Non-linguistic factors affecting the speaking skills of grade seven and grade eight English as a Second Language learners in Nittambuwa, Gampaha District, Sri Lanka

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Speaking is an aspect that needs special attention and instruction in English as a Second Language teaching, yet the least addressed aspect in the Sri Lankan ESL context. ESL learners may encounter various issues affecting the speaking skills in the process of learning the language. Linguistic and non-linguistic factors are one of the many criteria that can be considered under the factors affecting the speaking skills of ESL learners. This study aims to identify the non-linguistic factors affecting the speaking skills of grade seven and grade eight ESL learners in Nittambuwa, Gampaha district. Thus, the objective of this research is to examine the non-linguistic factors affecting the speaking skills of young ESL learners within the Sri Lankan setting. A mixed method design was used in analyzing the primary data gathered through observations and interviews. The sample population consisted of twenty-five grade seven and grade eight, ESL learners. The analyzed data give insight into the most common non-linguistic factors affecting young, Sri Lankan, ESL learners. The preliminary results identified that the most common non-linguistic factors affecting the sample population were anxiety, lack of motivation, personality traits, peer influence, and environmental factors. The results further revealed that the feedback of the teacher in the classroom plays a crucial role in aggravating these very non-linguistic factors. In conclusion, the findings of this research imply that these affective non-linguistic factors significantly impact the speaking skills of ESL learners in Sri Lanka, highlighting the need for targeted attention in both classroom practice and curriculum development.

Keywords: *: non-linguistic factors, speaking skill, ESL learners*