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INSTRUCTIONAL BARRIERS CONTRIBUTING TO STUDENTS' POOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE SPEAKING DURING THEIR SENIOR-ESSAY, PRACTICUM, AND TERM-PAPER PRESENTATIONS

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Abstract

This study assessed instructional barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking during their senior essay, practicum, and term-paper presentations at the College of Education and Behavioural Sciences, Haramaya University, Eastern Ethiopia. A descriptive survey research design was employed through stratified random sampling to collect pertinent information from the participants(n=210) by questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed by both descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings reveal that the four major (about 73%) identified instructional barriers that negatively contributed to students' poor English language speaking during their senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations were poor exposure to speaking, fear of feedback, poor subject matter knowledge, and poor motivation whereas anxiety, lack of enough vocabulary, lack of confidence, and poor listening ability were the four least (about 27%) identified instructional barriers. There was no statistically significant mean difference among the five departments and between genders. Finally, instructional barriers explained 69.05% of students' poor English language speaking. To conclude, students' poor exposure to speaking, fear of feedback, poor subject matter knowledge, and poor motivation to speak were found to be the major identified instructional barriers that negatively contributed to students' poor English language speaking during their senior essays, practicum, and term-paper presentations.

Keywords: English language, Instructional-barriers, Presentations, Senior-essay, Speaking-skills

1. Introduction

Apart from having good materials and using good and effective methods for successful language instruction, some factors negatively contributed to teaching and learning a language (Gardner & Lambert, 2016). Different researchers focus on different factors. Some of them focused on the factors affecting the students; some of them focused on the factors affecting the learning process, and a few focused on the barriers that have negatively been contributing to the instructors. It means the barriers contributing to language teaching and learning affect all people in one way or another. In addition, it is wrong to say that the factors affecting learning may be related only to the students, or it is related only to the teachers. This is inappropriate because teaching and learning are not a separable phenomenon (Hawley, 2018). So many barriers can negatively contribute to poor students' English language speaking skills in different courses where the medium of instruction is the English language. It means we should not pay attention just to one group of barriers, instead, we must take some barriers seriously, and we should observe the interaction of these barriers too (Hawley, 2018). Furthermore, it should be clear that some barriers are negatively contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills in teaching and learning and we should take it seriously. To summarize, the outcome of this study is to facilitate and improve students' poor English language speaking skills in learning and teaching different courses that have been given in the English language in general and research, practicum, and senior essay courses in particular.

It was undeniable that teaching and learning are the two influential elements that are both related to human beings. According to Farhady & Delshad (2011), both of them are intellectual creatures and they are the gifts with the most powerful instruments in the world, i.e. the brain and the mind. Both the students and instructors use their brains and minds to achieve their goals. Students learn the language through methods and material. On the other hand, both of these creatures are so complex, because when they face a problem, they do not respond in the same way. Therefore, for a successful language teaching barriers contributing to the teaching and learning are necessary. Abdelhak & Ladi (1995) believe that "The cognitive and affective dimensions may cause teachers to be less successful in teaching English as a second language. This is the tree that hides the forest" (p. 3). It means in most EFL contexts the

problem belongs to the lack of all the conditions that would contribute to successful language teaching and learning (Sayedi, 2020).

The researcher of this paper observed that the teaching and learning of the English Language declined because of unpredictable barriers. Exploring these unpredictable barriers which is shown to the falling standards of English language teaching and learning in tertiary education is found to be important. It is needed to examine the environment in which the English language is conducted. According to Brown (2005), some surveys show that motivation, attitude, language learning strategies, personality types, personality barriers, instructional media, and instructional barriers have either a negative or a positive impact on learners' English language speaking skills (Sayedi, 2020). The researcher believes that other barriers like students' background knowledge is some important cognitive barriers can make learning easy. The cognitive theory of learning must be meaningful for learners. Affective variables are belonging to the learners' behavior and attitudes. One of the important and effective factors is self-concept. Fortunately, the students who have positive self-concepts may have the risk of initiating a conversation without much concern for the errors during the conversation. Learners who have a high self-concept will not be scared of the instructional environment. They will pay attention to the grammatical and communication errors completely natural for non-native speakers of English. Self-concept also affects learners' approach to solving important problems. For example, the students who are interns try to blame for their failure on themselves. However, the students who are externals try to blame outside factors for their failure. When speakers produce words and sounds, they publicize information, feelings, and opinions. Some believe that speaking is the best skill to measure students' language learning. Technology challenges today's classrooms by supplementing the chalkboard and other audio-visual media (Bowers, 2008) to offer a better educational environment. Such technologies including various mobile computing devices and interactive presentation tools are considered as an opportunity for learners to foster and build upon students' intuitive exploration. Most people who learn the English Language have in their minds that they like to master the goal of developing proficiency in speaking skills though it is a difficult task. In supporting this idea, Celce-Murcia and Olshtain(2000) pointed out that in some ways speaking can be considered the most difficult skill to acquire as it requires command of speech production sub-skills like vocabulary retrieval, choice of grammatical patterns, and sociocultural competence.

Wongsuwana (2006) believed that speaking skills can be trained and it does not depend on the talent. The linguists and experts in languages wrote many articles and books about the difficulties of learning foreign languages in general and speaking skills in particular. In Ethiopia, the students started learning English language skills from preprimary schools, primary schools Cycle I (grades 1-4) and Cycle II (grades 5-8) as one subject whereas starting from general secondary schools (grades 9 -10), preparatory schools (grade 11-12) to university level, the medium of instruction has been English language. However, the levels of our students at all levels have been very weak in all aspects of English language skills in and outside of the classroom. From the researcher's experience as a teacher of the English Language for eight years and eleven years in teaching research courses under the Ministry of Education in Ethiopia, he noticed that the students, in general, do not have the desire to study English Language in general and English speaking skills in particular. Of the increased need to use the English Language in different areas of academic life, it becomes necessary for every person to be able to communicate with other persons outside his country using (EL) since people have been living in a world of globalization. Through the researcher's teaching experience under the Ethiopian Ministry of Education for the last 22 consecutive years in different universities, he noticed that students suffer much from using English Language fluently and accurately in presenting research papers and term papers, which indicated that there are problems that hinder them from mastering English Language skills in general and speaking skill in particular. Therefore, this study was mainly focused on assessing instructional barriers contributing to students' poor English Language speaking skills in research courses.

1.1. Purpose of the study

The overall purpose of this study was to assess instructional barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills in senior essay presentations, open defenses, and advisory activities at the College of Education and Behavioural Sciences (CEBS), Haramaya, University (HU), Eastern Ethiopia. Specifically, the purpose of this study was to

- Identify the level of agreement and disagreement among the participants on instructional barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills in senior essay presentations, open defenses, and advisory activities in research courses
- Compare if there is statistically a significant mean difference among the five departments in the college on instructional barriers contributing to their poor English language speaking skills
- Compare if there is statistically a significant mean difference between female and male participants on instructional barriers contributing to their poor English language speaking skills
- Compare if there are statistically significant mean differences among the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of participants on instructional barriers contributing to their poor English language speaking skills
- Find out how much instructional barriers are contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills in senior essay presentations, open defenses, and advisory activities in research courses as explained variables.

2. Methods

A descriptive survey research design was employed to carry out the study at the College of Education and Behavioural Sciences, Haramaya University, Eastern Ethiopia. Two hundred and sixteen undergraduate third-year students in the college were invited to participate in the study by using stratified random sampling techniques. The sample size was determined by using Taro's (1967) formula which can be written where n_i is the total sample to be taken, N_i is the total population, α is significant level = 0.05 and i is departments (1,2,3,4 and 5).

Accordingly, $n_i = \frac{470}{1+470(0.05^2)} = \frac{470}{1+470(0.0025)} = \frac{470}{1+1.175} = \frac{470}{2.175} = 216$ out of which 210 participants filed and returned the questionnaire fully. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Participation in the study was voluntary. For the present study Instructional Factor Questionnaire (IFQ) was used to determine the contributing factors to students' poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay presentations, open defenses, and advisory activities. It is a valid and reliable instrument that consists of 8 items representing instructional barriers: picture describing & interviews, brainstorming, information gap, stimulation, and discussion. Participants were asked to rate each source by choosing from five responses, "Strongly disagree, "Disagree'', "Undecided, "Agree'' and "Strongly agree''. The scoring method assigns marks from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to each of the responses respectively.

Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean scores, percentages, standard deviations, and coefficient of variations to make a summary of the findings. Moreover, inferential statistics (Independent t-test, one-way ANOVA, and factor analysis) were made to compare the difference between two groups (male and female), mean differences among groups (five departments and five different CGPA), and variables explained in the study respectively. The instructional barriers questionnaire was transformed, computed, and summed. The pilot test (reliability and validity) was made independently. A reliability test was made through Cronbach coefficient alpha to assess the internal consistency of the instrument by using SPSS version -20. Thus, the computed alpha value was 0.813 which was excellent so it was a very high reliability of the internal consistency of the items.

Table 1. Reliability test

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No of Items
0.813	0.813	8

On the other hand, the validity of the instruments (content validity) was made by well-experienced professionals in the area (psychologists and educational specialists) who tested it and commented on some linguistic areas (too long sentences and phrases) so that the researcher improved as per the comment given by these professionals. After all these amendments were made, the items were distributed to the participants for responses by the researcher himself.

3. Results

This section of the paper mainly dealt with the quantitative data analysis of the study. Out of 470 undergraduate students in the College of Education and Behavioural Sciences, 216 students participated

and 210 of them completed the questionnaire giving a response rate of 97.22%, which can be said a very excellent response. Out of the 210 participants, 135 (64.29%) of them were males whereas 75 (35.71%) of them were females. The overall mean age was 23.55 years (95% Confidence interval, 23. 63 - 23.74 years). The mean age for the males (24.68 years) was higher as compared to the females (23.48 years). To interpret the Likert scales more easily, the computed mean scores have been interpreted as follows. If the computed mean score (M) = 1.00-1.50 = strongly disagrees; if M = 1.50-2.50, it disagrees; if M = 2.50-3.50, it is undecided; if M = 3.50-4.50, it is agreed; and if M = 4.50-5.00, it strongly agreed (Bluman, 2017). The level of significance (α) is .05.

Table 2. Instructional barriers (students' perspectives)

No	Barriers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.	Exposure to speaking	52	24.76	24.76
2.	Fear of feedback during speaking	40	19.05	43.81
3.	Subject matter knowledge	34	16.19	60.00
4.	Motivation to speak	28	13.33	73.33
5.	Anxiety	18	8.57	81.90
6.	Lack of enough vocabulary	14	6.67	88.57
7.	Lack of confidence	13	6.19	94.76
8.	Listening ability	11	5.24	100.00
	Total	210	100.00	

As indicated in Table 2, students were asked to prioritize the eight barriers indicated in Table 2 from the most important to the least important instructional barriers to their poor English language speaking in real practice of speaking during their senior essays, practicum, and term papers presentation in the classroom. Accordingly, Exposure to speaking, Fear of feedback during speaking, subject matter knowledge, and motivation to speak, 154 (73.33%) were the four major identified instructional barriers that negatively and cumulatively contributed to students' poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations. In contrast, Anxiety, lack of enough vocabulary, lack of confidence to speak, and listening ability 56(26.67%) were the four least identified instructional barriers that negatively and cumulatively contributed to students' poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics analysis on instructional barriers

No	Items	Mean	SD	CV%
1	My instructor tolerates my errors during my senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations.	2.45	.96	39.18
2	My instructor applies pairs and groups for me in speaking during my senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations.	2.80	1.25	44.64
3	My instructor varies his methods in English speaking skills during my senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations.	3.07	1.39	45.28
4	My instructor understands my language skills well during my senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations.	3.72	1.45	38.98
5	My instructor's speech is appropriate to the level of my understanding during my senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations	3.79	.84	22.16
6	My instructor understands my language skills well during my senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations.	3.96	.65	16.41
7	My instructor listens carefully to my speech to understand my errors during my senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations	3.99	1.49	37.34
8	My instructor used his native language during his speech with me during my senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations	4.06	1.26	31.03

As indicated in Table 3, the mean score ($M_1 = 2.45$) of item one of the participants identified that they disagreed with the idea that "their instructor tolerates their errors during their senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations". On the other hand, the mean scores ($M_2 = 2.80$ and $M_3 = 3.07$) of the participants respectively undecided upon the ideas of items (2 and 3) as instructional barriers contributing to their poor English language speaking during their senior essay, practicum, and term

paper presentations. However, the mean scores (M_4 = 3.73, M_5 = 3.79, M_6 = 3.96, M_7 = 3.99, and M_8 = 4.06) of the participants agreed upon the issues of items (4, 5, 6, 7, and 8) as instructional barriers contributed to students' poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations. This is mainly because the English language has been the medium of instruction in which students need to have good knowledge and skills. Moreover, the coefficient of variation (45.28% of item 3 was the highest variability among the participants on one of the instructional barriers listed in Table 3 whereas the coefficient of variation (16.41% of item 6) was relatively consistent variability among the participants. To summarize, there was a clear variability among the participants on the instructional barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations in the college under the study.

Table 4. ANOVA between instructional barriers among departments

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8.53	4	2.13	.12	.98
Within Groups	3598.64	205	17.55		
Total	3607.17	209			

As shown in Table 4, there was no statistically significant mean difference among the five departments (Adult Education & Community Development, Educational Planning & Management, Postgraduate Diploma in Secondary School Teaching, Psychology, Special Needs & Inclusive Education) on instruction factors contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills in their senior presentations, open defenses, and advisory activities in the research course, $F(4, 205) = .12$, $p > .05$, one-tailed. This indicated that there were no differences among these students in the five departments on the instructional barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills during senior essay presentations, open defense, and advisory activities in the college under the study.

Table 5. Independent samples t-test on instructional barriers between sexes

Instructional Domain	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.	MD	SEd	95% CID	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	14.15	.00	.68	208	.50	.40	0.60	-.78	1.59

The Levene's Test for Equality of Variances assumption identified in Table 5 that there was no statistically significant mean difference between female and male students on instructional barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations, $t(208) = .68$, $p > .05$, two-tailed. This indicated that the participants (female and males) in this study had similar problems and difficulties with instructional barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking during their senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations.

Table 6. Descriptive analysis between CGPA and instructional barriers

No	CGPA	Mean	Std	Coefficient of Variation (%)
1	Below 2.00	3.56	.68	19.13
2	2.00-2.50	3.46	.97	28.05
3	2.50-3.00	3.41	.97	28.53
4	3.00-3.50	3.60	.41	11.26
5	3.50-4.00	3.48	.58	16.63
	Total	3.48	.83	23.88

As Table 6 reveals, the mean scores (M_2 = 3.46, M_3 = 3.41, and M_5 = 3.48) of the participants clarified that they are undecided about the instructional barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking during their senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations. From this data, it was understood that students who scored CGPA between 2.00-2.50, 2.50-3.00, and 3.50-4.00 were undecided upon the instructional barriers listed in Table 3. However, the mean scores (M_1 = 3.56 and

M_4 = 3.60) of the participants agreed that those instructional barriers contributed to students' poor English language speaking skills. From this data, it was understood that students who scored CGPA below 2.00 and 3.00-3.50 agreed upon those instructional barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations. To summarize, the combined mean score (M_c = 3.48) stipulated that the participants are undecided about those instructional barriers contributing to students' English language speaking skills during their senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations.

Moreover, the coefficients of variation (CV_3 = 28.53%) of the participants had the highest variability among the participants who scored 2.50 – 3.00 on those instructional barriers. However, the coefficients of variation (CV_5 =16.63%) of the participants were the most consistent among the participants who scored below 3.50- 4.00 on those lists of instructional barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking during their senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations. To sum up, the combined coefficient of variation (CVc = 23.88%) of the participants indicated a medium variability among them on those lists of instructional barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations regardless of their cumulative grade point average.

Table 7. ANOVA among participants' CGPA and instructional barriers

Sources of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	40.94	4	10.24	.59	.67
Within Groups	3566.22	205	17.40		
Total	3607.17	209			

Table 7 shows that there was no statistically significant mean difference among the participants on those lists of instructional barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations, F (4, 205) = .59, p > .05, one-tailed. This identified that there were similar problems and difficulties among the participants' CGPA and those lists of instructional barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations in the college under the study.

Table 8. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.64
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1301.76
	df	28
	Sig.	.000

Table 8 indicates that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) reported a value of .64 which was fair to apply factor analysis as the KMO greater than 50. Any value greater than .50 KMO measures of sampling adequacy is considered to be an indication that the data are suitable for factor analysis (Everitt and Hothorn, 2011). The next test result is for Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, which reported a chi-square test of 1301.76 at the degree of freedom (df = 28) and a significance level of .00. This is also a positive result, and the researcher felt more confident that his final factor analysis was going to yield useful information about the factor analysis.

Table 9. Rotated component matrix

		Component	
		1	2
8	The teacher used his native language during his speech with me during my senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations.	**-.859**	.326
2	The teacher applies pairs and groups for me in speaking during my senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations.	**.830**	.207
7	The teacher listens carefully to my speech to understand my errors during my senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations.	**-.787**	.249
6	The teacher understands my language skills well during my senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations.	**.726**	.082

1	The teacher tolerates my errors during my senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations.	**.714**	.442
3	The teacher varies his methods in teaching English speaking skills during my senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations.	.299	**.871**
5	The teacher's speech is appropriate to the level of my understanding during my senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations	.011	**.852**
4	The teacher understands my language skills during my senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations.	-.243	**.629**
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.			
a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.			

Table 9 indicates that the two rotated components are just good components in explaining and reproducing the observed correlation matrix. The rotated component 1 contains five items (8, 2, 7, 6, and 1) all of which have high to very high both positive (items, 1,2, and 6) and negative (items 8 and 7) loadings on the first component, (and low positive loadings on the second components) whereas component-2 contains three items (3, 5, and 4) in which all of them have medium to very high positive loadings on the second components, (and low positive and negative loadings on the first components).

Table 10. Component transformation matrix

Component	1	2
1 Setting personal routine that students can control	.982	.190
2. Methods of teaching	-.190	.982

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Here, the researcher has named the 8 items into two components as per the rotated component matrix loadings of Table 8. Component-1 includes five items (8, 2, 7, 6, and 1) named "Setting personal routine that students can control" and Component-2 includes three Items (3, 5, and 4) named "Methods of teaching".

Table 11. Total variance explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.27	40.85	40.85	3.27	40.85	40.85	3.23	40.39	40.39
2	2.26	28.20	69.05	2.26	28.20	69.05	2.29	28.66	69.05
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.									

As it was seen from Table 10, the researcher saw the eigenvalues for the 8 components out of which only the two most important components were extracted. Look at the column called Initial Eigenvalues, and notice the value of 3.27 for Component 1. These eigenvalues (3.27) are equivalent to 40.85% of the total variance when all 8 components are considered. The second row shows the eigenvalues of 2.26 for Component 2, which means that it accounted for 28.20% of the total variance for all 8 components. These percentages were not related to the variance of the first component and the second extracted factors together; therefore, cumulatively, these two components accounted for 69.05% of the variance for all 8 components whereas 30.95%of the variances were not explained.

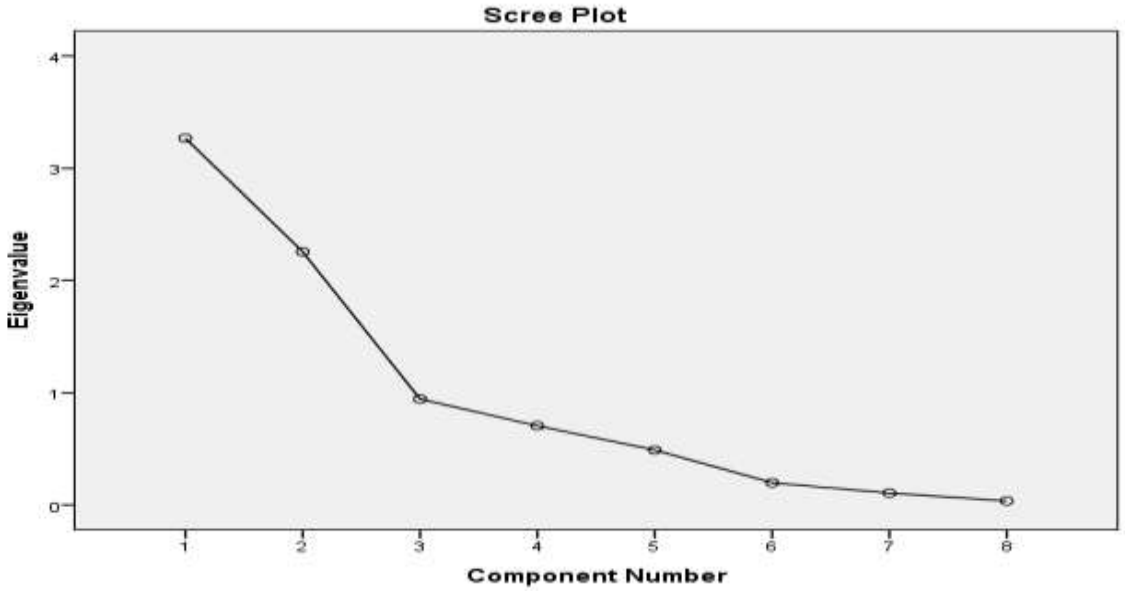


Figure1. screen plot

The scree plot is shown in Figure 1, which graphs the eigenvalues on the y-axis and the eight component numbers on the x-axis. It has been believed that the scree plot is a widely accepted aid in selecting the appropriate number of components when interpreting factor analysis. The researcher simply selected those components above the "elbow" portion this case, components 1 and component 2.

4. Discussion

The present study was aimed at investigating the Instructional Barriers Contributing to Students' Poor English Language Speaking Skills at the College of Education and Behavioural Sciences, Haramaya University, Eastern Ethiopia. The results highlighted that about 73% of instructional barriers (poor exposure to speaking, fear of feedback during and after speaking, poor subject matter knowledge, and poor motivation to speak) were identified as the four major contributing factors to students' poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations whereas about 27% of them (anxiety, lack of enough vocabulary, lack of confidence to speak, and poor listening ability) were also identified as the four least contributed factors to students' poor English language speaking skills. A similar study conducted by Desalegn (2020) at Assossa University, Ethiopia, confirmed a similar finding to this study. Moreover, Tamador & Snoubar (2017) found that speaking skills were given the least attention next to listening skills in EFL classes in Jordan. This happened due to the following two reasons. The first reason is that teachers' perception of teaching speaking skills can be covered within the teaching of either listening or reading skills. This idea is against the ideas of Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011), Bozorgian (2012), and Celik & Yavuz (2015). The second reason was to emphasize the procedures required to teach and test both speaking and listening skills. Moreover, Tuan & Mai (2015) stated that learners' oral performance is affected by listening skills. From this, it was understood that listening, which is considered as the mother of the speaking is not given due emphasis in the classroom to enable the learners to develop their communicative ability. As Urrutia & Vega (2010) stated students speaking proficiency is affected by their insufficient vocabulary. Therefore, vocabulary was also one factor that hindered them not to easily understanding someone's message. This result confirms the idea of Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope (1986), that adult language learners prevalently feel anxious during their learning experience, and it often makes foreign language learning a very inconvenient experience for them. In addition, difficulty in speaking in EFL classes is probably the most frequently cited concern of anxious EFL students seeking help from either their peers or teachers. The learners' attitude in improving the foreign language is undeniable (Brown, 2000). Furthermore, Gardner (2006) also stated that learners with high levels of motivation can do better than those who have less motivation. He also said "If one is motivated, he/she has reasons (motives) for engaging in the relevant activities, expends effort, persists in the activities, attends to the tasks, shows desire to achieve the goal, enjoys the activities, etc." (pp.124).

The second prominent finding of this study was that there was a clear variability among the participants on the instructional barriers contributing to their poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations in the college under the study. According to Jehan (2014), informal talk between two or more people is the most common type of spoken discourse either similarly or differently because of different levels of understanding and communication in the foreign language. It is a complex activity, even in the first language. Both the speaker and the listener cause and face difficulties. Some may not remember the exact or appropriate words or expressions to say. She further states that discussions that have been made among the groups aimed to engage everybody in the communication process in which teachers stimulate critical thinking, establish a rapport with their students, demonstrate appreciation and contributions with challenging deep thinking, provide a means of measuring learning and exploring in depth the key concepts of the course through questioning. It is transmitting, communicating, and sharing information in organized activities in pairs, small or large groups. Activities include instructions (giving directions), descriptions, comparisons, and narrations (Oxford University Press, 1987).

On the other hand, information gap activities can solve a problem, collect information, and give a chance to everybody to talk. Directions, describing, and talking about happy families are excellent topics for information gap activities (Barton, 2006; Qiao, 2024).) even if it is not so easy to implement this technique in senior essays, practicum, and term paper presentations. Other researchers, Chaudhry, Muhammad, and Malik (2012) concluded that classrooms should be more interactive; they need to be equipped with modern teaching resources; students' English language proficiency is poor when they join the university; students have to pass an English language proficiency test to qualify for the next academic year; finally, the department should start remedial courses for the weaker students. The ideas are very convincing; however, there were no such kind of support and principles in Ethiopian Universities in general and the study area in particular. Qashoa (2006) revealed that second and foreign language learners should be offered the opportunity to be motivated and fulfill their learning orientations. He also revealed that students have a higher degree of instrumentality than integrativeness. Contrary to the findings of other related studies, difficulties with the subject (English) aspects such as vocabulary, structures, and spelling were found to be in the first place in terms of demotivating factors.

The third finding of this study was that there was no statistically significant mean difference among the five departments on those lists of instructional barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills during their senior essays, practicum, and term paper presentations. This indicated that there were no differences among these students in the five departments on the instructional barriers. According to Alasmari's (2015) investigation, the barriers that hinder the oral proficiency skills of college students were the attitudes of students towards the English language, frequent use of students' mother tongue not only outside the campus but also inside the classroom with their peers and teachers, their inability to command proper pronunciation, appropriate grammatical structures, necessary vocabulary items, their hesitance to use the target language in front of their class fellows because of their fear of making mistakes. Moreover, it was identified that there was no statistically significant mean difference between female and male students on those lists of instructional barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay, practicum, and term paper presentations. This indicated that both female and male students had similar problems and difficulties with instructional barriers. Prior research by Larisa and Fumitaka (2007) suggested that everyone can learn to speak a foreign language and that it is easier for students to learn a new language. However, the female students tended to give a slightly higher support than their male classmates. Interestingly, both of them had an almost similar opinion regarding Instructional barriers that women are better language learners than men. The previous research by Ali & Yesilyurt (2013) showed that the subjects, whether they were intrinsically or extrinsically motivated to speak English, had negative ideas about speaking instruction in Turkey, though they all agreed that it was the most important language skill. The findings also showed that they felt incompetent in oral communication though they had different motivational orientations about speaking English. They added in say that students' ideas about the importance of speaking skills among the four language skills are diverse; this diversity is associated with the students' motivational orientations and students' feeling competent or incompetent in speaking. They concluded that students' self-assessment of their speaking ability was generally negative and they expressed themselves as incompetent speakers.

Other researchers, Eissa, Misbah, and Najat (1988) in their study Problems of Using English as a Medium of Instruction and Communication at the College of Science, Kuwait University concluded that students had several problems in using the English language as the medium of instruction. The majority of the college members (64%) admitted that their students' English language proficiency was very low which hindered their studies in their respective subjects. The students' difficulty in comprehending their English-medium textbooks was reported by (48%) of college members whereas (54%) of them stated that the students faced severe problems in comprehending the content-subject lectures delivered in English without translation or using their first language to deliver the lecture content. The findings suggested that the students suffered from English language deficiency due to weak backgrounds. Other previous studies by Choudhary, Javid, Turki, Al-Thubaiti & Awwadh Uthman (2012) and Qiao (2024). concluded that it seems necessary to teach language learning strategies explicitly so that even the weaker students should be able to enhance English language proficiency by exploiting a wide range of suitable strategies that are appropriate to different classroom activities and learners' second language experience. Ali & Yesilyurt (2013) showed that the subjects, whether they were intrinsically or extrinsically motivated to speak English, had negative ideas about speaking instruction in Turkey, though they all agreed that it was the most important language skill. The findings also showed that they felt incompetent in oral communication though they had different motivational orientations about speaking English. They added in say that students' ideas about the importance of speaking skills among the four language skills are diverse; this diversity is associated with the students' motivational orientations and students' feeling competent or incompetent in speaking. They concluded that students' self-assessment of their speaking ability was generally negative and they expressed themselves as incompetent speakers.

Finally, Win Listyaningrum (2017); and Qiao (2024) suggested that routines that provide familiarity, regularity, boundaries, and frameworks gradually boost feelings of being able to cope through repetition and presentation practices that students must keep in mind. The more something is established, repeated, and becomes familiar exposure, the more it loses its mystery, the more it is learned and the more it can be controlled. For example, setting times to do their homework, ways to organize their work, and not using work times for leisure are easy routines they can follow. By setting clear routines for students, they are given a sense of security, a sense of purpose and security, and a base from which to gradually build their confidence. On the other hand, Mekonge (2017), and Liu &Yin, (2021) stated that teachers need to use teaching methods that enhance the acquisition of speaking proficiency in English like group or pair discussions and debates. Dialogue was also employed though students disliked the method and on many occasions, it was teacher-initiated. The lecture method was also used to enable the teacher to cover enough content on time as prescribed in the English syllabus. It was also used in situations where students failed to participate in the teaching and learning process due to a lack of interest. Role play was not used completely by any teacher as the 40 minutes allocated for English lessons were insufficient for teachers to give students opportunities to participate in real speaking activities.

5. Conclusions

In summary, this paper argued that the students in the College of Education and Behavioural Sciences, Haramaya University, Eastern Ethiopia, were suffering from instructional barriers (poor exposure to speaking, fear of feedback during and after speaking, poor subject matter knowledge, poor motivation to speaking, anxiety, lack of enough vocabulary, lack of confidence, and poor listening abilities) contributed to their poor in English Language speaking skills during their senior essays, practicum, and term papers presentations. Some of the barriers that hinder the oral proficiency skills of college students under the study were (i) poor exposure to English language speaking skills inside and outside of the classes, (ii) fear of feedback during and after speaking in their presentations, (iii) poor subject matter knowledge, and (iv) their poor motivation to speak in English. Therefore, teachers need to use teaching methods that can enhance the acquisition of speaking proficiency in English language speaking skills like group or pair discussions and debates. Dialogue should also be employed though students disliked the method. The lecture method should not only be used to enable the teacher to cover enough content on time but also to be used in situations where students fail to participate in the teaching and learning process due to a lack of interest, exposure, and motivation.

6. Recommendations

Working in small groups and discussing interesting topics are good activities that allow students to know each other and to practice their English language speaking skills. Teachers have to use gentle and flexible approaches to error correction, be friendly, and with a good sense of humor during students' senior essays, practicum, and term paper presentations. Classrooms should be more interactive and need to be equipped with modern teaching resources; students' English language proficiency should not be poor when they join the university; finally, the department should start remedial courses for the weaker students. Enough time for practice should be given before the actual senior essays, practicum, and term paper presentations to make them develop self-confidence and motivation, and free from shyness and frustration from making mistakes while speaking in English.

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