



A STUDY ON RETICENCE OF SRI LANKAN ADULT LEARNERS IN PRODUCING SPOKEN UTTERANCES IN SECOND LANGUAGE CONTEXTS

Alahakoon H.P.* and Hewage R.T.

English Language Teaching Unit, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University,
Southern Campus, Sri Lanka
himeshaprabodini@kdu.ac.lk

Abstract

In studying the group of adult learners in question which comprises some public and private sector employees along with a set of young school leavers, in the conduct of a language improvement programme, the researchers of the substantive study in the capacity of resource persons came to an understanding. This is based on the fact that the learners lag behind in making English as a Second Language (ESL) spoken discourse utterances compared to other three remaining language skills, listening, reading, and writing. This milieu has led to do a study as to how speaking needs are required for a given set of learners compared to other language skills. The study paves the way to inquire why the adult learners are reluctant to engage in discussions and what kinds of measures can be exploited to enhance their involvement and motivation to be engaged in English speaking activities during the programme. Previous studies further affirm the reticence of adult learners in producing spoken discourse utterances as a conspicuous challenge in the contexts of teaching and learning English as a second language. The researchers made use of structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires to accrue qualitative data pertaining to find the causative factors behind the voluntary participants' reticence in spoken language practicing sessions. The results have indicated that the reluctance of learners on spoken discourse may depend on a myriad of factors spread in sociocultural, affective, and educational domains. Having studied the causative factors, a set of remedial measures have been further proposed to mitigate the experienced challenges in pedagogic delivery in terms of speaking.

Keywords: *Adult learners, English as a Second Language, Learner interaction, Reticence, Spoken discourse*