

MAIN CHALLENGES FACED BY EFL STUDENTS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract: This thesis explores the primary challenges encountered by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in the process of language acquisition. The study aims to identify, analyze, and understand the barriers that EFL learners face, shedding light on these challenges' impact on their language learning journey. This research seeks to provide insights into the multifaceted nature of challenges faced by EFL students, encompassing linguistic, psychological, cognitive dimensions. The investigation delves into the struggles experienced by EFL students, including difficulties in grammar and syntax acquisition, comprehension of idiomatic expressions, pronunciation challenges, and communication apprehension and suggests some strategies and solutions to these problems.

Keywords: EFL students, language learning, main challenges, acquisition, sub-Skills

Introduction: In contemporary times, the influence of English as a global language has expanded, impacting individuals worldwide and enabling communication across diverse cultures. The function of English transcends international boundaries, encompassing not only global interactions but also local contexts (Gunantar, 2016). Consequently, the utilization of English has proliferated in a broader global community, attributable to its status as an international language, which has effectively shifted the dominance of English on a global scale (McKay, 2018).

As the role of English extends its reach, Kachru (1992) observed that English is increasingly employed in non-English speaking nations, particularly for academic purposes and language learning processes. However, despite this widespread use, challenges persist within the language learning domain. Learning English in non-English speaking countries may present greater potential hurdles than in English-speaking nations, as noted by Kachru (1992). These challenges underscore the complexities encountered in the process of acquiring English proficiency, particularly in settings where English is not the primary language of communication.¹

Literature review: Among the many language learners worldwide, EFL students face a unique set of challenges, often stemming from the differences between their native language and the complexities of English as a second language.

Notably, renowned linguist Stephen Krashen's theory of second language acquisition provides valuable insights into the challenges faced by EFL students. Krashen emphasizes the distinction between learning and acquisition, underscoring the significance of comprehensible input and meaningful communication in language learning. His work highlights the importance of creating an environment where EFL students can engage in authentic language use, an endeavor often inhibited by the challenges they encounter. Moreover, the influential work of linguist Michael Long showcases the complexities of interaction in the language learning process. Long's Interaction Hypothesis delves into the pivotal role of conversational interaction and negotiation of meaning in fostering language

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acquisition. For EFL students, navigating these interactions can pose considerable challenges, impacting their fluency and communicative competence in English.

Discussion

Difficulties in sub-Skill

Grammar: English grammar can present a significant challenge for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. To overcome this hurdle, learners should concentrate on one grammar aspect at a time and apply it in practical situations. Moreover, they can enhance their grasp of grammar in real-life contexts by reading English materials and listening to English media.

Vocabulary: Acquiring new vocabulary can feel daunting, particularly for those starting out. To address this, beginners should prioritize learning commonly used English words initially and gradually expand their vocabulary. Embracing a structured approach to vocabulary acquisition can alleviate the challenges of learning new words. One effective strategy is to categorize words based on frequency and relevance to everyday communication. By mastering commonly used English words before progressing to less frequently used vocabulary, learners can build a strong foundational understanding of the language. Additionally, employing context-based learning methods such as word associations, usage in sentences, and engaging with authentic materials can further enhance retention and application of new vocabulary.

Speaking: Many EFL students encounter difficulties in speaking English fluently, often due to limited practice or a fear of making errors. To address this obstacle, it is recommended that students engage in conversations with either native speakers or fellow learners and make an effort to speak as frequently as possible. It is essential for students to overcome their fear of making mistakes and instead focus on effectively conveying their thoughts, rather than striving for perfection.

Listening comprehension: It can be challenging for EFL students, as native speakers commonly use informal language and speak at a rapid pace. Students can address this challenge by actively listening to English media, such as podcasts and videos, to grasp the overall meaning of the content. Furthermore, practicing listening for specific details and taking notes during the process can also be beneficial.

Writing: Meanwhile, problems in writing skills, as mentioned by Byrnes (1998), were that the most problems faced by the students in writing skills included psychological problems, linguistic problems, and cognitive problems. To conquer this obstacle, students should strive to engage in extensive reading and writing activities in English, and should endeavor to practice composing various forms of written work, including emails, essays, and reports. Furthermore, utilizing grammar and spell-check utilities can aid in rectifying errors.

Conclusion: In conclusion, the journey of learning English as a foreign language is undoubtedly fraught with challenges, yet with dedication and the application of appropriate strategies, EFL learners can conquer these obstacles and reach their language proficiency objectives. Prioritizing areas such as vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, grammar, speaking fluency, listening comprehension, and writing skills enables students to enhance their English proficiency and foster confidence in utilizing the language. As an EFL educator, it is crucial to acknowledge these hurdles and provide steadfast support to students as they navigate their language learning endeavors. Furthermore, fostering a supportive and encouraging learning environment, tailored to addressing the multifaceted challenges of EFL acquisition, is instrumental in facilitating students' linguistic growth and success.

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