Moh. Rofid Fikroni

WHY WE HESITATE:

The Role Of Monitor Performance in Speaking Competence



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In Speaking competence

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Editor:

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FOREWORD

Language is the bridge that connects minds, cultures, and ideas. Among the four foundational skills—listening, reading, writing, and speaking—speaking holds a unique position. It is immediate, interactive, and deeply human. Speaking is more than merely stringing words together; it is the active process of conveying thoughts, emotions, and intentions to others. Yet, for learners of English as a foreign language (EFL), achieving proficiency in speaking remains one of the most formidable challenges.

This book, Why We Hesitate: The Role of Monitor Performance in Speaking Competence, delves into an aspect of language learning that is often overlooked yet profoundly influential: the relationship between speaking performance and monitor performance. Drawing on the pioneering work of Stephen Krashen and other leading scholars in second language acquisition, the book explores how learners' internal "monitor"—a mental editor that checks language output—affects their fluency, accuracy, and overall communicative competence.

The research and analysis presented here are not merely theoretical. They are grounded in practical classroom experiences, real-life examples, and empirical data from EFL learners. The book provides a detailed

examination of how students' psychological, cognitive, and linguistic processes interact during speaking. It shows how some learners rely excessively on their monitor, creating hesitation and reducing fluency, while others may underutilize it, sacrificing accuracy for speed. Optimal monitor use, as highlighted throughout the chapters, emerges as the key to achieving a balance between confidence, fluency, and correctness.

For educators, this book serves as both a guide and an inspiration. It demonstrates how awareness of monitor use can inform teaching strategies, enabling teachers to support hesitant learners, guide overconfident ones, and foster environments that cultivate effective communication. For learners, it offers insights into their own language production processes, helping them understand why they hesitate, self-correct, or occasionally lose fluency.

In an age where English is increasingly the language of global interaction, mastering speaking skills is no longer optional; it is essential. Yet, proficiency is not only about memorizing grammar rules or expanding vocabulary—it is about understanding the delicate balance between thought and expression, accuracy and fluency, self-monitoring and natural communication. This book

illuminates that balance and provides a roadmap for achieving it.

I am confident that readers—teachers, learners, and researchers alike—will find this book both enlightening and practical. It is a timely contribution to the field of language education, bridging theory and practice while addressing one of the most pressing challenges in EFL learning: how to speak confidently, accurately, and effectively.

Author

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Chapter 1 – Why Do We Struggle When Speaking English?

The Central Role of Speaking in Language Learning

When people think about learning a new language, the first thing that usually comes to mind is the ability to speak it. Speaking, after all, is the skill most visibly associated with language mastery. In daily life, people use speaking more often than any other skill to share their ideas, express feelings, clarify opinions, or simply connect with others. A short conversation can achieve what pages of writing sometimes cannot: it creates immediacy, warmth, and connection between people.

Consider a typical classroom scenario. A teacher enters the room, greets the students, and begins explaining a lesson. From that very moment, speaking becomes the primary channel of communication. Questions are asked, clarifications are made, examples are provided, and discussions take place—all through spoken interaction. Writing may appear occasionally, perhaps when students take notes or when a teacher writes keywords on the board, but speaking remains the driving force behind almost every classroom exchange. In fact, even reading and listening

activities often end in speaking, when students are asked to summarize, explain, or share what they have understood.

It is no surprise, then, that many learners measure their progress in English by how well they can speak. A student who can construct essays or answer grammar tests but remains silent in conversations often feels dissatisfied with their learning. On the other hand, a learner who can confidently interact, even with grammatical mistakes, may feel more successful because speaking provides them with tangible proof of communicative ability. As Richards (2008) observes, fluency, confidence, and the ability to express ideas are often viewed as the ultimate outcomes of learning English.

The Challenges of Speaking in Foreign Language Contexts

However, mastering speaking is not easy, especially for students in foreign language (EFL) contexts. In countries where English is not used as a daily means of communication, opportunities for authentic speaking practice are limited. Inside the classroom, teachers may try to encourage students to use English, but outside the classroom, learners usually revert to their mother tongue. This gap creates an environment where speaking becomes

a performance expected only during lessons, not a natural habit.

Teachers, therefore, face numerous challenges. Imagine three students in the same classroom. The first knows exactly what she wants to say but cannot produce the words out loud—her mind works faster than her mouth, and fear of mistakes holds her back. The second speaks confidently, without hesitation, but ignores grammar altogether—his sentences flow, but accuracy suffers. The third understands what to say and how to say it but chooses silence, worried about being judged or laughed at. These are not rare cases; they represent common realities of EFL classrooms across the world.

The situation is further complicated by cultural factors. In many Asian classrooms, for example, students are taught to respect silence and avoid drawing unnecessary attention to themselves. Speaking up, especially in a foreign language, may feel like breaking social norms. In contrast, in Western classrooms, speaking up is often encouraged and rewarded, so students may develop confidence more quickly. Such cultural differences show that speaking is not just a matter of language knowledge, but also of psychology, confidence, and context.