Scrutinizing Factors that Hold back Female Students' from Speaking English in the Classroom at Mettu University in the case of first year Oromo folklore and literature students of 2008 E. C Entry

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Abstract- The purpose of this study was to scrutinize factors that hold back female students' of Oromoo folklore and literature of Mettu University from speaking English in the classroom. To this end, the study employed descriptive survey design, which involves both quantitative and qualitative methods. Accordingly, Oromoo folklore and literature department was selected through purposive sampling. And the data were collected from 30 purposefully selected female students from Oromoo folklore and literature department for questionnaire and from two English teachers who were purposefully selected for interview. Thus, descriptive statistics using frequencies and percentages were employed in analyzing the quantitative data and the qualitative data were analyzed qualitatively.   The result of the study revealed that almost all female students of Oromoo Folklore and Literature department at Mettu university were dominantly hold back from speaking English due to psychological, contextual, and linguistically   factors. Finally, based on the findings, the researchers agreed to some recommendations that the most important one is to create conducive environment to support and encourage female students to speak and practice English frequently in the class.

Index Terms- scrutinize; hold back; psychological factors; speaking English; folklore, and Oromoo

Introduction

English language is a global language which can be used for communication with native-speakers and none-native speakers in the worldwide, especially in the education section, all University students need it for their studies in order to search information and obtain knowledge; therefore, a lot of the Universities throughout the world need to include English language as one of their educational tool requirements (Khader& Mohammad, 2010). This means English is often used as the medium of instruction in higher education.

In the teaching of English, as one of the productive skills, speaking activity must focus on how to assist students to use and to communicate in English (Richard, 2008). This is important as Richard further says; most students often evaluate their success in language learning as well as the effectiveness of their English course on the basis of how much they feel they have improved in their speaking proficiency. That is why teachers' efforts should be focused on developing students' ability to speak since learning to speak is considered as the greatest challenge for all language learners (Pinter, 2006). In this sense, teachers have to give more opportunities to their students to express themselves by providing them with speaking activities that enable them to speak English (Brown, 2001).

According to Harmer (2007) and Pourhosein Gilakjani (2016), human communication is a complex process. Persons need communication when they want to say something and transmit information. Speaking seems to be the most important skills of all the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) because people who know a language are usually referred to as speakers of that language (Ur, 1996). The major goal of all English language teaching should be to give learners the ability to use English effectively, accurately in communication (Davies & Pearse, 1998). However, not all language learners after many years studying English can communicate fluently and accurately because they lack necessary knowledge.

This was seen; at Mettu University (MeU) specifically Ormoo folklore and literature female students still seem to have problems in communicating in English language through speaking.

With this intention, first year students of "Oromo Folklore and Literature" 2008 entry at Mettu University took researchers' attention and the problems female students faced in speaking initiates the researchers to explore factors that hold back female students' speaking in the class.

I.   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the factors that hold back the female students of Oromoo Folklore department at

Mettu University encounter in English speaking?

2. What are the psychological factors that hold back female students' from English speaking?

3. Which type of factors that the most frequently hold back factors that Oromoo Folklore and

literature female students' faced?

4.   What are the linguistic factors that hold back female students' English speaking skills?

5.   What are the context factors that hold back female students' English speaking skills?

II.   OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

General Objectives

The general objective of this study is to scrutinize the factors that hold back female students' from English speaking in the classroom at Oromo Folklore and literature department.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were to:

- Identify factors that hold back the female students of Oromo Folklore and literature department(OFLD) in Mettu University.
- Distinguish the psychological factors that hold back female students' from English speaking
- Make a distinction factors that the most frequently reported that hold back Oromoo Folklore and literature of female students' faced?
- Find out linguistic factors that hold back female students from English speaking
- Differentiate the context factors that hold back female students' from English speaking

III.   RESEARCH DESIGN

Since, the main objective of this study is to scrutinize the factors that hold back female students' from English speaking in English class in Oromo Folklore and Literature department, descriptive survey design with both qualitative and quantitative method were found appropriate. The main data gathering instruments used for the study were questionnaire, class room observation and interview. Students' questionnaire was mainly aimed at gathering information about factors that hold back them from English speaking in the class. An observation checklist was designed based on literature review and used during the observation time.

IV.   SAMPLE SIZE AND TECHNIQUES

The present study is a case study. Only one department female students and two English were involved. Thus, the target population of this study was Year 1 female students who are enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Oromo Folklore and Literature at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (FSSH) and two English teachers at Mettu University in the academic year 2008 E.C. Therefore, the target population of the study was 33 Oromo folklore and literature department female students and 2 English teachers who gave compulsory courses (communicative Skills and basic writing skills) were selected through purposive sampling techniques. Since the goal of purposive sampling is credibility, not representativeness or the ability to generalize, the researchers employed the purposive sampling technique, which is a process of selecting a sample that is believed to represent a given population. Therefore, the purposive sampling technique was used for both female students and teachers because the goal of purposive sampling is credibility, not representativeness or the ability to generalize. For this reason, the researchers employed the purposive sampling technique, which is a process of selecting a sample that is believed to represent a given population.

Source of Data

The sources of data were Oromo Folklore and Literature female students and English language teachers at Mettu University.

Participants

This case study was conducted with the participation of 33 female students of Oromo Folklore and Literature and 2 English teachers who gave English courses for them. So it mainly focuses on scrutinizing the factors that hold back female students' from speaking English in the class.

V.   METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

The research data was analyzed to examine the factors that hold back Oromo Folklore and Literature speaking skills of female students and causes for these hold back factors from the teacher's view. Therefore, the data which were gathered from female students and teachers through questionnaires, classroom observations and, interview was analyzed, interpreted and discussed accordingly.

VI.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed at scrutinizing the extent to which factors hold back female students' from speaking English in the classroom at the department Oromo Folklore and literature. To collect relevant data for the study questionnaire, classroom observation, and interview were employed.

Accordingly the results and discussions of female students' and teachers' responses, teachers' point view of factors that hold back from speaking English in the class compared with the classroom observation were scrutinizing . Finally, the major factors that hold back the female students' from speaking English in the class were treated under this section respectively.

	Items	SA		A		N		DA		SDA		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	I feel shy when I try to speak in English language in the class	30	90.91	3	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	100	100
2	I lack motivation to make conversation in English class.	6	18.18	8	24.24	9	27.27	10	30.3	-	-	100	100
3	I speak in English freely without worrying about making mistakes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	33	100	100	100
4	I feel with anxiety when I try to speak in English language	28	84.85	5	15.15	-	-	-	-	-	-	100	100
5	I lack for confidence when I try to make ideas and express it in English language	26	78.79	7	21.21	-	-	-	-	-	-	100	100

Responses of female students regarding psychological factor that hold back them from speaking English

The questionnaires were administered among 33 female students of Oromo Folklore and Literature department of Mettu University in different factors that hold them back from speaking English in the class.

Key: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, DA= Disagree SDA= strongly disagree
Note: strongly agree = 5 Agree= 4 Neutral= 3 Disagree= 2 strongly disagree = 1

The above table presents a brief enlightenment of each psychological factor that holds back female students' speaking English in the class.

Accordingly, for the first item, 30(90.9%) of the respondents said "strongly agree", where as 3(10.1%) of them responded "agree" respectively. This indicates that females' students felt shy due to their nature as shy to speak in front of people. The comments are in line with Bowen (2005) and Robby (2010) arguing that some shy learners are caused by their nature that they are very quiet. Therefore, teachers need to create a friendly and open classroom environment in order to solve their shyness. Solving the shyness problem, Chinmoy (2007) suggests that in order to help students to be more confident in their speaking that convince students to look upon shyness as a thing to overcome and do not fear failure or success.

In item2, the female students were asked whether they lacked motivation or not to make conversation in English class. Responses to this item disclosed that 6(18.18%), 8(24.24%), 9(27.28%) and 10 (30.3%) of the respondents responded that "strongly agree", agree, neutral and strongly disagree respectively. This indicates that 42.42% of the respondents have lacked motivation to make a conversation in English. The fact is lined up with Gardner in Nunan (1999) and Babu (2010) stressing that motivation is a product of good teaching, not its prerequisite, students are unmotivated and unwilling to speak English in the classroom among others are because uninspiring teaching and lack of appropriate feedback. Therefore, teacher should concern about this issue since motivation is a key consideration in determining the preparedness of learners to communicate (Nunan, 1999).

Regarding Item3, the female students were asked to check whether they worry about mistake while speaking in English or not, all respondents or 33(100%) of them responded as they worry about making mistake. This indicates that Students feel afraid of making mistake as they are worried that their friends will laugh at them and receive negative evaluations from their peers if they make mistake in speaking and they are afraid of looking foolish in front of other people (Kurtus, 2001; Kim, 2006; and Frank Middleton, 2009). Thus, it's very necessary for the teachers to convince their students that they do not have to worry to express their ideas by speaking since the language is a foreign language that everyone in the class is also studying the language. In other words it's natural if they make mistake.

With respect to item 4, female students asked about their anxiety when they try to speak in English language. Responses to this item disclosed that 28(84.84%) of the respondents 'strongly agreed' that they feel anxious when they try to speak in English. whereas 5(15.16%) of them 'agreed' as they felt anxious when they try to speak in English. This indicates that they do not have energy or motivation to speak freely in English. This condition relates to the importance of motivation since it is an inner energy (Zua, 2008). It has been proved that students with a strong motivation to succeed can persist in learning.

Concerning item 5, 27(81.81%) and 6(18.19%) of them "strongly agreed" and "agreed" respectively. This shows that all of them have no confidence to speak in English in the class. In response to this idea, Kubo (2009) further adds that to build students' confidence to speak English, teachers can provide regular opportunities to practice proper pronunciation and intonation, and to converse freely, thus it will make students experienced a greater sense of ability to speak English. Therefore teacher should create a comfortable atmosphere in which learners are encouraged to talk in English and are praised for talking. According to Schwarz (2005) the psychological factors are the factors that are commonly hold back the female students from speaking English in the class.

Responses of female students regarding linguistic and context factor that hold back them from speaking English in the class.

	Items	**SA**		**A**		**N**		**DA**		**SDA**		**Total**	
		F	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**
1	I lack for vocabularies to express my ideas in English language	30	90.1	3	9.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	**100**	**100**
2	I feel weak in understanding the pronunciation of English words.	2	6.1	28	84.8	-	-	**3**	**9.1**	-	-	100	100
3	I freely understand the English grammar and use them freely to speak in English.	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	21.21	26	78.79	100	100
4	I always prefer to use my native language to express my ideas	30	90.9	3	9.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	100	100
5	I always like to make a conversation with friends/peers in English class	-	-	-	-	4	12.12	26	78.78	3	9.1	100	100
6	I am not influenced by my culture to speak in English in front of the students and teacher in the class	-	-	7	21.2	-	-	24	72.7	2	6.1	100	100

Key: SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, N= Neutral, DA= Disagree SDA= strongly disagree
Note: strongly agree = 5 Agree= 4 Neutral= 3 Disagree= 2 strongly disagree = 1

This second research question was designed to examine whether linguistic factors and context factors hold back female students from speaking English or not

With respect to lack of vocabulary, respondents 30(90.9%) and 3(9.1%) "Strongly agree and agree" respectively shared their ideas as they lack of vocabulary to express their ideas in English. This indicates that the majority of the respondents thought that the main problem of their inability to speak English was because of their fear of a limited vocabulary in which students could not describe the expression they would like, and they gave up speaking. This was clear with many of us. Because everybody really wants to talk with native speakers in English but when expressing their ideas they cannot find the correct word at that time. To this end, female students need to improve their vocabulary knowledge. Brown (1995) pointed people are created to created comprehensive utterance when they learn more vocabulary. So the more vocabularies students know, the more alternatives they have for conveying accurately what they mean in speaking and writing.

With regard to weak in understanding the pronunciation of English words, 2(6.1%), 28(84.8%) and 3(9.1%) of female students replied strongly "agree, agree and disagree" respectively. This kind of factor made them weak in understanding English words' pronunciation which may lead them to speak English and found it difficult to pronounce English words in the class. It is stated that correct and clear pronunciations are important in language learning because good pronunciation makes the communication easier to understand (Dan, 2006 cited in Varasarin, 2007).

A third item was developed whether female students freely understand the English grammar and use them freely to speak in

English to express their ideas or not. In this item 7(21.21%) and 26 (78.79 %) responded that disagree, and strongly disagree respectively. This condition suggests that teacher's way of teaching grammar becomes necessary to be noticed since it will influence students' achievement in grammar competence (Harmer, 2001).

VII.   ANALYSIS OF DATA OBTAINED THROUGH INTERVIEW

Interviews were conducted with the two TEFL lecturers who taught the two courses (communicative and basic writing courses) selected to explore their views on the female students' English speaking in the class.

Concerning the psychological factors that hold back female students from Speaking English, the interviewees were asked "do you think that female students are highly influenced by psychological factors to speak in English during your class"? Both interviewees answered that female students of Oromo Folklore and literature are highly influenced by those psychological factors (shyness, fear of mistakes, anxiety) that hold back them from speaking English in the class freely.

Regarding the major the major factors that mainly hold back female students from speaking English in the class, both interviewees answered that even if the psychological factors, linguistic factors, cultural factors are common factors, the psychological factors are the major factors that hold back female students from speaking English in the class. Because Psychological factors are the mental factors that help or hold back students for making 'frame of mind' to perform things well. As argued by many theorists, fear of mistake becomes one of the main factors of students' reluctance to speak in English in the classroom (Robby, 2010).

Regarding interview item number 3, the interviews were asked "how often do you use Oromo language to express your ideas for female students? Bothe interviewees answered some times. But the problem is the degree of using Afaan Oromo which may lead the learners to use their mother tongues while they are speaking English language. Because it is almost impossible to know when and how frequently to use students' first language; however, agree that the first language use to give brief explanations of grammar and lexis, as well as for explaining procedures and routines, can greatly facilitate the management of learning (Nunan ,1996).

Concerning interview questions item number 4, the interviewees were asked whether they do have any attempts to make female students active participatory during speaking session. Accordingly both of them answered as they have attempted to motivate the female students in order to build their confidence and minimize their fear through building emotional bonds between students and teachers. The last interview question was "do you think that lack of English vocabulary hold back female students from speaking English freely"?   Both of them answered "definitely" since lack of vocabulary was identified as a big source of student silence in oral English language classrooms. Additionally, the interviewees said the poor back ground knowledge of the female students in using the target language is also the major one.

VIII.   ANALYSIS OF CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

Classroom observation was conducted to make out female students' participation in speaking activity done by the teachers. To scrutinize the female students' actual classroom participation in speaking English classes four observation sessions were made by the researchers for the period of one month. It was observed that female students' were held back by psychological factors, linguistic factors and context factors.

The data from observation in general indicated that all Oromo Folklore and Literature female students were hold back from speaking English due to psychological factors, linguistic factors and cultural factors. This can be seen from the fact that all female students who were not free to speak English in class due to the above factors.

The researchers also observed that female students have got no confidence in English speaking; they always preferred to speak in mother tongue or they rather remain silent and show passive participation in class when they are invited to speak. And their` speaking performance mostly does not exceed the word level and in the best cases it takes the form of short sentences which lack accuracy and fluency.

The Oromo Folklore and Literature department of female students did not show initiative to ask question or to respond to the teachers' questions due to psychological factors which includes shyness, fear of making mistakes, anxiety, lack of confidence, linguistics factors which include lack of vocabularies, lack of understanding of grammatical competence and incorrect pronunciation (Smith 2011; Huyen and Nga 2003; Savage et al, 2010; Foppoli, 2009; Liu 2007). Those factors, as those theorists argue, hold back students from actively speaking in English class.

IX.   CONCLUSIONS

The result of the study revealed that all female respondents of Oromoo Folklore and Literature department at Mettu University were submissive due to the factors that hold them back from speaking English in the class. Even if speaking is not merely uttering words and sentences through the mouth, but it is more a matter of expressing or stating the message of communication through words and sentences, definitely factors that are related to psychological factors, linguistic factors, and cultural background factors made them unable to develop and make use of their speaking ability. Thus, the female students were deficient in the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts.

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