

MENTAL ENLIGHTENMENT SCIENTIFIC –
METHODOLOGICAL JOURNALMENTAL ENLIGHTENMENT SCIENTIFIC –
METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL<http://mentaljournal-jspu.uz/index.php/mesmj/index>IDENTIFYING APPARENT LANGUAGE SKILL
CHALLENGES AMONG FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS**Tursunoy Ortiqova***Middle-level doctoral student**Gulistan State University**E-mail: ortiqovaturunoy66@gmail.com**Gulistan, Uzbekistan*

ABOUT ARTICLE

Key words: language skills, skill-related challenges, FLT (foreign language teaching), FLLs (foreign language learners), limited vocabulary, common problems, novel techniques, effective communication, foreign language acquisition, idea generation issues.

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Abstract: Current research mostly focuses on reading and writing skill-based problems one of which is receptive, and the other from productive skill components. Relying on questionnaire results and local learners' needs, moderately challenging language skills have been selected and analyzed. In the study a mixed method has been utilized. The results are based on self-reported responses of language learners from three different universities. The study subjects are the first-year English philology department students. The aim is to identify characteristic some language skill-related challenges in order to enable language educators and teachers to bring novel and modern teaching methods and techniques in education system. The research results have been demonstrated in descriptive method with the usage of graphs.

Introduction

Foreign language teaching (FLT) plays a crucial role in the modern education systems of many nations. Teaching and learning foreign languages have always been an important part of the social life of people [1, 776]. As the foundation of Foreign Language Teaching (FLT), the four language skills—writing, speaking, listening, and reading—must be properly developed to enable effective communication in any context. Therefore, an acquisition of a foreign language is a basis of understanding other cultures, their life styles and of intercultural communication [2, 99].

Basic components of FLT

Foreign language teaching is a multifaceted and complex process. It encompasses multiple essential elements. First core basis of FLT is four important skills;

1. Reading: developing the ability to comprehend simple to complex written texts
2. Writing: teaching students how to write in different formats accurately with coherence and cohesion for various audiences
3. Speaking: helping language learners to express themselves fluently in various contexts orally
4. Listening: training students to understand audio materials.

Besides, grammar and vocabulary, language phonetics and pronunciations are also included into FLT's main components. Additionally, applying communicative activities, learner-centered approaches, and giving feedback and assessing students become essential parts of teaching foreign language.

Research aim

Although the modern educational domain has become increasingly structured and systematic, Foreign Language Learners (FLLs) still face numerous challenges in acquiring the core components of a language. The study is aimed to define existing challenges among foreign language learners in the development of four language skills. Understanding these challenges enables to introduce modern effective teaching methods into language learning.

Methodology

Research method

The research utilizes a mixed method to investigate existing skill-based challenges among FLL students. The questionnaire represents close and open-ended questions to provide qualitative and quantitative insights on the research.

Participants

The study covers 7 groups of first-year students majoring English Philology program. Existing groups includes 4 big groups, each of which constitutes of over 20 students, and 3 mini groups in which approximately 15 individuals are present. The students' language proficiency is B2 levelled, all of whom are non-native speakers from 3 local universities.

Sampling

Convenience sampling has been used to meet certain research criteria (all first-year, English-major and B2 levelled university students).

Research tools: Online questionnaire has been organized by utilizing Google.doc form. The questionnaire consists of total 25 questions, 15 of which was specifically dedicated to find out several problems referring language skills.

Visual representations, particularly graphs have been illustrated to demonstrate research statistics.

Results

Considerable part of study participants are females (91%), and small number are male students (9%). The reason of that noticeable differences between these two sexes is that female students study in the field of foreign language teaching or language philology more often rather than males in our nation.

Figure 1. Division of questionnaire participants.

According to the results of the experiment, the percentages of students who find speaking and writing difficult comprises the biggest proportions (34 %, 31,2%) among four core skills. In next places, almost 23 % of participants mentioned that reading is challenging. The other two smallest numbers of language learners reported listening as difficult skill, and considered all language skills as uncomplicated, 8,5 %, and 3,5 % respectively. Overall, while most students often come across multiple difficulties in grasping productive skills (speaking and writing), and one of receptive skill (reading), a few of them struggling with listening.

Figure 2. The pie chart illustrates the number of students who find a certain language skill difficult

Besides that, specific language skill related problems have been recorded by participants in the survey. The chart below gives detailed information about small language skill-based challenges.

Figure 3. A cluster bar chart illustrating language skill-specific challenges.

In the bar chart, each language skill is separately explained with their characteristic problems. In the first column, learners most regularly come across the problem of limited vocabulary followed by hesitation & anxiety and inappropriate fluency while grammar rules and comprehension skills scarcely occur in the practice of speaking ability.

Regarding with writing skill, idea generation and grammar are in a noticeably problematic with 10 and almost 8 in frequency respectively unlike the reading skill with contrasting frequency numbers (2 and almost 1) among students. However, the learners hardly struggle with vocabulary range and comprehending in writing. The least challenging skill came out to be listening with two characteristic issues namely catching up with rapid speech and comprehending an audio material. Overall, difficulties in generating ideas, having enough vocabulary and understanding advanced words are the most common problems across language skills.

Figure 4. A bar chart showing particular challenges while doing reading passages.

In the survey, multiple choice questions have been organized to identify further challenges belonging to a particular language skill. For instance, several possible reading passage-related challenges have been demonstrated as a multiple choice. However, there is some limitation in the survey since the original language of the research and questionnaire is Uzbek. Therefore, some results have been shown in graphs with the Uzbek language.

As the bar chart shows, three main problems have been registered in high proportions, such as not knowing the meaning of unknown terms (with 59,8%), hesitation in choosing the

right answer (55,7%) and misunderstanding a particular question type (9,8%) while the other minor issues account for the same percentages (0,8%).

Discussion

The study presented that students most frequently face difficulties in speaking skill among other four skills. Definitely, interacting in a non-native real-life communication is principally difficult. According to Tanveer [3] and Shabani [4], the main problem of the majority of EFL students in language learning is speaking in a foreign language. Language learners struggle with both linguistic and psychological factors: anxiety and vocabulary limitation. Unlike with native speakers, it is much more challenging for EFL learners to apply correct pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary [5].

Regarding with reading skill, most common challenges are related with text comprehension and new words. As Ramdhianti & Somba [6] stated almost the same results with our ongoing research. According to these scientists, students had difficulties in grasping the main idea of the text, understanding new vocabulary and making inferences based on the text.

Writing, which is one of productive skills is highly challenging to improve but extremely important skill to develop. The analysis of responses revealed that students consistently find idea generation and accurate use of grammar issues problematic.

Conclusion

To sum up, the research investigated apparent challenges based on language skills mostly considering writing and reading skills. Although writing has been reported as the most difficult skill, our study scope has been dedicated to cover particularly writing and reading. Writing issues centered around grammar and idea generation while reading was linked to comprehension problem and unfamiliar terms in passages. However, the reason why the questionnaire involved all four language skills is to select moderately challenging language skills among the others. The limitations of the research are: 1) the study subjects (only first-year English program students); 2) selectively investigated two skills (writing and reading).

Recommendations and suggestions

Future studies need to be carried out to create appropriate methodology to tackle the existing problems; and to apply strategic approaches so as to integrate all four skills in the language learning situation.

Appendixes

Figure 1. The division of experimental groups according to regions.

Tahsil olayotgan OTM nomi
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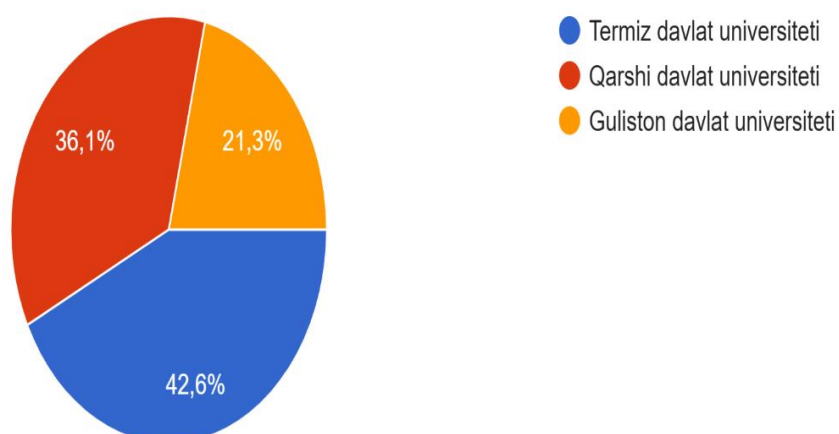


Figure 2. The assessment in percentages of spelling mistakes in listening materials among language learners.

8. Audio matnlardagi soʻzlarni yozishda imloviy (spelling) xatolarga yoʻl qoʻyasizmi?

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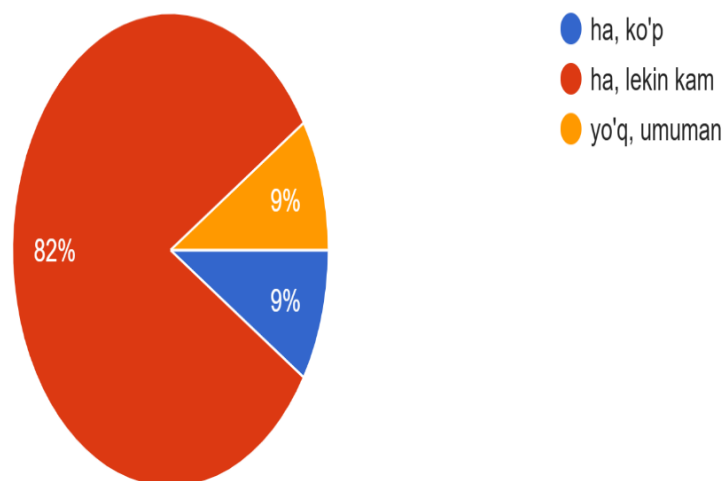


Figure 3. The pie graph illustrating the percentage of effectiveness of note-taking technique in listening skill among students

6. "Listening" tinglaganingizda sizga talaffuzi tanish hamda siz eshita oladigan soʻzlaringizni yozib olish (note-taking) toʻgʻri javobni topishingizda yordam bera oladi deb oʻylaysizmi?

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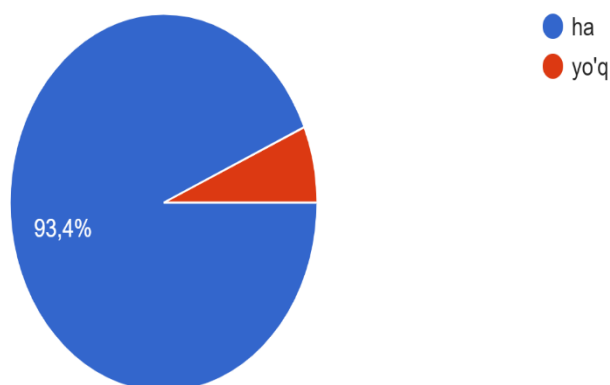
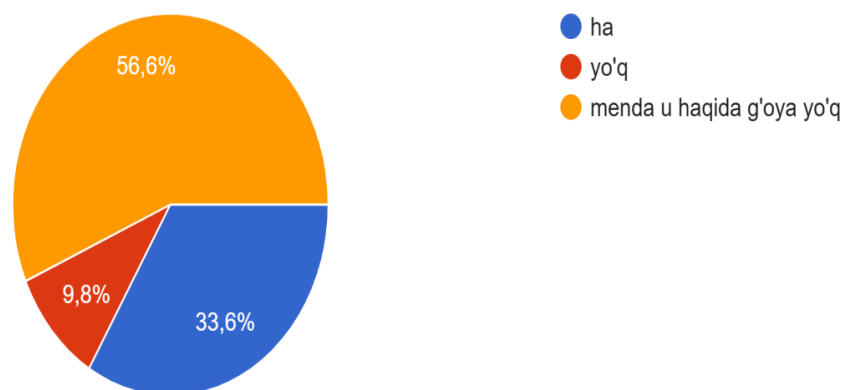


Figure 4. The pie chart representing the degree of intention of students to use the comparative table for choosing the right answer in reading passages.

11. "Reading" matnlari savollariga to'g'ri javob topishga ishonch hosil qilish uchun matnlar va savollardagi so'zlarni taqqoslashingizga imkon ber...grafik organayzerlardan foydalanishni xohlaysizmi?

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