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A Study of Silence as Illocutionary Force in ESL Context through Dennis Kurzon's Theory



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Abstract

This research aims to investigate the role of silence within the ESL context in Pakistan & the illocutionary force attached with use of silence, specifically through Dennis Kurzon's (1998) theory of the discourse of silence. Silence is interpreted in this research as more than just the absence of oral communication and includes various methods of communicating; therefore, it has pragmatic value. The study uses a mixed-method design to collect quantitative and qualitative data from 95 participants using a structured, questionnaire-based survey. The quantitative data regarding the existence of various psychological barriers present for ESL students during oral participation were significant. The findings demonstrate how a cultural compromise between institutional authority and personal identity contributes to silence in Pakistani ESL classrooms to further develop Kurzon's model of theoretical understanding. The instructional implications of this research recommend those large-scale reductions in students' perceptions of the teacher as an authority figure can be accomplished; culturally appropriate instructional materials containing no linguistic biases; and an environment of psychological safety for students to generate spoken language.

Key words: Illocutionary force, psychological factors, sociocultural norms, teacher dominance, face-saving act, esl pakistan, discourse of silence

1. Introduction:

Historically, silence in the language classroom has been interpreted as a deficit (i.e., inner deficit), a result of insufficient preparation, lack of motivation and/or limited linguistic competence; however, such interpretations do not capture the communicative complexity encoded by silence. In applied linguistics, silence has gradually been recognized as a meaningful pragmatic phenomenon that occurs within culture/institutionally specific communicative conventions. Jaworski (1993) established that silence has social/pragmatic power and operates not as negation of communication, but rather as an enhancement or complementary feature of it. Subsequent research conducted by Jaworski and Sachdev (1998) supported this understanding in the pedagogic context, showing that both teachers and students have complex beliefs about the role and meaning of silence in educational contexts.

At the crossroads of social obligation and psychological vulnerability lies a unique phenomenon - Behavioral Constraints. Granger (2004) studied behavioral constraints using psychoanalysis, looking at both the way silence affects interpersonal relationships and how unconscious dynamics create barriers to speech production in a language. These dynamics can be particularly pronounced in post-colonial educational contexts such as Pakistan, where English represents prestige, power, and cultural conflict simultaneously.

The study's theoretical basis is found in Dennis Kurzon's (1998) Discourse of Silence. Kurzon's framework allows for varying perceptions on how to interpret silence depending upon the intended message of the speaker(s), as well as how they perceive one another. The meaning and characteristics of silence fluctuate based on interpersonal and contextual variables, including psychology-based anxiety and culture-based (e.g., adab) values, as well as institutional hierarchies that prioritize teacher communication.

By applying Kurzon's theory of silence, we can see that silence is a complicated phenomenon with multiple determinants beyond just the original speaker's intent when viewed in an ESL classroom setting within Pakistan.

The study's research objectives are designed to shed light on this area. First, it identifies the psychological and sociocultural factors that contribute to deliberate silence among ESL students in Pakistan. Second, it explores how organizational dynamics and teacher discourse control impedes oral participation. In addition to the, assessing whether silence is a passive form of communication breakdown or if it is a strategic form of communication in relation to personal, cultural and institutional factors that are affecting the individual will be the third aspect of determining whether students are intentionally avoiding verbal participation.

Research Objectives:

- To identify the psychological and sociocultural influences that contribute to purposeful silence by ESL students living in Pakistan.
- To analyze how the organizational dynamics of an ESL classroom and the power dynamics of teacher talk are barriers to oral participation by ESL students living in Pakistan.
- To assess whether student silence is a passive communication breakdown or whether it is a strategic response to the individual, cultural, or institutional pressures faced by the student.

2. Literature Review

2.1.Theoretical Framework: Dennis Kurzon's Theory of Silence

The basis or foundation of this project is derived from the work of Dennis Kurzon (1998). Specifically, his work on "The Discourse of Silence," which he refers to as a seminal reference for researching the pragmatics surrounding silence. According to Kurzon, silence can be contextualized by sophisticated human interaction analysis with respect to "speech act theory." More specifically, under certain contextual conditions, silence, like its verbal counterpart, can create an illocutionary force. Kurzon's focus is on developing the distinction between intentional and non-intentional silence. Intentional silence can be described as a communicative action in which the communicator intentionally uses silence/mute to communicate by deliberately withholding information to convey the intended meaning, socially construct reality, or maintain relationships. Non-intentional silence refers to situations in which the lack of communication is the result of cognitive, emotional, or situational limitations, but not the result of communicative intention. This distinction provides a significant conceptual basis for the study of silence in the classroom in Pakistan because it reframes the understanding of silence in relation to the student-learning experience. In conventional teaching theory, student silence has been characterized as a lack of engagement with the material or teaching process; whereas Kurzon's framework encourages educators and researchers to investigate the implicit or explicit motivation within which students are intentionally withholding speech. The claim that "the silence of one student is not merely the absence of that student's speech" and "the absence of that student's speech is a consequence of the lack of interactional support of other speaking partners" provides evidence that Kurzon's assertion regarding the operation of silence within social systems of communication is supported by the data. (Amundrud, 2011) Through this reflexive narrative, the author illustrates how teachers propagate silence through institutional practices such as random pairing of students, establishing assessments with limited time and creating assessment criteria that reward

verbosity; therefore, the teachers in this study exemplify Jaworski's (1993) analysis of power and support Kurzon's framework for examining the role of institutions in producing silence.

Kurzon's conceptual framework provides an inherent framework in which he identifies four discrete functions of silence: silence as a form of showing respect; silence as a form of demonstrating objection; silence as a form of reflection; and silence as an indicator of status. All four function categories are evident in the data on silence in the normal classroom environment in Pakistan, where *adab* (respect) for those in positions of authority, face-saving (the avoidance of public humiliation), and the fear of not being judged positively are the primary determinants of when students choose to remain silent during their studies. Through Kurzon's model, Jaworski (1993) adds the social and pragmatic aspects of silence – which he refers to as complementary to Kurzon's – to show that silence is always situated in relations of power. In types of power where the teacher's authority is institutionalized, then it becomes reasonable to see silence as an accommodation to the inequalities in power rather than mere failure in communication. Additionally, the empirical study conducted by Jaworski & Sachdev (1998) on beliefs about silence in the classroom also attributed to the movement of teachers and students in respect of the culturally specific assumptions they each have about when silence considers appropriate, meaningful, or obligatory. These beliefs operate below the level of explicit awareness; therefore, the communicative ecology of the classroom is structured in a way that the forms of expressed verbal communication, or performance, do not capture. Granger's (2004) psychoanalytic treatment also expands upon existing relationships amongst theory by examining unconscious investment that learners may make, when acquiring a second language, through affective responses associated with using another language (for example, speaking). The affective charge involved in producing spoken output using a second language (i.e., feelings of shame, idealization of others who speak that language well and of oneself, and the anticipation of the rewards of being seen positively as a successful second language speaker) creates an environment where students will use silence as a form of withdrawal as a psychodynamic strategy.

2.2.ESL Context in Pakistan

In Pakistan, where English is used as a legacy of colonialism as well as a measure of social status (and therefore has a higher intensity of emotions attached), the psychodynamic relationship between being silent and using silence as a protective withdrawal generates greater intensity than what an individual may experience in any other country. (Nguyen, 2020) Similarly, the investigative work on Vietnam-based EFL confirms Kurzon's framework by identifying language-based factors (low level of fluency, limited vocabulary) and psychological-based factors (lack of self-confidence, feelings of anxiety about embarrassing oneself, and shyness) as primary contributors to silence. The edited collection of chapters on East Asian cultural perspectives about classroom silence gives credence to challenging the negative stereotype of "the quiet, passive Asian student." They examined how social and cultural contexts affect people's experiences of silence in the learning environment. According to the authors of the book, silence is complex, and experiences relating to silence may vary based on contextual considerations such as anxiety, social pressures, how many days one has been preparing to communicate, languages spoken/written, and the level of difficulty of the task. They also confirm Kurzon's claim that there are two diverse types of silence: intentional and unintentional (Harumi, 2020, as cited in King & Harumi 2020). Further,

Harumi's mixed-methods study found that the attitudes of teachers towards silence were highly variable and those with more teaching experience were more comfortable with silence than those with less teaching experience. Instructional practices such as scaffolding, allowing for longer waiting times, providing emotional support, and assisting with turn taking were identified as helpful ways to manage silence.

2.3.Socio-pragmatic Extensions

Furthermore, Kurzon (1998; Jaworski, 1993; Granger, 2004; Amundrud, 2011; Nguyen, 2020; King & Harumi, 2020) is the key theoretical force that connects the four separate extensions (i.e. (a) social-pragmatic extension for placing silence into the context of power dynamics and cultural norms; (b) psychodynamic extension concerning unconscious, affective investments; (c) an empirical-Asian extension offering context-specific data on the functional role of silence; (d) interactional-constructionist extension demonstrating the co-construction of silence through the configuration of classroom talk) within this Synthesized One-Framework. As such, by using the synthesized framework, one can understand silence in Pakistani students as an illocutionary force representing a purposeful withholding of expression that can be an expression of respect or dissent, a form of reflection or as a way of negotiating one's status. This framework also allows for a greater analysis of the intentional versus non-intentional withholding of expression and demonstrates how cultural norms and institutional power intersect to form a communicative strategy with some level of meaning.

3. Materials and Methods

The research uses mixed methods: quantitative analysis through a survey and qualitative description using an interpretative method. The reasons for using mixed methods are based on the complexity of the phenomenon being studied - ESL students remaining quiet in classroom settings is at once an individual psychological experience or occurrence; as a behavior which is culturally defined; and, as a communicative pattern produced by institutional factors. As there is no one method to capture all this complexity, we will use quantitative data to identify the patterns of how often and how students were quiet during class; then we will explore or interpret these patterns based on Kurzon's (1998) framework and other relevant literature.

3.1. Theoretical framework

This study operationalizes Kurzon's theoretical framework by mapping his constructs of intentionality/ non-intentionality and the illocutionary value of silence to a tripartite model of three domains (i.e., psychological, sociocultural, and institutional) that support or contradict Kurzon's original framework through the distribution of silence across these domains.

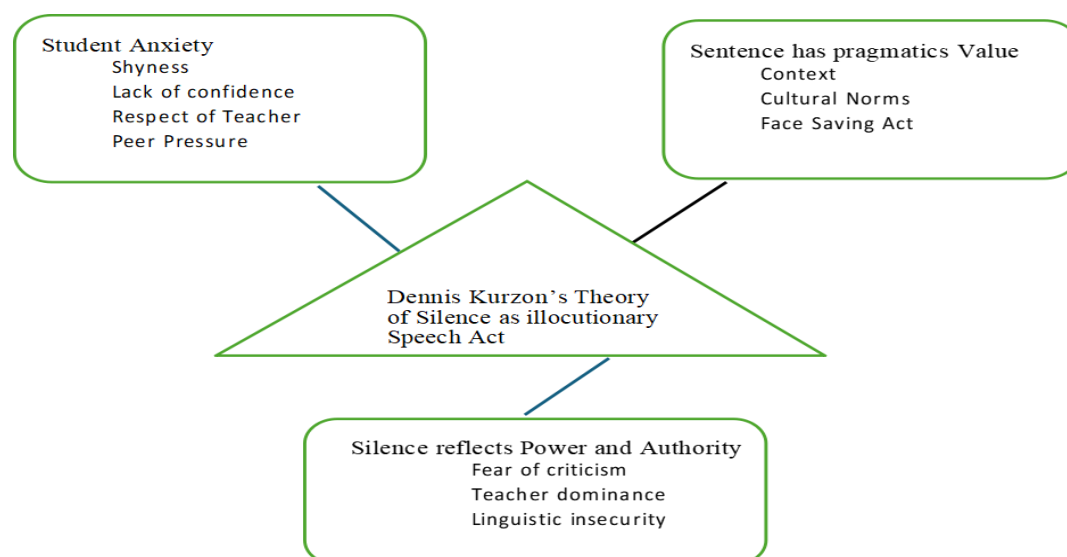


Figure: 3.1 Theoretical framework

3.2 Participants

The researchers recruited 95 ESL students from various educational institutions in Pakistan. The study used purposive sampling to identify participants with experience in formal English instruction in an educational setting. While the sample size is small, it is still appropriate for a mixed method, exploratory study and is consistent with similar research in the field of applied linguistics.

3.3 Instrument

A structured and close-ended questionnaire of 9 items, divided into three themes, was used to collect data. The first theme is psychological and social factors influencing the students' internal dynamics such as: anxiety, shyness, and trust; the second theme is sociocultural and contextual dynamics which looked at the effects of adab (cultural respect for authority), face-saving behaviors, and cultural distance; while the third theme examined institutional power dynamics such as teacher talk monopoly, mental translation barriers (cost of converting between Urdu and English), and the perceived power of the institution by the students. Each item was rated on a four-point frequency scale: Always, Often, Sometimes, and Never.

The three concepts of silence within the questionnaire reflect the primary dimensions of Kurzon's (1998) theory of silence. The classification of silence in this way (psychological, sociocultural, and institutional) stems from Kurzon's assertion that silence is not a singular act of communication, but multiple acts of communication shaped by many different configurations of context.

3.4 Survey Variables

The following constructs were operationalized across the three survey sections:

- Student Anxiety: Shyness, lack of confidence, respect for teacher, peer pressure
- Pragmatic Value of Utterance: Context, cultural norms, face-saving acts
- Dennis Kurzon's Theory of Silence as Illocutionary Speech Act: Intentional silence as a communicative strategy
- Silence Reflecting Power and Authority: Fear of criticism, teacher dominance, linguistic insecurity.

4, Data Analysis

The statistics of each item and section were collected using descriptive statistical

analysis; for example, frequency distributions were collected from each response category (i.e. Always, Often, Sometimes, and Never). Mean percentage values for each section were also calculated. Aggregate mean values for each section were used for comparisons of the relative weights of barriers that are psychological, sociocultural, or institutional. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses occurred in accordance with conceptual categories from Kurzon (1998), supplemented with qualitative data from Jaworski (1993) and Jaworski and Sachdev (1998). Granger (2004) also provided supplementary insights.

The survey results are organized using the three-part format/structure of the survey instrument that corresponds to the three analytical domains of psyche barrier, sociological barrier, and institutional barriers. Frequency distribution and section averages are presented in tabular format, subsequently interpreted.

4.1 Section # 1

Psychological and Social Factors (Internal Student Dynamics)

This section of the research assessed psychological and emotional internal barriers, including anxiety, shyness, and distrust, which stop some students from answering in English even if they can do so. These barriers correspond to what Kurzon (1998) would classify as non-intentional silence triggered by affective incapacity, as well as intentional silence deployed as a protective strategy against psychological threat.

Managing Anxiety and Shyness

A total of 85.5% of students reported that their silence functions as a deliberate shield against anxiety or shyness when required to speak English aloud (Always: 19.3%; Often: 9.6%; Sometimes: 56.6%; Never: 14.5%). This figure is the highest single-item result across all three sections and is consistent with Granger's (2004) psychoanalytic account of silence as an affective withdrawal from the demands of second language performance.

1. When you know the correct answer to a teacher's question but choose to stay silent, how often is your silence a deliberate way to protect yourself from the anxiety or shyness of speaking English out loud?
83 responses

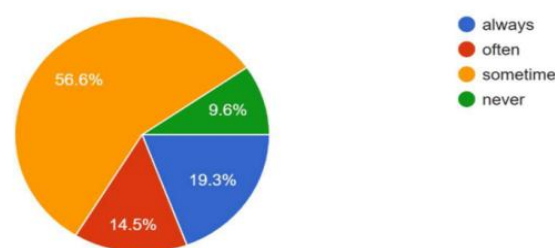


Figure. 4.1: Fear of Negative Evaluation

Approximately 78% of students use silence to manage a deep-seated fear of peer evaluation regarding their English grammar and pronunciation (Always: 9.8%; Often: 26.8%; Sometimes: 41.5%; Never: 22%). This finding aligns with the face-saving dimension of silence theorized by Jaworski (1993) and anticipates the sociocultural patterns addressed in Section Two.

2. To what extent does your classroom silence communicate the following message: "I am remaining silent because I fear my classmates will ... or criticize my English pronunciation or grammar"
82 responses

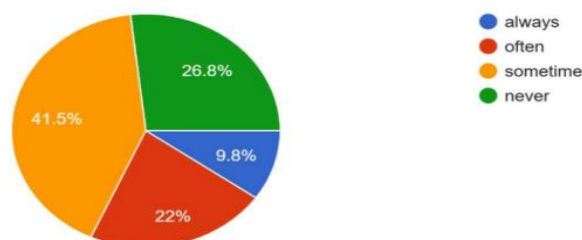


Figure. 4.2: Trust Gap

When teachers invite voluntary participation, 79.5% of students choose silence due to an absence of social trust in revealing knowledge to peers and instructors (Always: 13.3%; Often: 13.3%; Sometimes: 53%; Never: 20.5%). This pattern resonates with Kurzon's (1998) category of silence as a marker of social hierarchy, suggesting that institutional power differentials inhibit candid self-disclosure.

Table 4.1: Section 1 – Psychological and Social Barriers

Factor	Always (%)	Often (%)	Sometimes (%)	Never (%)	Average (%)
Anxiety & Shyness	19.3	9.6	56.6	14.5	85.5
Fear of Negative Evaluation	9.8	26.8	41.5	22.0	78.0
Trust Gap	13.3	13.3	53.0	20.5	79.5
Section 1 Average	14.1	16.6	50.4	19.0	81.0

According to the aggregate mean of Section One, it is estimated that approximately 81% of learners suffer from social or psychological obstacles to communicating effectively in English. The most selected frequency response was "Sometimes" (50.4% of all respondents), with only 19% of participants stating that these barriers had no direct effect on their communication experience.

4.2 Section # 2

Sociocultural and Contextual Dynamics (Norms and Cultural Values)

In this section the researchers studied how indigenous Pakistani cultural values—such as adab (showing respect to others) and saving face—are expressed through silence when attending a Western ESL class. According to Kurzon (1998), these values are seen as "**conventionalized forms of intentional silence**" by using silence to communicate something that has been socially determined (for example, through interaction with other people) via cultural practices.

Silence due to Respect

62.7% of students consciously use silence to demonstrate respect for their instructors (Always: 13.3%; Often: 28.9%; Sometimes: 20.5%; Never: 36.1%). This finding corroborates Jaworski and Sachdev's (1998) observation that classroom beliefs about silence are culturally conditioned, and that in high power-distance cultures silence towards authority figures carries positive social valence.

4. In Pakistan, remaining silent when an elder or instructor is speaking is traditionally viewed as a sign of respect (Adab). Do you consciously employ ...ss to show respect and deference to your teacher?
84 responses

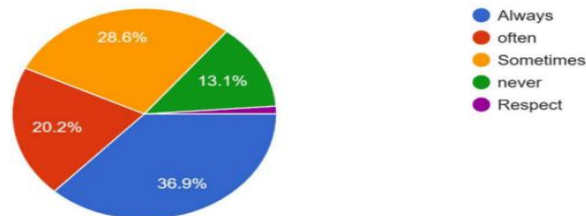


Figure. 4.3: Silence due to Respect

Face-Saving Acts

73.5% of students employ silence strategically as a face-saving act to avoid public discomfiting purpose. Face-Saving Acts: 73.5% of students employ silence strategically as a face-saving act to avoid public embarrassment over potential grammatical errors (Always: 8.4%; Often: 20.5%; Sometimes: 44.6%; Never: 25.3%). This figure instantiates Kurzon's (1998) account of silence as a socially motivated act with calculable illocutionary purpose.

5. If you realize you might make a grammatical or pronunciation error while answering a question, do you use silence as a deliberate "face-saving act" to avoid embarrassment in front of your peers?
84 responses

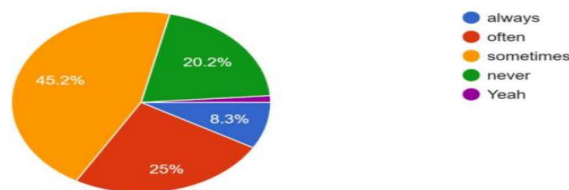


Figure. 4.4: Face Saving Act

Figure. 4.5: Cultural Content Distancing

The most striking single-item result in the entire study: 95.2% of students report using silence when lesson content is culturally distant or outside their personal knowledge base (Always: %; Often: 20%; Sometimes: 51.8%; Never: 23.5%). This near universal finding signals that curricular irrelevance operates as a structural silence trigger, extending Kurzon's framework into the domain of content pedagogy.

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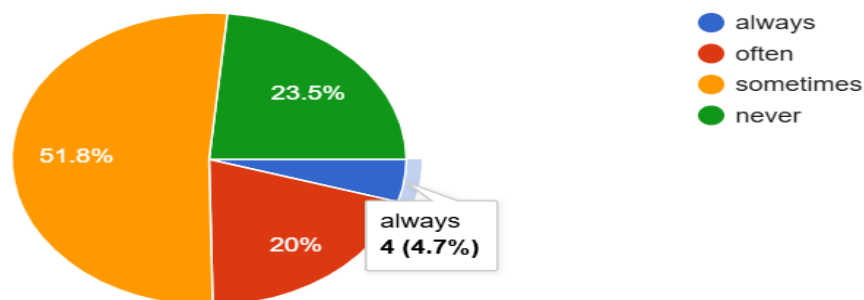


Figure. 4.5: Cultural Content Distancing

Factor			Always (%)	Often (%)	Sometimes (%)	Never (%)	Average (%)
Adab	Silence	/	13.3	28.9	20.5	36.1	62.7
Respect							
Face-Saving Acts			8.4	20.5	44.6	25.3	73.5
Cultural	Content		19.3	24.1	51.8	4.8	95.2
Distancing							
Section 2 Average			13.7	24.5	39.0	22.1	77.1

Table 4.2 Section 2 -- Sociocultural and Contextual Dynamics

The average score recorded in Section 2 (77.1%) was slightly lower than that reported in Section 1 (81%). However, there was a greater mean number of times sectionally were experienced as a barrier in Section 2 (24.5%) than in Section 1 (16.6%). The overall findings suggest that although barriers to mental functioning may be more widespread than barriers related to culture and society, once a barrier based on culture or society has been activated, it will tend to be activated more frequently than barriers based on the feelings/emotions associated with the experience of cultural scripts versus those based on the affective states of an individual.

4.3 Section # 3

Power, Authority, and Linguistic Insecurity (Institutional Dynamics)

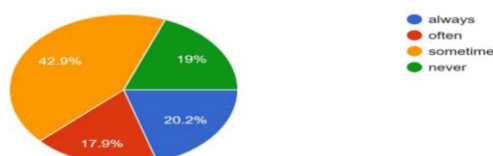
The features of the structures and systems that make up the physical environment of the classroom have been examined within the context of teacher-dominated power arrangements, and the cognitive load of processing non-native languages. These are some of the structures at the institutional level identified by Kurzon (1998) as causing a form of "structurally induced silence" that is not intended by students but is produced systemically by the conditions of the educational environment.

Monopoly of Teacher's Talk

81.9% of students feel that teacher domination of oral expression reduces their ability to respond spontaneously (Always: 20.5%; Often: 19.3%; Some of the Time: 42.2%; Not at All: 18.1%). This finding supports Jaworski as he (1993) concludes that students are silent due to power arrangements created by asymmetrical structure of the discourses surrounding them.

Figure. 4.6: Monopoly of Teacher's Talk

7. When an ESL teacher dominates the classroom talk-time, your resulting silence represents "I know the answer, but I lack the confidence to deliver it publicly."
84 responses



Cognitive Demand of Translating Urdu (Or Whatever Their Native Language Is) Communication to English in Real Time is an Obstacles To 74.7% of the students having linguistic anxiety and inability to Achieve Synchrony with Instructional Discourse (Always: 7.2%; Often: 18.1%; Sometimes: 49.4; Never: 25.3%). This shows that unlike Intentional Dimensions Identified by Kurzon (1998) Where a student is non-complacently presents throughout an activity for reasons of cognitive insufficient processing capability — is in fact indicating that silent responses are produced while processing mental barriers to communication.

Table 4.3: Section 3

Institutional Power and Linguistic Barriers

Factor		Always (%)	Often (%)	Sometimes (%)	Never (%)	Average (%)
Teacher Monopoly	Talk	20.5	19.3	42.2	18.1	81.9
Mental Barrier	Translation	7.2	18.1	49.4	25.3	74.7
Institutional Perception	Power	14.6	17.1	47.6	19.5	79.3
Section 3 Average		14.1	18.2	46.4	21.0	78.6

The average of the aggregate institutional barriers (78.6%) is comparable to Section 2 (77.1%) but is less than for Section 1 (81.0%). Nevertheless, the total 'always + often' average for Section 3 (32.3%) is larger than for either of the other two sections, thus implying that both power related and language related anxieties will often provide a more chronic and enduring source of barriers, whereas the other two types of discouraged or sociocultural causes of barriers have more sporadic patterns.

5. Discussion

Through the analysis of survey data from 95 participants, the study distinguished institutional barriers, psychological barriers, and sociocultural barriers as the three most crucial factors contributing to ESL learners' reluctance to speak; cultural distance was found to be the most prevalent cause of silence across all three categories (95.2%). This study contributes to theory in two ways. First, it demonstrates that the discourse of silence framework proposed by Kurzon can be applied to the cultural and pedagogical realm of ESL instruction in a postcolonial context, as well as to any context; second, it provides empirical evidence to support Kurzon's claim that silence can carry illocutionary force; in particular, the study clearly shows that ESL learners in Pakistan are using silence in a communicatively intentional manner, as evidenced by 79.3% of participants indicating that they consciously use silence as a strategy to manage institutional and cultural pressure.

The data reported above suggest that ongoing engagement with Kurzon's (1998) theoretical framework is warranted as this study confirms and elaborates on his ideas. In each of the three analytical genres, student silence was a purposeful act of communication rather than an unintentional lack of verbal communication. The pooled data clearly demonstrate that silence in Pakistani ESL classrooms is shaped methodically by how psychological vulnerability, cultural obligation and institutional power interplay as represented by Kurzon's distinction between intentional and non-intentional silence.

The psychological barrier data (Section One) supports Granger's (2004) psychoanalytic theory of silence as an affective withdrawal from reality. The 85.5% incidence of both anxiety and shyness in students being the 2 primary factors resulting in silence are indicative of the level to which second language learners are likely experiencing narcissistic injury, i.e., the risk of public failure when stepping out of their cultural comfort zone into a linguistic environment that is both aspirational and threatening. As noted by Kurzon, silence exists in a grey area of ambiguity; that is to say, while students may elect to be silent as a means of self-protection, the factors that led to the choice of silence stem from affective states that students likely have little or no control over.

Sociocultural barrier information (Section II) generates the greatest theoretical yield. For instance, 95.2% of all students interviewed indicated that distance between them and any culturally based content served as a silence trigger. To understand the significance of this finding, Kurzon (1998) argues that silence carries illocutionary force when it has been conventionally established in a society and appears to be conventionally established in the Pakistani classroom; thus, when students are exposed to culturally based material, silence is recognized as a communicative act within the parameters of those students' respective cultures. This supports the claims of Jaworski and Sachdev (1998) regarding the conflicting views that exist regarding the meaning of silence in a classroom context, i.e., whereas silence may indicate a lack of interest to teachers, students are expressing an acceptable response to culturally unfamiliar material through silence.

Section III of this report focuses on institutional barriers to silence in the classroom; the data also suggest that institutional barriers are structural correlates of students' silences in ways consistent with Jaworski's (1993) analysis on power. For example, regardless of their pedagogical merit, monopolies on teacher talk were found to be present in 81.9% of interactions studied. Monopolizing teacher talk is a structural discourse feature that systematically restricts the interactional space for student speech within the context of the learning environment. Kurzon's (1998) theoretical framework allows us to interpret the phenomenon of teacher production of silence not as an unintentional result of a particular instructional style, but rather because of the institutionalized power produced by asymmetric speaking rights through the tacit enforcement of these rights via institutionalized power. In addition, for non-native speakers, the 74.7% of participants identifying themselves as being limited by a mental translation barrier demonstrates a cognitive component to the examination of the power dynamics of the institutional conditions of instruction because the institutional conditions of instruction are not only misaligned with the processing realities of non-native speakers, but they are also misaligned cognitively with the processing realities of non-native speakers.

The data indicates that 79.3% of participants see their silence as negotiation between their agency and their environment (Q9) provides an important theoretical framework

for thinking about teacher silence and provides significant clinical support for thinking about the concept of teacher silence. The notion that the silence documented in this study is not the consequence of learned helplessness but rather is a form of strategic navigation is consistent with Kurzon's (1998) assertion that silence has illocutionary intent in the form of a communicative act.

Conclusion

The implications of these findings are serious in nature. Student silence is a communicative act, and not a communicative failure. Therefore, if we regard student silence as a problem that we need to overcome through increased pressure for verbal performance, any learning intervention will be ineffective, and therefore theoretically incoherent. Effective pedagogical interventions, as recommended by Jaworski and Sachdev (1998), must involve restructuring the learning environment: teachers should not dominate the classroom with teacher-centric instructional methods; culturally appropriate content should be used in the curriculum; the cognitive burden of translating from the student's first language to their second language should be acknowledged; and there should be a safe and supportive space where students can use their oral language capabilities without fear of being socially humiliated. Future research should investigate the impact of gender and region on student silence in particular contexts of ESL in Pakistan, as well as whether teacher-training programs are preparing teachers to address the structural causes of student reticence in the classroom. Longitudinal research that evaluates the impact of culturally responsive pedagogy on student engagement and participation in the classroom will also add to the knowledge base established to support policy changes regarding education for children attending schools in Pakistan.

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