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ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PERCEPTION AND MANAGEMENT OF LEARNERS' ORAL COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION

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Abstract

This study reports on how English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers perceive and manage oral communication apprehension (CA) among learners in the language classrooms. The main purpose of this qualitative study was to understand language teachers' perception and how they think they are addressing the phenomenon. A qualitative methodology was employed with data generated through interviews, classroom observations and document reviews. A total of twelve respondents from five Malaysian secondary schools were involved in this study. They comprised eight ESL teachers, who were the primary respondents, as well as one principal and three heads of the English language department. The data were analyzed manually by coding and categorizing them based on common patterns that emerged. The study found that teachers are perceptive of learners' manifestations of oral communication apprehension. The findings confirmed some of the manifestations mentioned in earlier literature and at the same time present new information. The findings also revealed ESL teachers' view of oral CA learners were influenced by their perception of oral language development. Finally, the study managed to uncover the rationale behind teacher actions in relation to communication apprehension in the classrooms. The teachers' working practical knowledge emerged from the demands teachers felt that were imposed on them.

Introduction

The phenomenon of learners' fear of oral interaction is termed 'communication apprehension' or anxiety (CA) and is defined as 'an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons' (McCroskey, 1977; 1984:13). Researchers believe that patterns of reinforcement that an individual experiences in the environment are the dominant components of the development of CA (Glaser, 1981; McCroskey, 1982; McCroskey, 1984). This is based on the belief that children make an effort at communication and if they are positively

reinforced they will be encouraged to communicate and if the opposite happens the child will be less willing to communicate.

McCroskey (1984) pioneered studies on communication apprehension and asserted that difficulties in speaking in groups (oral communication anxiety), or in public (stage fright), or in listening to or learning a spoken message (receiver anxiety), are all manifestations of oral Communication Apprehension (CA). People who typically have trouble speaking in groups are likely to experience even greater difficulty speaking in a second language (L2) class since they have little control of the communicative situation and their performance is constantly being monitored.

Literature of development of communication apprehension (McCroskey, 1984) and the development of shyness suggest that there are strong relations of the two phenomena. CA was originally conceptualized as 'a broadly based anxiety related to oral communication' (McCroskey, 1984:12). However, modifications of this definition were made and CA is subsequently defined as 'an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons' (McCroskey 1984:13). CA now encompasses all modes of communication. For this study, the focus is only on one's oral communication in the Malaysian ESL classrooms thus, the reference made is only meant to oral CA.

It is important that students be good communicators in order to succeed academically and socially but high CA may prevent this, thus thwarting their education (Phillips, Smith and Modaff, 2003). CA inhibits one from participating actively within and outside classroom setting. Its effects thus reach further than the classroom and it impedes peoples' social life as well.

Earlier research has noted that people with high CA communicate less frequently than people with low CA. The impact of peers and teachers as contributing to oral CA cannot be ignored. Similarly a teacher with high CA may talk less in class and consequently be a negative role model for the young child. McCroskey et al. sampled 573 in service

elementary and secondary school teachers from 57 school districts in five states. The study reports that there was strong indication that teacher behaviour may form a crucial contributing factor to a child's level of CA. However, no such study has been carried out locally.

A study carried out by Arfah (1981) in a primary school in Malaysia suggests that teachers are insensitive to learners' communicational needs. Teachers in her study were reported to put the blame on the pupils for failure in following instructions given. Sibert's (1996) study goes one step further and reports that teachers neglect the development of learners' oracy needs. Local studies on CA include a study by Rosna (1994) on students at a Malaysian university which reports that oral CA exists in students across the urban and rural distinction and also across grades achieved. A study by Aizan and Rohaiza (2001) inform us that there was no rural and urban distinction either. In 1999, Parilah studied students at another Malaysian university and reported that these students expressed anxiety during their English classes. A similar reaction was observed among undergraduates from another Malaysian university in a third study (Aizan and Rohaiza, 2001).

Of these local Malaysian studies, Rosna's study is especially relevant to the present study as she used McCroskey's Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA 24). McCroskey (1984) views CA as a cognitive variable. According to him, one who experiences CA would experience an internal feeling of discomfort. The lower the CA, the less the internal discomfort. Since CA is experienced internally, the only potentially valid indicator of CA is the individual's report of that experience. Thus, self-report of the individuals obtained under the circumstances where the individual has either nothing to gain or lose serves as the only valid measures of CA. The PRCA24 was designed and improved by McCroskey and is the current instrument used to measure one's oral CA. McCroskey stressed that the PRCA 24 is the only valid measurement for oral CA as no measures of physiological activation and observation of behaviour can provide direct evidence of CA (McCroskey, 1984).

Several other studies (Bahiyah, 1992; Gaudart, 2003) have examined shyness behaviour and although their studies are not specifically on oral CA, they are related to the phenomenon. Bahiyah (1992) claimed that shy learners seldom volunteer to answer questions, seldom give opinions and seldom initiate communication. She said that 'when called, these learners would hesitate, give very short answers, or not answer at all' (1992:97). According to her, in most cases the learners shun eye contact, preferring to stare at the floor, ceiling or out of the window' (1992:97). When asked why they are not responding they claim that they are 'shy', and would relate their feelings of being 'nervous' or 'afraid' (1992: 98).

Amatu (1981:34) states that in verbal performance situations, 'shyness may manifest itself in hesitation, short durations of speech, few syllables and non-fluent speech, or 'garrulousness; characterized by flamboyance, boastfulness, long durations of talk, large verbal output, with the speech largely non-fluent being accompanied by minimal eye contact, excessive fidgeting, and feelings of nervousness'. These manifestations of shyness can be useful indicators for the teacher to better understand the emotional and psycho-social state of the students and subsequently respond accordingly.

Communication Apprehension and Teacher Response

It is interesting to note that the focal attention of these studies were on students who had completed their secondary school education. This gives the impression that oral CA is a spill over from these students' basic formal education, the schools they attended and where they received their formal education.

Given the importance of positive feedback during communicative encounters, teachers play an undoubtedly important role in reducing communication apprehension among their students. The success of any program rests with teachers who are responsible for carrying out teaching and learning in the classroom. It is what teachers think, believe and do at classroom level that ultimately shapes the kind of learning that learners get (Smyth, 1995). Thus, this study aims to understand how English Language (ESL) teachers experience and cope with the oral CA phenomenon.

Researchers in teacher education recognize that what L2 teachers know about teaching is not simply rooted in a body of facts and theories. Instead, L2 teachers' knowledge of teaching is largely experiential and is socially structured based on the teachers' experiences and the type of classrooms from which these teachers come (Freeman, 1993, 1994; Freeman & Richards, 1996; Johnson, 1992, 1994, 1996; Richards & Nunan, 1999).

Teaching is viewed as connecting three dimensions: the cognitive, affective as well as behavioral (Clark and Peterson, 1986 and Lynch, 1989). This is based on the assumption that what teachers do is a "reflection of what the teachers know and believe, and that teacher-knowledge and teacher-thinking provide the underlying framework or schemata which guides the teachers' classroom actions" (Richards & Lockhart, 1994:29). In other words, teachers' perspectives of classroom practices are influenced by their beliefs (Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996).

In the last two decades, research in teacher education has moved from studying teachers' classroom behavior and teaching skills towards examining teachers' thoughts and beliefs. This move is expected to increase our understanding of teachers' classroom decision-making and practice (Fernstermacher, 1994; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Clandinin & Connelly, 1987) and consequently understand what teachers think and believe.

Examining the Teacher and Communication Apprehension

The present study was carried out with a primary focus of examining how ESL teachers perceive and manage learners who experience oral CA in the classroom. It also seeks to study the rationale behind the management strategy these teachers employed. The following research questions were therefore posed and examined:

1. How do ESL teachers perceive CA related behavior in their L2 classrooms?
2. How do ESL teachers view oral CA learners in relation to their teaching?
3. How do ESL teachers manage oral CA learners in the L2 classroom?
4. Why do ESL teachers use the particular method in managing oral CA learners?

A qualitative approach is chosen for this study as the researcher intends to understand a specific phenomenon. The focus of this study is to identify and explore English Language (ESL) teachers' perception of oral CA learners and how they think they are managing oral CA learners in the second language (L2) classrooms. The qualitative approach adopted in this study is considered appropriate as the study needs to be 'context sensitive' (Bogdan & Bilken, 1998) and the view held by Taylor & Bogdan (1998:7) who quote that the qualitative approach pays attention to 'the meanings people attach to things in their lives'. According to Wildermuth (1993), a qualitative approach intends to understand the social world from the point of view of the informants and is based on in-depth interpretation of practices as well as observable behaviors, as noted and reported through classroom observations. In this study, the 'social world' refers to the teaching and learning of ESL in the L2 classrooms as viewed by the ESL teachers.

Data Generation

For this study, serious consideration was given in selecting classroom observation, in-depth interview and document review in generating the required data. The main purpose of the interview was to gain information from the informants. Intangible aspects such as feelings, thoughts and one's perception cannot be observed but can be detected or sensed through careful elicitation during the interview. The interview was also integrated with observations and documentation review during the field study. Similarly, observations offered a first hand account of the situation under study. Both the interview and observations were specifically designed to address the research questions. The document review was used to identify evidence of focus given to oral language development in the teachers' teaching activities.

Respondents

Eight ESL-trained teachers from five secondary schools were involved in this study. Two criteria were used in selecting the informants. The first criterion was that the respondents had to be trained in English Language teaching. This criterion was used to ensure that the informants in the study had been exposed to and trained in content and pedagogical knowledge of the subject. This criterion would help equate one teacher

informant to the other, thus, minimizing the difference between the informants' knowledge of the subject.

The second criterion relates to the informants' professional experience. The selected ESL-trained teachers must have taught the subject for the past three years and have been confirmed in their positions. A minimum of three years of teaching experience would ensure that these ESL teachers have had some grounded teaching experience in the L2 context and would consequently have information to contribute to the study. This criterion would also ensure that the informants are familiar with and have been exposed to the latest in-service courses carried out either at state, district or school level.

Data Site

The research-site for this study was in five National-type Secondary Schools, or more commonly referred to as Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan (SMK). An SMK type school is chosen for this study because of two main reasons. Firstly, this is the type of school that employs the curriculum designed by the Curriculum Development Centre, Ministry of Education Malaysia in its entirety with minimal intervention language development programs. Secondly, the majority of Malaysian learners come from this type of school. The rapport built between the researcher and informants during the researcher's employment at the Education Department also helps ensure co-operation from informants and accessibility to their classroom as well as better opportunity to carry out the study in the selected school.

In this study, only schools that have maintained a consistent record of achievement above 75% in the two national standardized examinations, the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) and the Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR), for three consecutive years were used. The demarcation point of 75% was taken as it represents the mean national achievement in the English language subject in 2003. This demarcation point serves to indicate that learners in the schools have managed to attain commendable proficiency in written English.

Prior to conducting the study, it was important to confirm that there were CA students in the classrooms. The study can only be conducted if there were such students in the classroom. As such, the PRCA 24 was administered to their classes.

The students were briefed as to what they needed to do. They were instructed to read the 24 statements in the PRCA questionnaire and indicate as to how they felt about communicating in the English language under four different situations namely in interpersonal situations, group discussions, public speaking sessions and at meetings.

Table 1 below illustrates the number of students who were identified as CA using the PRCA 24 as well as those who were identified by the respondents as being quiet. The teacher respondents in the study were given pseudonyms to protect their identities as well as their students.

Table 1: Number of students identified as CA and identified as being quiet.

School	Respondent	No. of Students in Class	Students Who Scored 72 and Above	Students Identified by Respondents as Being 'Quiet'
A	Allie	32	19	21
B	Bitha	29	20	25
C	Chloe	41	26	18
	Clair	43	19	19
	Chad	31	19	23
D	Dina	23	15	10
E	Ella	47	32	15
	Erin	28	20	12

According to Table 1 above, more than half of the learners in almost all of the primary respondent's classes scored more than 72 in the PRCA. The scoring thus illustrates that more than half of the learners in the classes studied personally reported experiencing oral CA. The last column displays the primary respondents personal comments based on their observation of learners whom they consider as being 'quiet'. The sitting positions

of these students in the class were then determined from a class plan and the students' behaviour was observed during fieldwork.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study are obtained from orally reported teachers' experiences which were transcribed to enable closer analysis as well as from field-notes and memos. In this article, the findings will be summarized and presented according to the four research questions put forth earlier.

A. Teacher Perceptiveness of Oral Communication Apprehension Related Behavior in the Language Classroom.

In this study, informants are considered to be aware of the presence of oral communication apprehension (CA) among learners if they are able to describe or identify signs or symptoms of learners' avoidance of oral communication. Their descriptions must be related to learners' emotional state of fear or anxiety over the prospect of oral communication.

Data collected indicate that informants were sensitive of learners' feelings and observant of learners' physical behavior. Informants described how they sensed what learners feel when the learners were required to participate orally during the lessons. The informants also noticed oral CA learners' physical display during these instances as is illustrated in Figure 1.

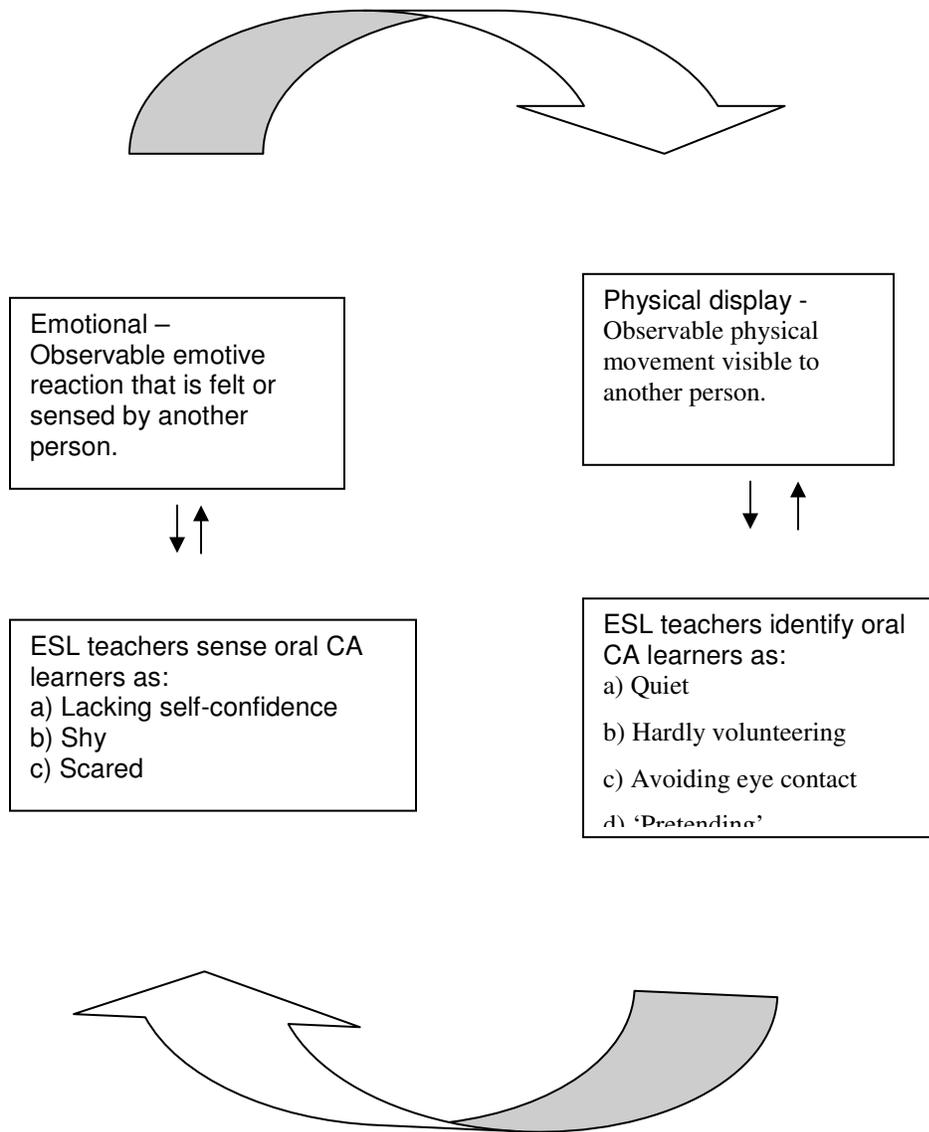


Figure 1: English Language Teachers’ Perceived Oral Communication Apprehension Related Behavior.

Figure 1 illustrates that informants were receptive of oral CA learners’ emotional stature and how these emotional feelings were manifested through their outwardly physical display. In this study, emotional display would include emotive reaction portrayed by the oral CA learners sensed or felt by another person. While physical display would include

all observable physical movements made by the oral CA learners, which was visible to another person.

Figure 1 also demonstrates how ESL teachers sensed oral CA learners' emotive feeling and how specific physical displays are perceived as manifestations of CA. Similarly, the physical manifestations described in Figure 1 imply that these learners withdraw from interaction in the L2 classrooms. The teacher informants reported sensing these feelings among their oral CA learners when these learners were put in situations where oral responses were expected.

ESL teachers are perceptive of their learners' disposition in the language classrooms. They are conscious of learners experiencing discomfort and fear at oral communication even though these learners may seem to have a good grasp of the written aspects of the language. The teachers felt that learners with oral CA put on an act or fake actions in their bid to avoid from being called to respond to teachers' questions. Chloe, for example, noticed that her learners with oral CA sometimes signalled out to her, as a means to avoid from being called out to respond orally. She shared this, "*... And you know, they'll start coughing, like the other day, when I was about to ask for their response. You know --- coughed. Actually she's giving me a signal, ahem, ahem, teacher don't call me (laugh).* (Chloe)." Chloe also noticed that they would be involved in other tactics, such as talking to their partner or even seem busy looking for answers by flicking the pages. Chloe said, "*I also noticed that some of them ... actually pretend to be talking to their partner, or flicking pages ...* (Chloe)."

The teachers' ability to sense learners' emotional disposition and ability to relate that to how learners manifest it when oral responses are required inform us that teachers are sensitive of the presence of the phenomenon in the ESL classroom. Teachers often describe oral CA learners as being physically quiet, they hardly volunteer a response and they employ avoidance strategies.

B. English Language Teachers View of Oral Communication Apprehension Learners in Their Classrooms

In this study the researcher is interested to discover ESL teachers' personal opinion of oral CA learners in relation to their teaching process. ESL teachers in the study personally view the oral CA learners in their language classrooms in various ways. First, they were seen as unproblematic. Secondly, the teachers felt that the learners hinder lessons. They were also considered difficult to help as well as affecting the teacher in various ways.

'Unproblematic' is defined as not attributing to or causing disciplinary problems in the classroom that impedes the teachers' teaching process. Due to their quiet nature, learners with oral CA were considered as 'unproblematic' by most of the respondents.

Chloe admitted that learners with oral CA were 'unproblematic'. She described them as being quiet and not causing any problems in the class that would impede her teaching. She described one of her oral CA learner as, "*... she's so quiet, she gives me no problem, she doesn't even shout or scream, I don't have to tell her 'shut up' ... (Chloe).*"

Allie claimed that learners with oral CA could sometimes impede teachers' teaching. She declared that learners with oral CA consumed a lot of class contact time. She explicated that when she expected them to respond and they did not, it resulted in her spending more time, waiting for them to respond. She explained,

... they take up my time, because when, when I expect them to answer and they don't answer I'm always at the, the dilemma should I give them the answer or... force them all, force them to answer, ... and if I have to force them to answer how long do I wait? (Allie).

She further added that their silence hampered her teaching. She said, "... and if they don't answer, you know, do I just leave it hanging and ...give them the answers or ... it does. It does sort of slows down, ... teaching, ... (Allie)." Allie claimed that learners with oral CA slowed her teaching pace because they consumed a lot of her class contact

time. Allie said that learners with oral CA took a long time to give a response. She claimed that she was usually disappointed over their silence and lack of response especially since she knows they actually know the answer.

Even though Bitha had earlier claimed that learners with oral CA are unproblematic, she too admitted that learners with oral CA impeded her teaching pace. She explained that learners with oral CA do not cause disciplinary problems but they upset teachers' teaching plans, thus their silence is seen as hindering teachers' teaching pace. She said that not getting a response from them put her in a dilemma too. She explained that if the learners respond when she teaches them, she felt that they have understood what she was trying to teach. But if they were quiet, she claimed that she could not get the cue to proceed. Thus, their silence impeded her teaching, as she would then have to re-strategize. She shared, "*... if they are not being responsive, you know it ... sort of ... it puts you like there is this big question mark there whether or not they get what you are trying to tell them, you see?* (Bitha)."

In short, the oral CA learners' silence was accepted, as they caused no disciplinary problems in class. Speaking may not be seen as an important skill to master and therefore oral CA learners' silence proved not a hindrance to their teaching. Teachers in this study do not see oral CA learners as a problem. Since oral CA learners are not an issue in the EL classrooms thus they are not addressed. Teachers claimed that their main concern was that they managed to complete their teaching plans and the syllabus, which are reading and writing based.

C. Managing Oral Communication Apprehension Learners in the Classroom.

In this study, teachers' management of oral CA learners is defined as how the ESL teachers address or treat the oral CA learners in the ESL classrooms. Based on observations during the study, teachers were observed to:

- a. “force’ the oral CA learners to speak;
- b. carry out more reading and writing oriented activities;
- c. marginalize the oral CA learners.

The presence of fear among these L2 learners also implied that learners do not feel they are safe to take risks in their learning. The feeling of insecurity may exist due to lack of opportunity available for them to sample the language learnt. This may also imply that teachers’ pedagogical practices do not cater to learners’ emotional needs.

Teachers in this study can be said to experience a teaching dilemma. They disclosed their worry for the oral CA learners but at the same time did not do much to help them. They claimed directives both from the Ministry of Education as well as the school administrator bind them. They disclosed that even though they would like to have more oral language activities in their classes, the skill is not evaluated. Thus, time spent on practicing the skill seemed wasted.

D. Understanding Approaches Employed in Managing Oral Communication Apprehension Learners

The finding to the previous research question revealed that ESL teachers practiced reading and writing focused teaching and that they marginalized oral CA learners in their language classrooms. School administrators and heads of department of the various schools in the study verified this finding.

Figure 2 illustrates that teachers’ actions in the classrooms were determined by various ‘constraints’. These ‘constraints’ have a strong influence in the way teachers approach the teaching and learning of the English Language.

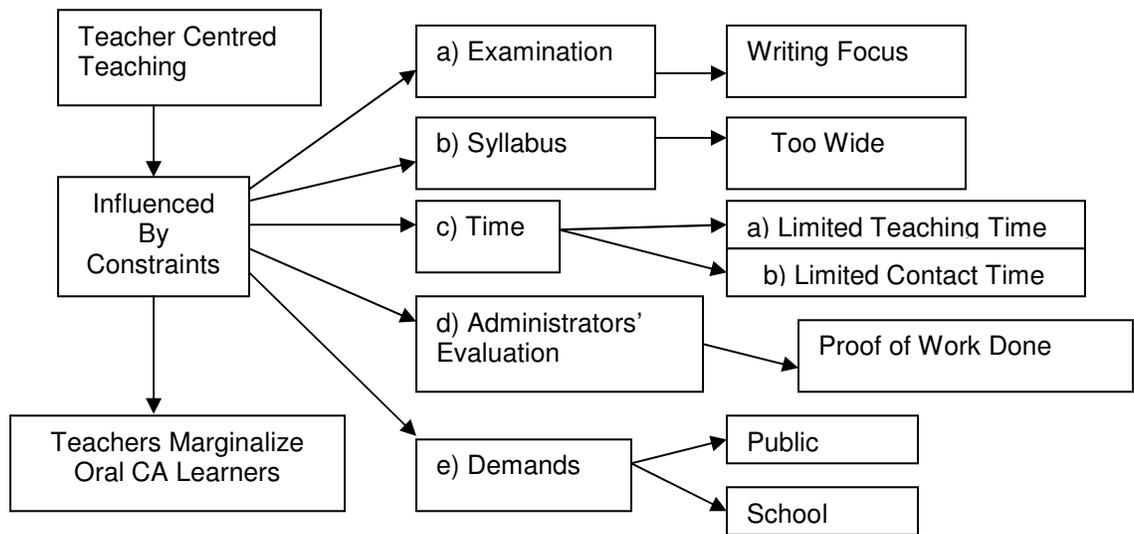


Figure 2: Rationale for English Language Teachers' Management Approach of Oral Communication Apprehension Learners

Data indicated that teachers were influenced by the examination needs, which they believed to be written based. Data also indicated that teachers were required to handle a wide syllabus within time constraints besides having to fulfill the demands of administrators as well as other stakeholders. Hence these 'constraints' affected their view on the oral language component of language teaching, and consequently their management of oral CA learners.

Data collected also revealed that informants personally concur with experts. They believed that for oral language to develop, opportunities for practice and use of oral language through language activities should be made available. But they reported that the reality of the ESL classrooms however, disallowed them from doing what theories proposed and what these teachers believed.

The findings also revealed that teachers' approach was influenced by five main constraints. Firstly, the informants were influenced by the needs of the examination. Since they believed that it is written based, thus they focused on the skill and not on the

spoken component. Secondly, informants claimed that the syllabus is too wide. In order to complete the syllabus before the examination they had to rush through. In doing so they practiced teacher-centered teaching so that they would have better control of the pace to cover the syllabus. Informants claimed that they had to teach within time constraints. They reported the allocated five periods of teaching time was too limited for them to do what they need to do. This was made worse by the interruption on their contact time through state, district and school level activities. Data also indicated that the school administration's evaluation system too influenced their teaching approach and activities, besides having to meet demands from parents and the school.

Teachers in this study revealed that their teaching is not driven by professionalism. What these teachers disclosed seemed to imply that they possess knowledge of theories but they lack the freedom to practice teaching the way they seem fitting. What these teachers disclosed seemed to indicate that they are bound by 'directives'. This is revealed when they seemed to be receptive of learners' in the class, they were able to share their ideas of how best to teach these learners but they disclosed they were not at liberty to do so in the classroom.

Conclusion

This study seeks to explore ESL teachers' perception and management of oral CA learners in the ESL classrooms and discovered the force, which determined what takes place in the ESL classroom. Several conclusions were derived from this study.

Even though data indicated that teachers are perceptive of oral CA related behavior in their L2 classrooms, the findings revealed that no appropriate or suitable actions were taken by the teachers to understand the phenomenon. Teachers proved they were knowledgeable of strategies for oral language development but they lack the effort to provide a non-threatening language-learning environment or minimize the fear that exists in the L2 classrooms.

Teachers claimed they understand the emergent need to rectify the situation but admitted that they are bound by 'constraints'. Constraints of fulfilling examination needs, limited teaching time and the extensive syllabus were reported to steer teachers towards the approach they are employing at present which is reading and writing focused. Teachers claimed that the syllabus was too wide for them to accomplish within the time given thus they minimized learners' oral language time and maximized their reading and writing practices.

It was also found that teachers' practical knowledge played an important role in determining what went on in the classroom. Their practical knowledge informed them that their job is to prepare the learners for the examination. The examination is reading and writing focused. Speaking is not an essential skill for learners to master in order to pass the examination. As such, teachers may see it as an insignificant skill to teach. This knowledge consequently, molded their view of oral language development and put no emphasis on teaching this skill to the learners. Teachers are more worried about producing the expected results and oral CA learners proved they could read and write well and thus fulfill teachers' expectation.

Based on data, some teachers are affected by the oral CA learners' silence. These teachers admitted to experiencing low self-esteem and felt frustrated over these learners' silence. They admitted experiencing a teaching dilemma as to how best to deal with them in the language classroom.

Oral CA learners are learners who fear oral communication. They experience fear over the prospect of taking part in oral communication. Learners experiencing oral CA can thus be considered as learners with special needs. These learners' need to be attended to so as to develop their ability to speak without fear and teachers need to be better prepared to handle them in the ESL classrooms. Therefore, teachers need to be trained to help these learners.

The English language curriculum in Malaysian schools is a dynamic one. To achieve the education objectives, many programmes had been introduced to improve the teaching and learning of the subject. Based on the finding, several recommendations need to be considered for the betterment of future English Language programmes.

This study has shown that teachers may be well versed in various theories of language learning. They are able to share what theory says about oral language development but what determine what happened in the language classroom is their practical knowledge (Elbaz,1983:5). Teachers' practical knowledge informed them that the education system is examination oriented. They believed that they had to produce results. They also believed that the best way to achieve the expected results is by focusing on the written aspect of language teaching. Presently, the teachers feel that oral language play an insignificant role in the overall English Language achievement of the learner.

Consequently, minimal consideration is given to the development of the skill and issues related to oral language development are not attended to. The situation will remain so unless, teachers as the implementers of curriculum in the classrooms feel that they need to include the oral language development in their teaching procedure. As such, there is a need to reorganize teachers' practical knowledge. Based on the information gathered in this study, this is only achievable by restructuring the examination format.

Figure 3 illustrates how restructuring the examination format would lead to a restructuring of teachers' practical knowledge.

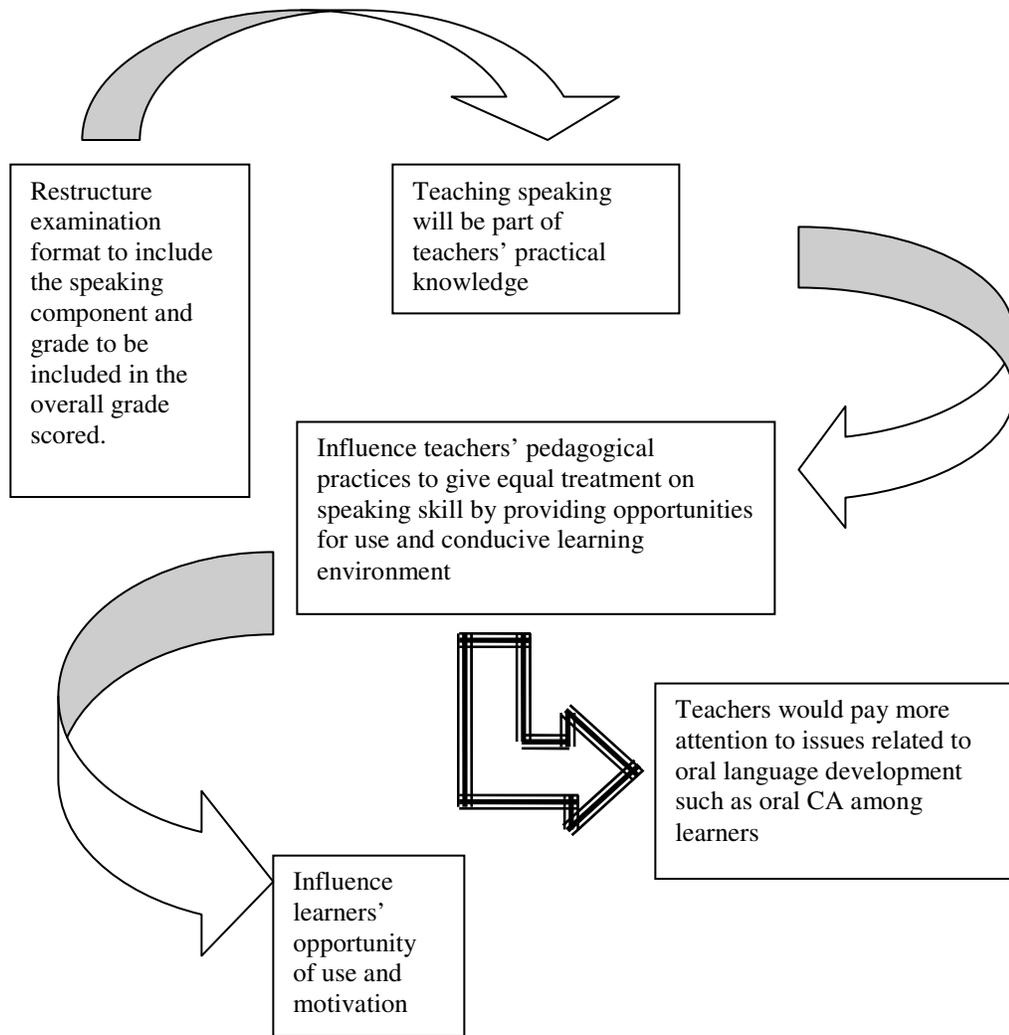


Figure 3: Reorganizing Teacher's Practical Knowledge

This restructuring would include and give emphasis to the oral language component. Once the restructured format becomes part of ESL teachers' practical knowledge, it will influence their pedagogical practices to provide for oral language development in their language classes. This in-turn would influence opportunities for learners to practice using the language besides changing their view on how learners look at the importance of the oral skill. ESL teachers would then pay attention to issues related to learners' oral language development, such as learners' oral communication apprehension.

Accordingly, a more reliable evaluation format needs to be set up for the speaking component as compared to the present OET. Informants were in favour of the MUET procedure where learners' ability at speaking is tested instead of just regurgitating a text. The MoE Examination Syndicate might need to study this proposal and come up with an evaluation that benefits all concerned. External examiners should be trained for the evaluation purpose to ensure fair allocation of marks as marks will be included to determine the final marks learners scored for the subject.

In-service courses on managing oral CA learners need to be carried out to refresh or enhance teachers' pedagogical practices. Alleviating anxiety and providing a sense of community within the language classroom should be the ultimate classroom atmosphere desired in the ESL classrooms.

Teachers in this study had shared their own learning experiences. Some admitted that they too experienced oral CA during their school days but claimed that they do not feel shy to speak up now. Since teachers play an important role in the language classroom, there is a need to study the phenomenon further. It would be interesting and essential to know how oral CA teachers may affect their learners. This would then have implications on future teacher-training selection as well as future programmes.

Based on the feedback, since these teachers claimed to have overcome the fear they felt when they were learning the language, a study on this transformation is imperative. This proposed study may lead to further understanding of the oral CA learners and may then be applied to improve the teaching of the subject for oral CA learners. Besides widening knowledge of the phenomenon, precautionary measures could also be considered in order to minimize oral CA among Malaysian English as Second Language learners.

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