

## Why Do Pakistani Students are Reluctant to Speak English

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### ABSTRACT

*English is the most widely used language in the world of academia and in the past few years a great increase in English language teaching (ELT) has been seen in various disciplines at all levels in Pakistan. But it is matter of great concerns that even studying English from the primary level, the Pakistani college and university students are unable to communicate effectively in English. The aim of present research is to investigate factors and causes that are big obstacle in speaking A close ended questionnaire was distributed among the 110 female students of two well-known education institutes of district Faisalabad Pakistan, to find out their attitudes towards spoken English and reasons behind the problems in communicating in English. The findings show that mostly students are victims of problems i.e. lack of vocabulary, syntax, fluency, cramming, and poor understanding of grammatical rules, proper use of tenses and structure of a sentence and hesitation in pronunciation. On the basis of the findings it is suggested that the old approach of ELT through Grammar translation method (GTM) should be replaced by new communicative approaches. The teacher centered classroom should be replaced with the learner centered classroom where the teacher should emphasize the pronunciation and more opportunities should be given to students for speaking English. The research will help the policy makers, teachers as well as learners of English as a second language (ESL) to focus on the suggestions to improve the prevalent situation of English speaking scenario in Pakistan.*

**Keywords:** ELT, ESL, communication skills, pronunciation, Grammar translation method, Communicative approach

### INTRODUCTION

Language is essential for proper communication. Importance of English is great not only in Pakistan but all over the world. It is spoken by more than three-hundred-forty (340) million people as a first language in United Kingdom and US (Crystal, 1997). The place of English language as a subject has remained a severe matter of controversy in the present system of education in Pakistan. It is also language of research and teaching at higher level, according to the new education policy of 2009 (Government of Pakistan, 2009), English will be used as a medium of instruction in science and mathematics from class IV to onwards (Govt. of Pakistan 2009). Talking about the current scenario of the education in Pakistan and teachers, Memon (1989) states English teachers excessively use mother tongue in the class room discourse and pay little heed on student's listening and speaking (p.66). It does not need special training to learn our mother tongue just by listening others a child learns to imitate. It can be learned to speak by parrot like repetition at early stage it does not require to understand grammar or sentence structure. We learn it as we learn different arts i.e. knitting, driving, stitching etc. The rule here to follow is "practice makes a man perfect". Teacher should make them to learn through drills so they become more habitual of using through drills (Hashmi, 1991).

In this fast developing era English has become more important than the native language, considering the importance of English language in Pakistan it has been given the status of compulsory subject and also the medium of instruction in science and technical education in Pakistan (Sarwar, 2002). English language is very important for the students because, if they are not able to speak English fluently, they cannot dream for a bright future, besides they cannot get appropriate jobs anywhere. It is great dilemma that students feel reluctance in speaking English. It is also true that teachers also emphasize on speaking English but our education system is not supporting this effort at all that's why students feel great difficulty in speaking English at post graduate level (Sharma, 2004).

Pronunciation is the basic tool of learning English language. "pronunciation continues to be the EFL/ESL orphan" (Gilbert, 2010:1), and Pakistan is no exception in this case. One more important reason for not getting accurate pronunciation of words in Pakistani students is Urdu orthography. Because of the orthography of Urdu which influences when learner tries to acquire English phonetics. In Pakistan mostly people speak Urdu, Punjabi so they feel difficulty in pronouncing English words accurately, this reason also discourages Pakistani people to speak English. English accent of the people also varies from one native speaker to another. The sound and spellings of L1 distorts the shape of word, it also distort pronunciation (Akram, 2010).

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

Language is essential for communication. Brown and Yule (1983) describe communication which is involving two common purposes; the interactional function, where language is used referentially exchange information. The purpose of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is enabling learners to function interactionally and transactionally in second language.

Rahman (1999) in his survey of different schools deduced the result that English language learning desire is produced in all type of students. Nunan (2003) states that accuracy is the extent to which student's speeches match with the people actually say when they use a target language Fluency is the extent to which student use language, quickly and confidently, with few hesitations and unnatural pauses, false start, word searches (p.55).

Bashiruddin (2003) states that the students do not have much interaction in their everyday communication. Student and teacher both use their native language to communicate in class room (Husain, 2005). In the large majority of Pakistani classrooms the grammar translation method is employed. More efforts are put on development of reading skills. Readers are usually given text which is followed by grammar, comprehension, and vocabulary building and translation exercises. This is a concern which led to a qualitative research. The results indicated that creativity, confidence and competence were the major key aspects of development when speaking to others.

Jalaluddin (2006) found that after learning English for eleven years students are not able to speak English. . English language enjoys a significant importance in Pakistan. It is the official language in the country. Boonkit (2010) worked for the enhancement and the development of speaking skills for non-native speakers of English. Gan (2012) describes the result of a research study that focused to the problems of verbal English skills of ESL students and teacher training institution in Hong Kong. The study describes the gap in the understanding of the problems while learning ESL. Students encountered in their verbal English development in the context of Bachelor of Education (English language) program, opportunities for speaking English is insufficient in tutorials, input-poor environment for verbal communication outside the class room gives birth to many problems that closely related to the sociocultural, interpersonal contexts in which ESL student encounters himself.

While motivation is another important factor. Younas (2013) said that motivation as well as self-confidence proved effective in EFL learning.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The present paper focuses on an important issue of the Pakistani learners of English that after the study of English language for more than ten years, the students are still unable to communicate in English.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

To address the problem this paper asks few questions:

1. What are the reasons which blocks the way of Pakistani students while speaking English language?
2. What is the role of pronunciation in learning English language?

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

This research paper aims to:

1. Analyze the problems which are hurdles in speaking English for Pakistani students,
2. See role of pronunciation in speaking English among Pakistani students.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Richards and Schmidt (2010) define a research methodology, and describe it as it includes procedures which are essential tools for an investigation; it also consists of the methods used in a research for the collection and interpretation of the data.

A sample is “any group of individuals that is selected to represent a population” (ibid, p.506).The present research aims to highlight the opinion of the students about the problems which causes hurdle among the students of Pakistan while speaking English language as ESL.

Richards and Schmidt (2010) define population as “Population consists of any set of items, individuals, etc., that share some general and observable characteristics from which a sample can be taken. Thus, one can speak of comparing test scores across a sample of a population of students” (p. 443). Population of the present research consisted of students from Govt. College University, Madina Town, Faisalabad and Shiblee College for Women, Faisalabad. Female students are included in population, for this purpose adapted questionnaire of Akram and Qureshi (2012) has been used which consists of 20 items. This study was delimited to investigate the attitude of Intermediate and Graduation students towards problems of speaking English among the students of Pakistan.

### **Method**

The approach used for data collection and analysis is mixed method approach it used both methods, qualitative and quantitative. A questionnaire which comes under the domain of qualitative research method was used to collect data. The collected data were analyzed in the forms of frequencies, percentages, tables and figures, which fall under the quantitative research method (Cohen et al, 2007).

### **Participants**

110 students (females) from the following colleges of Faisalabad district were the participants of the study aged between 17-23 years: i) Govt. College University Madina Town Faisalabad, ii) Shiblee College for women Faisalabad.

### Data Collection and Data analysis

Data Collection is an important aspect of any type of research study. Data collection is the process of collecting data. Population of the study consisted of students from Govt. College University Madina Town Faisalabad and Shiblee College for Women Faisalabad. Female students are included in population, 110 students (females) from the following colleges of Faisalabad district were the participants of the study aged between 17-23 years.

Students were asked to fill the questionnaire the data was collected in easy and frank way so it can facilitate participants. There are many problems regarding the problems of learning English the study were included in the questionnaire after having a thorough study and considering the answers of the people analysis of the data has been given. This analysis purely based on the answers of the population selected for research study.

### RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The following table shows the results of the study it has been highlighted in the percentages.

**Table 1. Response of the participants in Percentage**

No.	SA	A	UD	DA	SD
1.	73.63%	21.8%	3.63%	0%	0.09%
2.	5.45%	42.72%	14.54%	28.18%	9.09%
3.	20.90%	39.09%	26.36%	8.18%	5.45%
4.	30.90%	45.45%	10%	10.90%	2.72%
5.	27.27%	45.45%	12.72%	7.27%	7.27%
6.	21.18%	44.56%	18.18%	10%	5.45%
7.	27.27%	44.56%	16.36%	5.45%	6.36%
8.	34.54%	39.09%	13.63%	8.18%	4.54%
9.	58.18%	24.54%	9.09%	5.45%	2.72%
10.	14.54%	24.54%	21.81%	28.18%	10.90%
11.	30%	20.90%	22.72%	17.27%	9.09%
12.	2.90%	29.09%	16.36%	22.72%	10.90%
13.	14.54%	44.54%	19.09%	14.54%	7.27%
14.	30.90%	34.54%	18.18%	8.18%	8.18%
15.	20%	27.27%	27.27%	22.72%	2.72%
16.	15.45%	36.36%	25.45%	15.45%	7.27%
17.	20.90%	33.63%	20%	16.36%	9.09%
18.	51.81%	24.54%	11.81%	9.09%	2.72%
19.	35.45%	36.36%	15.45%	10.90%	1.81%
20.	25.45%	39.09%	11.81%	12.72%	10.90%

The following findings are made after the data analysis:

Figure 1 show that in the response of first question 95.45% students agree that pronunciation is an important factor in language teaching while 0.90% do not agree with this opinion and 3.63% students are undecided. Related to this 73.63% strongly agreed and 0.90% strongly disagreed (Table 1, as shown in point.1). On the basis of findings it is clear that in the

response of first question 95.45% students agreed while 0.90% do not agree with this opinion while 3.63% students are undecided also 73.63% strongly agreed and 0.90% strongly disagreed.

48.18% students agree that most students know the knowledge of phonology while 37.27% do not agree related to this question 5.45% strongly agreed and 9.09% strongly disagreed and 14.54% students are undecided (Table 1). The study shows that 60% students agreed while 13.63% disagreed and 26.36 % are undecided where 20.90% strongly agreed and 5.45% strongly disagreed

60% students agreed that phonetics paves the way for good pronunciation while 13.63% disagree and 26.36 are undecided (As shown in point.3) where 20.90% strongly agreed and 5.45% strongly disagreed.

76.36% students agreed that pronunciation drills polish the accents of the students (As shown in point.4) while 13.63% disagreed and 10% are undecided while in response to this 30.90% strongly agreed and 2.72% strongly disagreed.

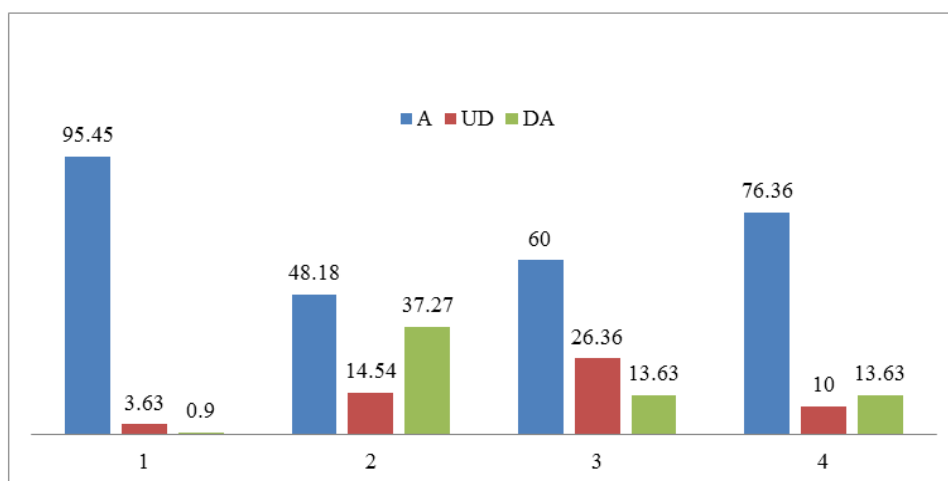


Figure 1. Importance of pronunciation

Figure 2 shows that 72.72% students agree that there should be use of AV aids in teaching pronunciation while 14.54 disagreed (As shown in point.5) and 12.72% undecided. in response to this question 27.27% strongly agreed and 7.27% strongly disagreed.

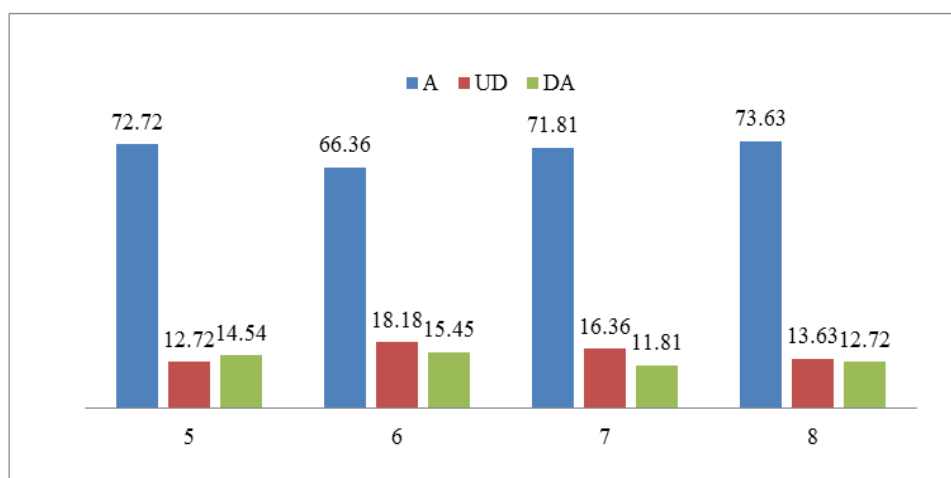


Figure 2. Response on the use of AV aids and digital dictionaries

66.36% students agreed that there should be use of dictionaries in teaching pronunciation while 15.45% disagreed and 18.18% are undecided (As shown in point.6) while 21.81 strongly agreed and 5.45 strongly disagreed.

71.81% students agreed that there should be practice of phonetic transcription (As shown in point.7) while 11.81% disagreed and 16.36% undecided, 27.27% strongly agreed while 6.36% strongly disagreed.

73.63% students agreed that teacher should make use of digital dictionaries as well (As shown in point.8) while 12.72% disagree with this statement and 13.63% are undecided while 34.54% strongly agreed and 4.54% strongly disagreed.

Figure 3 shows that 82.72% students agreed that students should be given chances to speak in English while 8.18% disagreed with this statement and 9.09% are undecided on the other hand 58.18% strongly agreed while 2.72% strongly disagreed(As shown in point.9).

39.09% students agreed that teachers are not capable enough to teach English while 39.09% disagreed (As shown in point.10) and 21.81 are undecided, in response to this 14.54% strongly agreed while 10.90% strongly disagreed.

50.90% students agreed that the encouragement for speaking English from the teacher is not satisfactory (As shown in point.11) while 26.36% disagreed and 22.72% are undecided, in response to this question 30% strongly agreed while 9.09% strongly disagreed.

50% students agreed that extracurricular activities are not adequately organized to improve speaking skills while 33.63% disagreed and 16.36% students are undecided (As shown in point.12) while 2.90% strongly agreed while 10.90% strongly disagreed.

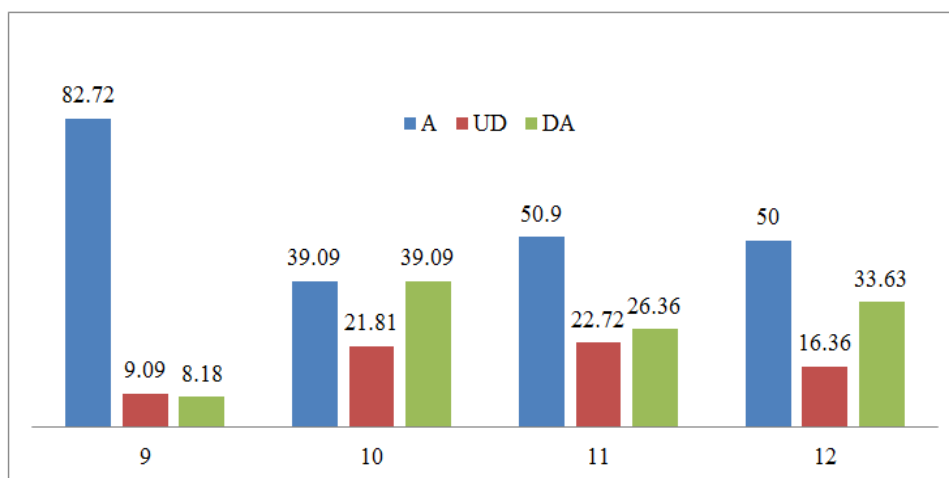


Figure 3. Role of teacher in ELT

Figure 4 shows that 59.09% students agreed that the methodology of teaching English as second language is not proper (As shown in point.13) while 21.81% students disagreed and 19.09% are undecided, in response to this question 14.54% strongly agreed while 7.27% strongly disagreed.

65.45% students agreed that positive motivation is helpful in teaching English language while 16.36% disagreed and 18.18% are undecided on the other hand 30.90% strongly disagreed and 8.18% strongly disagreed (As shown in point.14).

47.27% students agreed that stubbornness and unwilling to learn English is hurdle in speaking English while 25.45% disagreed(As shown in point.15)and 27.27% are undecided where 20% students are strongly agreed while 2.72% students strongly disagreed.



51.81% students agreed that insufficient practice in supportive environment blocks the way for speaking English while 22.72% disagreed and 25.45% students are undecided on the other hand 15.45% students are strongly agreed while 7.27% strongly disagreed (As shown in point.16)

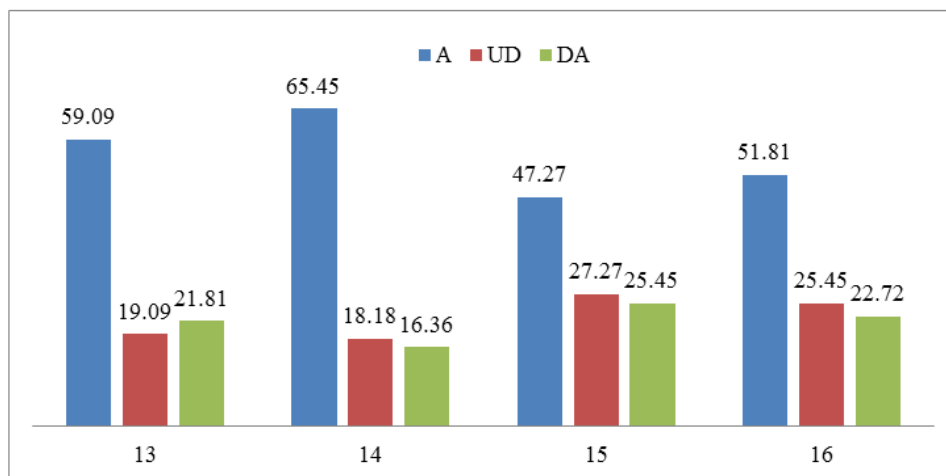


Figure 4. Methodology and motivation of the students

Figure 5 shows that 54.54% students agreed that physical disability of the students which creates a sense of complex is a hurdle for speaking English (As shown in point.17) while 25.45% students disagreed and 20% students are undecided on the other hand 20.90% students strongly agreed and 9.09% strongly disagreed.

76.36% students agreed that fear of embarrassment blocks the way for speaking English while 11.81% students disagreed and 11.81% are undecided in response to this question 51.81% strongly agreed while 2.72% strongly disagreed (As shown in point.18)

71.81% students agreed that portion of speaking English should be more in curriculum while 12.72% disagreed and 15.45% are undecided (As shown in point.19) while 35.45% strongly agreed and 1.81% strongly disagreed.

64.56% students agreed that students do not understand the rules of linguistics (As shown in point.20) while 23.63% disagreed and 11.81% are undecided on the other hand 25.45% strongly agreed while 10.90% strongly disagreed.

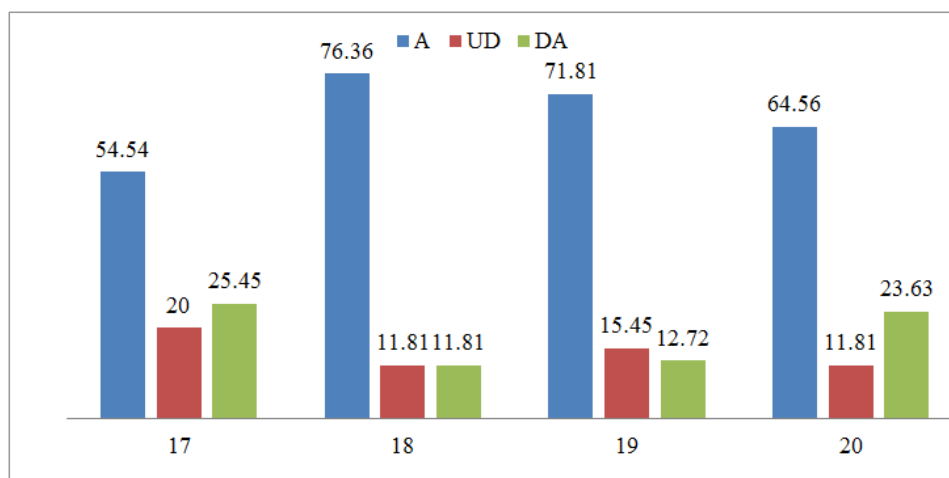


Figure 5. Role of speaking in curriculum

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Here the research shows that pronunciation is more important to teach as it paves way for language learning. Frazer (2000) says that poor pronunciation is a hurdle which makes a student less social, dull in academic work. In the second question here the results clearly recommend the statement of (Dan, 2006) that good pronunciation may make the communication more relax and easier and make it successful. In the answer to the question three most students agreed that phonetics paves the way for good pronunciation so the results highly favored that phonetics is important for good pronunciation

In the answer to the question four majorities of the students agreed so the results show that drill are essential for English language teaching.

Results of point five about the use of AV aid shows that AV aids should be used.

In response to point six a large number of students agreed that students should use dictionaries the results show that there should be use of dictionaries in teaching English language. In response to question seven results show that there should be phonetic transcription. As far as question eight is concerned these percentages suggest that teacher should make use of digital dictionaries.

In response to question nine mostly students agreed to this statement and here the study recommended the statement of Bahadur (2009) and Shughri (2007) points out that students used to be reluctant in class participation because of lack of opportunities.

In reaction to question ten, the results here shows that teacher frequently use L1 in classroom because of this student get less exposure to English language (Bahadur, 2009; Shughri, 2007). In question eleven. The study shows here that there should be encouragement from teacher for the students to speak English. In response to point twelve my results shows that there should be extracurricular activities.

In reaction to question thirteen about methodology, here findings recommended the statement that teacher can make changes in their methods if they are introduced to new teaching techniques (Bashiruddin, 2003, p.33)

In the point fourteen about motivation here results recommended the statement teacher should address the issues of motivation by creating awareness among students (Jones, 2002).

In response to point fifteen here study shows that stubbornness should be covered. In the point sixteen here study recommended the statement Shughri (2007) such practices should be brought to practice so students get chances to exchange their ideas (p.72).

In response to point seventeen here the research shows that physical disability creates complex in students. Where in reaction to point eighteen here study suggested the statement that good pronunciation makes the communication relax. (Dan, 2006) In response to the point nineteen study shows portion of English should be increased in curriculum. In response to point twenty results show that rules of linguistics must be taught.

Broadly stated that this article suggested in the context of second language learning the practice of teaching English should be changed. The teacher centered classroom changed with the learner center classroom. The old method of teaching Grammar translation method have to be replaced by new method of communicative approach and task based teaching activities. Students can be mimics and need to be provided with some explanations of phonetic sounds and transcription. Fraser (2000) says that poor pronunciation can condemn learners to less social, academic and work advancement than they deserved. This study is contrasted with Morley (1991) who opined that the methodologies of teaching must change



from emphasizing segmental elements of pronunciation to supra-segmental elements of pronunciation and from linguistic competence to communicative competence while the present study stress on the segmental elements.

### **SUGGESTIONS**

Following are the suggestions of the study for learning better English pronunciation:

1. There should be use of sound drilling and make it essential part of the student's learning so that they can learn primary sounds of English.
2. AV aids can be used to help students in learning English language.
3. Needs and moods of the student should be considered while teaching pronunciation.
4. There should be an encouragement from the teacher to use digital dictionaries
5. There is a need for the ESL/EFL teachers to get them equipped with courses and materials which help them to improve teaching pronunciation.
6. Teacher training should be essential so that the teachers may be well equipped in the communication skills as well.

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**Questionnaire for Students**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ College &Class: \_\_\_\_\_

SA =Strongly Agree, A= Agree, UD= Undecided, DA= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree.

No.	Statement	SA	A	UD	DA	SD
1.	Pronunciation is an important factor in language teaching.					
2.	Mostly students are aware of the knowledge of phonology.					
3.	Phonetics paves the way for good pronunciation.					
4.	Pronunciation drills also polish the accents of the students.					
5.	There should be use of AV aids in teaching pronunciation.					
6.	There should be use of dictionaries in teaching pronunciation.					
7.	There should be practice of phonetic transcription.					
8.	Teacher should make use of digital dictionaries as well.					
9.	Students should be given chances to speak in English.					
10.	Teachers are not capable enough to teach English.					
11.	The encouragement for speaking English from the teacher is not satisfactory.					
12.	Extracurricular activities are not adequately organized to improve speaking skills.					
13.	The methodology of teaching English as second language is not proper.					
14.	Positive motivation is helpful in teaching English language.					
15.	Stubbornness and unwillingness to learn English.					
16.	Insufficient practice in supportive environment.					
17.	Physical disability of students which creates a sense of complex.					
18.	Fear of embarrassment if they pronounce it wrongly.					
19.	Portion of speaking English should be more in curriculum.					
20.	Students do not understand rules of Linguistics studies.					