراسي ٢٠٢١/٢٠٢٢ . حيث تم استخدام اداتين لتحقيق أهداف هذه الدراسة: استبيان استراتيجيات التعلم الوجداني وختبار أداء حيث قام البحث ببناء اختبار بنفسه . تكشف النتائج أن الطلبة لديهم مستوى متوسط من أداء التحدث. فيما يتعلق باستراتيجيات التعلم الوجداني ، فإنهم يستخدمون هذه الاستراتيجيات على مستويات . من ناحية أخرى. تشير النتائج أيضاً إلى أن استراتيجيات التعلم الوجداني للطلبة مرتبطة إحصائياً بأداء التحدث لديهم..

الكلمات المفتاحية: استراتيجيات الاصغاء ، كفاءة الاصغاء ، اختبار توفل.