

Fostering psycholinguistic Variables in Second Language Acquisition Using Resilience Educators' Model

Dr. Rashid Hamed Al Azri, Acting Dean

*Mazoon College
Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.
Phone No. 0096899251313*

Abstract:

Language is acquired, produced, and perceived in multiple ways according to a variety of psychological theories. There is a great deal of reliance on theories in the teaching of languages. Experts develop language teaching techniques based on psycholinguistic principles. This approach is known as psycholinguistics. In psycholinguistic perspectives, education is seen as a cerebral activity that occurs within the individual before moving on to the social aspect. Some approaches were created based on psycholinguistic theories, such as the natural method and the resilience model. This study assesses the psycholinguistic theory and resilience model using an experimental study. The target population were undergraduate English students at Mazoon College in Oman. Twenty students were in the control group, and 20 were in the experimental group. Pre-test and post-test were used as the study's measurement techniques. It was found that applying the resilience model as a pedagogical strategy positively impacts the oral skills of EFL learners in Oman. This study has some interesting implications in the field of psycholinguistics.

Keywords: *psycholinguistics, SLA, resilience framework, pedagogy, experimental study.*

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I. Introduction:

Communication is central in our life, regulating and shaping human behavior. A branch of study combining psychology and linguistics, psycholinguistics is concerned with the relationship between the human mind and the target language. A psycholinguist studies language, speech production, and comprehension using behavioral responses. Due to its interdisciplinary nature, psycholinguistics can be an effective pedagogical tool.

Communication is a two-way process. Here, human psychology plays a vital role. If broken up, several areas include apprehension, motivation, and determination. Therefore, this paper studies how Psycholinguistics affects communication in general. Speaking English accurately and efficiently has become like a dream for EFL students. Spoken language production is often considered one of the most challenging aspects of language learning. The researcher noticed that despite his best efforts, many students showed no interest in using English; instead, they showed a kind of diffidence in switching to English from their native language, even for some simple and short sentences. There is a mismatch between teachers' efforts and students' achievements in English. Since Omani learners strongly feel the demand and need for English, it is imperative to investigate the factors behind the mismatch.

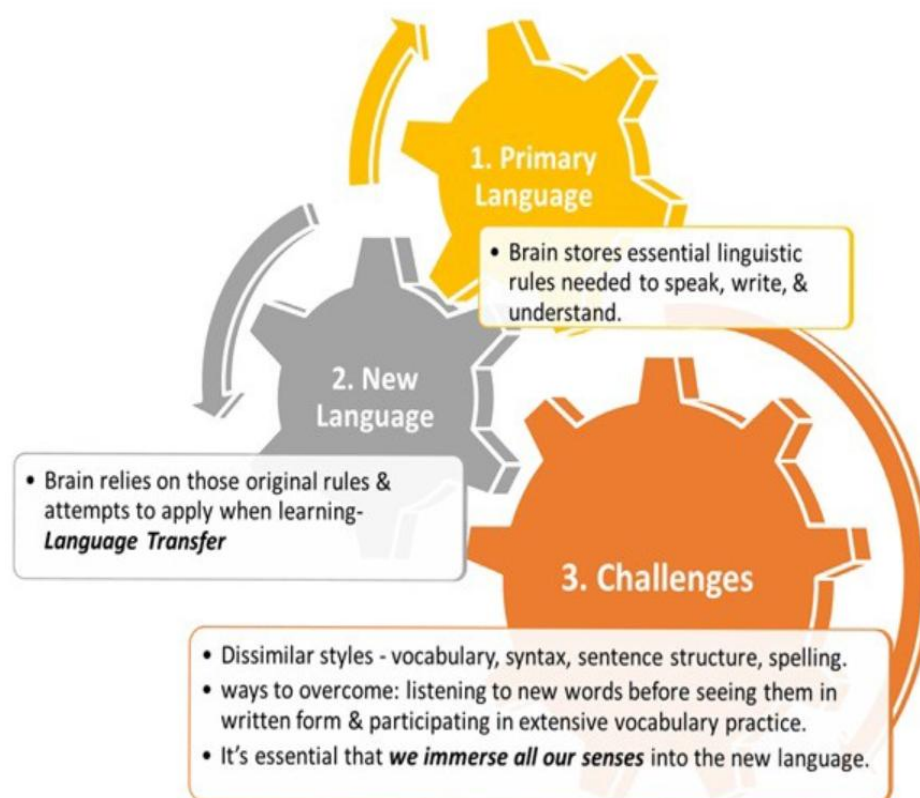
The examination of the cerebral processes that underpin language learning and usage is known as applied linguistics. Language proficiency is covered by psycholinguistics, particularly for fearful learners. Gleitman (2022) declares, "People in a variety of fields apply and research the concepts and findings of psycholinguistics. "Psycholinguistics is the study of cognitive functions that enable us to construct grammatically correct sentences based on vocabulary and grammatical structures, as well as the processes that enable us to comprehend utterances, words and texts. " (p.11).

Psycholinguistics studies how various emotional aspects affect how we learn and utilize languages. These include fundamental personality traits like timidity, long-term influences like attitudes toward learning, and constantly shifting emotions like boredom, anxiety, etc. (Jackson 2020, p.11). Emotions are frequently present in language lessons. In certain classes, there is a palpable sense of eagerness and genuine interest in the covered material. Others could experience negative emotions like boredom and disinterest. Furthermore, many classroom activities, including tests, cause stress and worry. Affective elements that affect cognition or learning are exciting topics of research. Since learning a language is essentially a social activity that

requires social contact, emotions will inevitably be triggered during the process. Some of these emotions may operate as barriers to effective learning and teaching.

Being a teacher of the English language at Mazoon college, the researcher noticed that some students hesitate to communicate their ideas or express themselves in fluent English. This study aims to determine the role of motivation as a psycholinguistic variable for developing fluency. It also tends to find effective and necessary solutions to overcome anxiety. The significance of this study comes from the fact that the mastery of English is a priority for many foreign language learners, and most measure their ability to the English language by how well they can speak it. So, the researcher carried out this study to highlight the psycholinguistic barriers that affect oral communication performance. The psychological aspects of learning are presented in figure-1

Figure 1
Psychological Aspects of Language Learning



The researcher also observed that psychological barriers, such as low motivation and high language anxiety, may prevent learners from learning English. A review of the available literature on psycholinguistic barriers and foreign language learning confirmed the researcher's view. This led the researcher to assume that EFL learners in Oman may have a few psycholinguistic barriers hindering their progress. Thus, keeping this assumption in perspective, an experimental study was designed to investigate whether EFL learners were affected by a lack of motivation. The idea was to check if there was any correlation between psycholinguistic barriers and students' performance in English. Some researchers (Oblanazarovna, (2022); Vasishth et al., (2022) and De Cat (2020) have studied the aspects individually, while others have studied the impacts of these factors on the language learning experience. No scholars have explored the impact of motivation as a psychological variable using resilience theory.

Speaking Difficulties and psycholinguistic aspects.

Language learners have difficulty learning a language. The process of improving speaking skills in particular is not easy for students. Inhibition is usually the first challenge students face. In the classroom, students often feel inhibited when trying to speak a foreign language. Fear of making mistakes, criticism, or losing face makes them worry about making mistakes. In addition, learners often complain that they lack motivation and are unable to come up with anything to say. The learners have nothing to speak maybe because the teacher had chosen a topic unsuitable for them". (Hopp, & Lemmerth, 2018 p.119). When teachers ask their

pupils to react in a foreign language, many of them find it challenging because they may not know what to say, what terminology to utilize, or how to apply the grammar correctly. Low or inconsistent participation in speaking classes is another issue.

Because only one person can speak in a large group, each pupil will have limited speaking opportunities. Bialystok et al. (2020) note that "the difficulties students face are speaking defects and personality factors like introverted and extroverted students. Speaking defects like voice disorders and misarticulation are also psychological and are caused by personality aspects. Therefore, motivational counselling and practices are necessary to overcome such difficulties" (p.526). Thus, the investigations of the psycholinguistic approach have provided solutions for language learning difficulties. We use language in a variety of situations.

Speaking was given more prominence in the communicative approach because oral communication requires speech, and students are encouraged to engage in verbal conversation. An area of importance in linguistic education is the psycholinguistic method. It has made significant advances in linguistics and language education. Communication is necessary for progressing professionally, academically and socially. The psycholinguistic approach provides ways to produce oral language production more pedagogically, so a language teacher training in psycholinguistics and pedagogical presentation of the new material will easily handle the affective factors involved in language teaching. Considering these factors, the researcher used resilience theory for psycholinguistic training.

Theoretical background: Resilience Theory

According to Van Breda, (2018). "Resilience is a process that includes a constructive adjustment to the backdrop of academic pressure". It is necessary to be familiar with this word to comprehend the theoretical framework supporting this body of study. The majority of students lack a particular set of resilience-related traits. The theory is considered a complex process that evolves through time. It is a flexible and pervasive process" (p.44). This study proposes resilience as a paradigm of instructional practices addressing cognitive and metacognitive difficulties in an L2 setting. The study of resilience has grown dramatically during the past ten years, particularly in , education, counselling psychology, cognitive neuroscience, counselling, therapy, and educational psychology. The variables in resilience are shown in figure-2

Figure-2
Variables in Resilience



“Despite the immense potential for using the resilience assumption in educational areas, there is a shortage of studies in this area. The expression, which is used to characterize a person's capacity to adapt successfully, gradually, and consistently despite challenges in language learning, has been classified as a personal trait. Students frequently encounter challenging situations that place them under tremendous stress in language classes”. (Greene et al. (2004) This research seeks to offer a paradigm for encouraging students to talk fluently in language classrooms in the area of language teaching. In their effort to comprehend the complexity of speaking skills, students in language schools should find the recommended Resilience Framework to be a helpful instructional model. This framework highlights the link between a person's growth and the educational experience. Therefore, it is consistent with the learning approach that underpins the classroom's language-teaching procedures.

Motivation may be critical in enhancing communication and educational resilience in challenging environments. Recent studies in psychological health have emphasized the causes and implications of academic resilience. Goal orientation has an impact on academic resilience. It is generally believed that students who seek a competency orientation are happier and perform better. Resilient people also sought out challenges and kept going in the face of difficulties.

People who lack resilience are more likely to back down from obstacles, stop trying, or give up, especially if they possess low self-esteem. As a result, the instructor must extend their viewpoint. Researchers in the past found that resilient pupils outperformed non-resilient students significantly. Therefore, we can conclude that the resilience theory fosters practical linguistic competence in an L2 context and improves learning efficiency even for those with modest levels of competence. However, no prior studies have supported resilience theory and psycholinguistics in the context of learning a second language.

From a psychological standpoint, resilience offers a fresh, upbeat, and potentially viable approach to view learning. Students who acquire to use language in settings where teachers mistreat or disregard them sometimes develop anxiety about speaking. According to Steven et al. (2014), "Learning about resiliency theory gives students in an ESL classroom a practical method to look at how learners change and develop in a manner that provides them hope and optimism" (p.22). A review of earlier studies reveals that a person's competency is not necessarily a reliable indicator of successful linguistic results. How the teacher behaves impacts how well the children perform is an essential factor that is often disregarded. As a result, this study recommends an instructor flexibility paradigm and the cornerstones of learner-focused language development. So that they can satisfy the requirements of our students, the majority of whom may be deemed weak learners, educators must be able to recognize and comprehend the factors that contribute to positive outcomes. The following study questions were developed using psycholinguistics and resilience theory as bases.

Research Questions

After reviewing the related literature, the following research questions were framed.

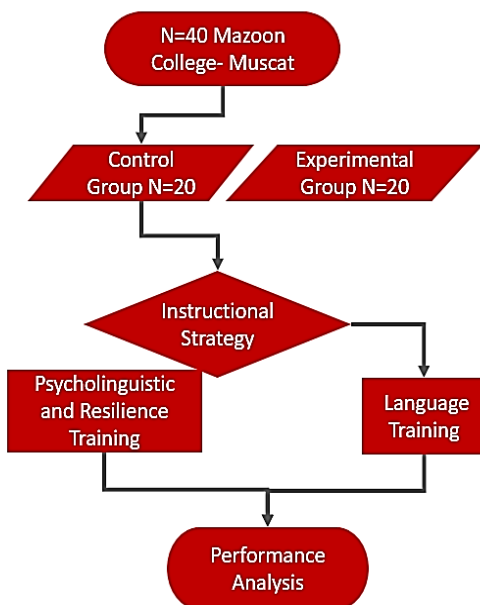
- 1) When applying the resilience model as a pedagogical strategy, how does it impact the oral skills of EFL learners in Oman?
- 2) How do students perform in speaking after motivational training?

Methods

The target population were undergraduate English students at Mazoon College in Oman. Twenty students were in the control group, and 20 were in the experimental group. Instruments. Pre-test and post-test were used as the study's measurement techniques. The purpose of the pre-test was to gauge the students' prior abilities in speaking. Two presentations worth 25 marks constituted the post-test. The post-test cumulative score was 50.

In addition to the researchers, two senior language teachers were also invited as part of the research project to ensure that the pre-test and post-test were sufficient to assess the student's learning progress. The two tests' Pearson's correlation was 0.029, indicating a slight variation between them. Additionally, the post-Kuder-Richardson test's Formula 20 (KR-20) value of 0.47 showed that the internal consistency was satisfactory.

Figure-3
Methodology Description



As shown in Figure 3, the instructional strategy was dissimilar for the control and experimental groups. The control group did not receive psycholinguistic and resilience training. The experimental group received resilience training. A pre-test was given to both groups before the intervention. After the pre-test, instruction was given to both groups. The control group was assigned oral communications training, whereas the experimental group was trained using the psycholinguistic and resilience model.

In the conventional model, the professors only focused on the subject matter. In the cognitive and metacognitive resilience approach, the instructors were dedicated and provided both subject input, support, and encouragement. The instructor placed equal emphasis on learning psychology and material. He built close relationships with the students. He urged the pupils to rise to the challenges and leave their comfort zone. Table 1 compares the educational approaches used by the two groups.

Table-1
Comparison of Intervention and Non-Intervention Groups

Experimental Group	Control Group
Moral Support along with content support	Only content support
The nonlinear and flexible instructional model	Linear instruction
Social support and peer-learning	Individualized instruction
Triggering group communication	Focus on the learner
Focus on breathing and relaxation exercises during instruction	Focus on only content

Data were obtained from the performance tests to examine these two research questions. The breakdown of marks was obtained from the two instructors concerned. When testing the research questions, a p-value is calculated to determine the significance level. Researchers traditionally establish 0.5% as the significance level. Thus 'p-value' smaller than 0.5% is considered statistically significant.

Findings

Speaking activities and resilience were analyzed to determine the students' presentation skills. Based on the results of the independent sample t-test, Table 2 displays descriptive scores for the experimental group compared to the control group. The independent - samples t was used to determine the significance of the differences.

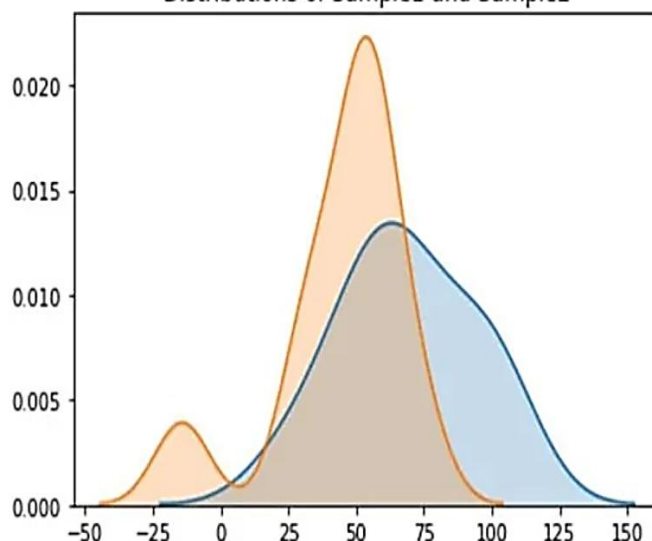
Table2 Descriptive Statistics- Control Group and Experimental Groups

	N	Min Scores	Max Scores	Mean	SD
Pre-test	20	19	26	20.14	2.89
Posttest	20	21	29	27.91	3.88
Control					

Pretest	20	20	27	23.13	2.89
Posttest					
Experimental	20	22.5	38	39.97	7.91

The test results were the same for the survey population and treatment category, as indicated in table 1. Although there was only a 7.7 on the average difference between pre-tests in the standard control, there was a 16.84 difference between post-tests in the treatment conditions. The researchers could conclude that the significance of the average variation between the two empirically validated. We perform a 95% confidence level Independent Sample T-Test. We reject the null hypothesis that both groups have the same average if the P-Value is less than 0.05. The bell curve shown in figure 4 demonstrates how the mean values of the experimental and control populations differ. Let's specify our parameters first and then figure out the statistical power. Cohens (2014) calculate the validity's effect magnitude. This yields a result that is more than 0.8, indicating that there is a significant impact size. This is expected given that the experimental group's post-test mean is 39.97, whereas the control group's post-test mean is 27.91. Figure 4 shows the distribution of data 1 and 2.

Figure-4.
Distributions of control and experimental groups
Distributions of Sample1 and Sample2



It is evident in figure 4 that the experimental group performed better than the control group. The orange curve indicates the experimental group, and the blue curve indicates the control group. A paired statistic was conducted to find the distinct difference. The results of the paired test are shown in Table 3.

Table3 Inferential statistics (T-Test Scores)

	Paired Differences			95% Confidence Interval of Difference		t	df	Sig (2 Tailed)
	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std.Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
Intervention and non-intervention	11.19.	5.97313	.3699	13.1876	19.3451	42.986	20	.000

The responses to the assumptions are listed in Table 3. SPSS calculates the aggregate variance scores for each set of variables. The disparity between the independent samples is known as the mean. It ought to be pretty near 0 if the demographic is equal. The two sets are substantially distinct because the average difference is 11.19. At a significance threshold of 0.05, the total average after the intervention was statistically meaningful. Because "Sig. (=0.05)" or "p > 0.05," this is the case. A positive average difference is well within the range of expected population results, according to the 95% confidence interval. Additionally, the confidence interval has statistical significance. The relevance of the findings was established by the t-value of 42.986. Students who received instruction that integrated resilience performed better than those who did not. As a result, we can conclude that the resilience hypothesis affects speaking performance by impacting confidence levels.

II. Discussion

This study examined the consequences of psycholinguistic and resilience training on speaking achievements in higher education. The results were similar to previous studies such as De Houwer (2021) & Hoff et al. (2012). Overall, the study makes an essential contribution to the knowledge by offering empirical evidence for facilitating linguistic competency. For students to develop a genuine interest in the subject, capturing their attention early on is crucial. The learners' level of involvement and interest may have been maintained with the psycholinguistic motivation provided by the instructor. Subsequently, the instructors communicated the course's objectives and expected outcomes. This instructional paradigm advocates that new sessions should be linked to existing ones that have already been covered to engage the learners' long-term memory. The study revealed that academic resilience was well-predicted by motivation. The most outstanding performers were those that exuded a lot of strength and confidence. The motivation to complete work with dedication comes from an innate drive for progress, learning, and growth. The fascinating result of the study was that performance objectives were a significant, upbeat predictor of resilience.

Previous empirical findings by Legacy et al. (2016), Zhu (2020) and Wilbur (2012) state that student performance is expected to be high in psycholinguistic environments. The results show that academic toughness is essential for success. There are several restrictions to this study. The predictive validity of our results may only apply to tertiary students; it is crucial to note. Students in kindergarten through grade 12 could potentially benefit from the recommended methodology. First, other factors influencing pupils' academic resilience must be considered because they might result in effective learning. Second, these results may be used by secondary school teachers to help pupils create more flexible goal orientations.

Implications

Our research with ESL students indicates that psycholinguistic instruction in language education can aid in fostering speaking skills. Additionally, our statistical study reveals that progress in presentation skills appears to have a favourable link with resilience and psycholinguistic training. The consequences of the results challenge us to think about how to encourage ESL instructors to use psychological models in online classrooms. This study offers empirical data that indicate the possible impact of resilience training in a speaking classroom. We recommend more studies on resilience and motivation to improve speaking. According to this study, this resilience and motivational framework may be helpful to university professors when teaching a productive skill like speaking. The study also suggests that instructors' implementation of the framework will probably result in positive student perceptions regarding their engagement and performance in foreign languages. This model would tend to solve, or at least lessen, the problems commonly found in the online teaching of oral skills. Students' motivation, self-confidence and a balanced mental state towards the target language play a significant role in learning a foreign language. These psychological factors are not only crucial from the learners' point of view but from the teacher's perspective as well, since no effective teaching can take place if the learners are not motivated to learn the language or they have low self-confidence to use the language in their oral and written communication or they are too anxious to read, write or listen to native speakers and respond to it. The findings of the present research study have profound pedagogical implications, especially in EFL contexts.

III. Limitations

The first limitation of the study is that, for lack of time and resources, the study has been confined to a small population of selected students, and conclusions have been drawn accordingly. The results might have been different with a larger student population and more extensive settings involving several universities. We examined the instructors' learning outcomes in our study. On the one hand, such studies enable testing applicability and efficacy in real-world and practically realistic situations. Resilience models do not provide an all-encompassing solution to all levels of learners. Therefore, further investigation will reveal how learning occurs during such interventions. Delayed performance tests would have allowed us to evaluate the long-term impacts of our intervention. But they were not also examined due to lack of time. Replication would be preferred, ideally with a more significant number of subjects to judge the efficacy of the modules. It would be helpful to repeat this. The present study has been conducted with a particular set of variables. It is possible that a similar kind of study can be performed by choosing a different location of variable analysis in more courses and in other universities to prove the plausibility of this model.

Furthermore, placing more emphasis on enhancing our applied test tools, particularly the self-perception ratings, would help us provide estimates of our results that are more trustworthy. Our study offers critical information on developing treatments that support speaking abilities and successfully incorporate technology into subject-specific learning. As a result, our findings could contribute to better technology-assisted instruction.

IV. Conclusion

Motivation and anxiety can affect classroom atmosphere and group cohesiveness (in most cases involving them negatively). Although the present study was not oriented to studying classroom atmosphere and group cohesiveness as an effect of psycholinguistic barriers future studies could focus on these variables. It is quite relevant here to remember that lack of motivation and low self-confidence among students to learn English may result in a hostile classroom atmosphere and lack of cohesion. The study's experimental results demonstrated how the psycholinguistic approach was a successful instructional model that improved students' performance. Applying resilience training is an excellent technique for guaranteeing an efficient and organized learning programme since it provides a structure of lesson plans and teaching from a holistic perspective. Additionally, the psycholinguistic approach considers students' affective variables to improve active learning and learner engagement. They can be used to quantify results at every step of an academic course or training programme and can be modified to meet the preferences of educators. In addition, the concerned teachers need to identify the other factors affecting their students' foreign language learning process. (Wilbur, 2012) and Morgan (2006) had similar findings in their research studies.

Some extra-curricular activities may be initiated on campus in which students may take part willingly and contribute in English to whatever extent they can. For instance, a weekly book reading and discussion club or other common grounds for an informal faculty-student interaction can be established. Since a correlation between psycholinguistic barriers to learning English and students' performance in the language has been found, teachers should take enough care to prevent such occasions where students feel intimidated by the sounds, spellings, or sentence structures in English. The study bears vital pedagogical significance as the affective filter hypothesis has practical implications for English language teachers. Teachers of English need to apply a different strategy so that learners lower their affective filters and the language input is not filtered out so that better learning takes place. Language learning is learner-centred; therefore, much depends on learners' attitudes towards the target language, such as English. Learners' attitudes towards the target language can make or mar the teaching and learning process. English language teachers should be given proper training in handling foreign language-learning-related emotional and psychological issues of students, especially personality-related problems, such as motivation.

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