ESL Learners' Sense of Alienation: An Exploratory Mixed Method Research on the Role of ESL Teachers' Remarking Practices

Misbah A. Khan[1], Misbah R. Khan[1] & Iftikhar A. Chughtai[2]

[1] Department of English Linguistics, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan

[2] Govt. Abbasia Higher Secondary School, Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan

Correspondence: Misbah A. Khan, Department of English Linguistics, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan.

Abstract

The study attempts to highlight a major cause of learners' detachment and low performance in ESL classrooms at graduation levels in Bahawalpur City, Punjab, Pakistan. In this connection, this study tries to focus on the role of teachers' feedback remarks as a major cause of either instilling or accelerating sense of alienation among ESL learners. This study underpinned exploratory sequential mixed method research design to prove its hypotheses. The qualitative data shows that ESL learners receive evaluative remarks from their teachers in the form of 'face-threatening acts' more than 'face-saving acts' during classroom activities. Resultantly, they experience a sense of alienation from the language-related tasks and try to avoid the classroom situation feeling it a threat. The quantitative analysis shows the average range of sense of alienation experienced by learners which are highest in oral activities, lower in written tasks and lowest in comprehension-based activities. ESL teachers' evaluative feedback either instils or accelerates the sense of alienation among learners during various classroom activities. The type of alienation experienced more was an accelerated sense of alienation. This is why the majority of learners avoid getting engaged in the activities in which they find chances of losing self-image. Keeping the results in view, training sessions on 'Face Wants, Politeness theory, and Speech Acts' are recommended for ESL teachers to enhance their follow-up remarking practices. Moreover, there is a need to develop an anxiety-free classroom atmosphere to strengthen learners' autonomy and linguistic self-concept.

Keywords: sense of alienation, ESL/EFL, face wants, politeness theory, speech acts, learners' autonomy, linguistic self-concept

1. Introduction

In routine occurrences, we remark for what people do or say. Our remarks range from short verbal utterances to non-verbal gestures. We as parent usually remark for what children do or carry out as household tasks. These remarks are more like in English as 'be careful, you'll be hurt'; 'it's difficult, you can't do'; 'you are too young to do this/that', and so on. Such remarks mostly stop children from repeating the tasks for which they receive them. Later, they refuse to carry out any task on their own assuming the task to be difficult or their abilities to be low. This experience with children has given rise to the following insight:

   i.   Children develop an interest in the activities for which they receive encouraging remarks even if they are less competent to do so.

   ii.   Children develop a sense of alienation for the activities for which they receive discouraging remarks even if they are so good at doing so.

Applying the same insight to the pedagogical context, a realization can be developed that

   i.   The ESL students perform well in subsequent language-related tasks if they once receive encouraging remarks from their ESL teacher.

   ii.   The ESL students perform poorly in subsequent language-related tasks if they once receive discouraging remarks from their ESL teacher.

In the pedagogical context, remarks made by ESL teachers are mostly follow-up remarks. The teachers need to give feedback to their students on their completion of some oral or written tasks. They provide feedback to

students in the form of a remark more explicit and overt in nature so that the students must know about their progress in language-related tasks, especially in oral activities. But sometimes, such straightforward remarks on the poor progress of ESL students turn to impact negatively and resultantly make them lose interest. Cullen (2002) exemplifies IRF (Initiation-Response-Followup) exchange as a 'powerful pedagogic device' in the interaction based and communicative L_2 classroom highlighting the third part of the exchange 'F' to be important only if it includes discoursal follow-up as well as evaluative feedback.

As far as alienation is concerned, in the present study, the concept of alienation is modified into two types: an instilled sense of alienation and an accelerated sense of alienation. First one is developed in those ESL learners who have never experienced it before and it is instilled for the first time by some learning situation. Latter one is developed in those learners who have already experienced some sense of alienation before and then get it accelerated and triggered by entering in such a situation again. Those who get the sense of alienation instilled, at later times, get it accelerated throughout their learning process whenever they confront triggering situations.

In Bahawalpur, ESL learners entering the classroom situation at graduation level come mostly with low levels of motivation and self-confidence since they belong to average and below-average socioeconomic status. On the contrary, they come with a high level of self-esteem as they are seen to avoid classroom situations when there are chances of losing their face and self-image to be hurt. So, they are more concerned about face-gain and usually do not contribute to ESL activities held in the class for the fear of losing their face. They hardly volunteer themselves for oral activities but sometimes happily accept written tasks. Coming to the stage to present something on board is the biggest issue ever faced by them. So for such students, a single effort is needed to be appreciated. But if they receive a critical remark, it is equal to receive an emotional death-sentence for them. Keeping this scenario and the afore-mentioned insight in mind, a causal hypothesis was taken followed by a set of associative hypotheses to be proved as true or partially true or false (depending on the results of the study) which are as under:

- Causal Hypothesis:

  ESL teachers' follow-up 'F' remarks either instil or accelerate the sense of alienation among ESL learners at graduation level.

The Associative Hypotheses are generated from the Causal Hypothesis cited above:

- Associative Hypotheses:

  a. Sense of alienation among ESL learners discourages them to perform well.

  b. Sense of alienation among ESL learners makes them challenging.

  c. Sense of alienation among ESL learners causes low achievement.

  d. Sense of alienation among ESL learners leads to agitation in the classroom.

Based on the above cited set of hypotheses, 'L2 Alienation-Triggering Model' is developed to show a possible flow of connection between the two types of alienation triggered as a result of ESL teachers' straightforward evaluative remarks on language-related tasks; and their impact on students' attitude towards L_2 learning process. The following figure presents this model:
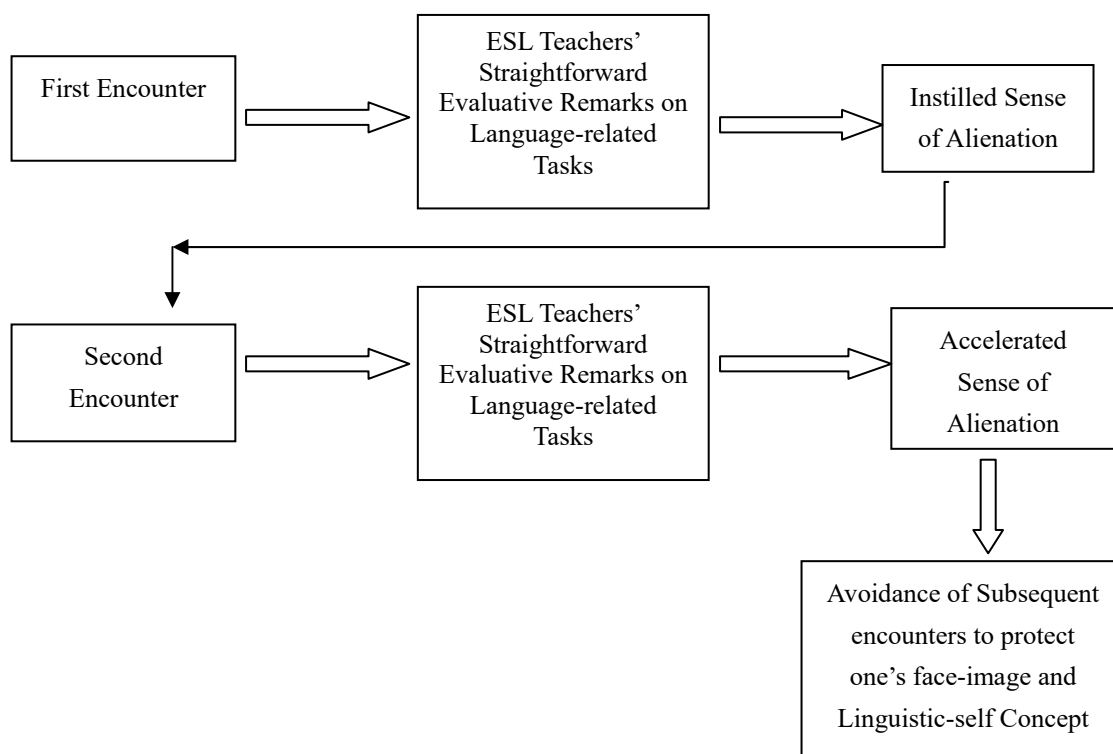
Figure 1. L$_2$ Alienation-Triggering Model

It is important to mention that the corroboration of this model depends on the verification of hypotheses as a result of exploratory mixed method research design. The partial or full confirmation of hypotheses would give rise to the partial or full confirmation of the model (proposed above) respectively.

This study, based on the hypotheses, attempts to meet the given set of objectives. So the study aims to:

  i.   know the range of evaluative 'F' remarks ESL learners usually receive from their teachers during various classroom tasks

  ii.   explore the feelings of ESL learners on receiving negative 'F' remarks (face-threatening acts) from their teachers during various classroom tasks

  iii. find the average range of sense of alienation experienced by ESL learners during various language-related activities

  iv.   find the average range of the type of sense of alienation experienced by ESL learners during various language-related activities

  v.   suggest possible ways for ESL teachers to improve their remarking practices to reduce the feeling of the sense of alienation among ESL learners.

This study is significant as it tries to mirror a very important issue of ESL learners' estrangement from language-related tasks and the teachers teaching them. This problem has never been taken for study by the researchers before either nationally or internationally. Thus, this study is unique of its kind as it tries to picture what mostly goes unnoticed and that is the phenomenon of wrong remarking practices of ESL teachers. This study can be taken as eye-opening research in making ESL teachers know how heavy their follow-up remarks can be for their students to bear as well as be aware of the impact their follow-up remarks leave on learners' mind to frame their attitudes towards English language learning process likewise and feel alienated.

It is important to mention that the present study is valuable as it adds to the existing body of literature related to i) Applied Linguistics by providing a unique stance of L$_2$ teaching-learning barrier inside classroom, ii) Second Language Teaching and Learning Research by offering a unique lens to see SLL context, iii) English Language Teaching Research by paying attention to the role of ESL teachers' remarking practices in alienating students from classroom tasks, iv) Discourse Analysis/Conversation Analysis by considering the possible negative impact of 'F' (Follow-up) remarks of ESL teachers on students, v) Pragmatics by highlighting the use of pre-sequences as a politeness strategy, vi) Sociolinguistics by emphasizing the importance of considering students' face wants

while making remarks, and vii) Psycholinguistics by proving sense of alienation as an important psychological barrier to learn L_2.

2. Literature Review

Alienation is a popular term in sociology and psychology with a focus on sociological and psychological isolation of humans. Recently, this term has gained in importance in the pedagogical setting with an emphasis on students' estrangement from school, classroom, classroom activities as well as teachers as it is termed as a 'psychologically destructive state' (Ozdemir & Rahimi, 2013: 48). More of concern, nowadays, is the estrangement of students from EFL/ESL context. This attention to the sense of alienation has led to the exploration of the number of factors contributing to alienate EFL/ESL students and the importance of teachers' role in EFL/ESL setting to help alienated students.

Several studies have been conducted to investigate the factors causing a sense of alienation among EFL/ESL learners (Asfaranjan et al., 2013; Ahmad & Shah, 2014; Mann, 2001 & 2003; Miles, 2004; Mohd-Ashraf, 2005; Ozdemir & Rahimi, 2013; Pachler & Field, 2001; Rudduck, 2007; Samad, 2016; and Yi Zhu, 2013). Among these causes are i) communication gap between EFL teachers and their students (Ozdemir & Rahimi, 2013), ii) the use of target language as a medium of instruction by EFL/ESL teachers (Miles, 2004; and Pachler & Field, 2001), iii) the content of English textbooks (Ahmad & Shah, 2014; Gray, 2000; and Mohd-Ashraf, 2005), and iv) cultural shock (Samad, 2016; and Yi Zhu, 2013). These various causes result in a common effect on ESL/EFL students that is letting them get estranged and isolated from target language teaching-learning process.

With the arousal of the feeling of alienation, EFL/ESL students develop a negative attitude towards the teaching and learning of target language. This negative attitude is marked by several characteristics. Alienated students remain aloof throughout the teaching-learning process (Suryanto, 2018). They become quiet, sit in the corner of the class, act to be busy in doing something, try to get late from class, easily withdraw and prefer to stay alone (Suryanto, 2018: 234). Remaining aloof keeps these students away from engaging in the learning process. Their state of alienation hampers their optimal learning of the target language concepts and become a cause for classroom agitation for both their teachers and peers. It is important to mention that this phenomenon usually occurs in English language classrooms in Pakistan, yet it has received less attention of researchers.

The studies so-far conducted in pedagogical context highlight the causes of students' social and psychological alienation from the teacher and their peers. Most of the studies conducted in EFL/ESL context (Fareed et al., 2016; Ozdemir & Rahimi, 2013; Mitra, 2004 & 2008; Rudduck, 2007; Rudduck and Flutter, 2004; Yi Zhu, 2013) present alienation as an effect caused by various factors. It is noteworthy that in these studies alienation is not presented as a significant cause leaving its meaningful effects on students' psychology and social routine. Thus, the present study has dealt alienation as one of the important causes which hampers active learning in the classroom. The objective of this study is to explore the extent to which 'sense of alienation' effects target language learning process. Another point of note is that this study focuses on the estrangement and isolation of students from language-related tasks and activities only. This form of alienation can be termed as language acquisition or learning estrangement. In previous studies, such a focus has not been found.

Moreover, it is noted that the above cited studies also offer several suggestions for EFL/ESL teachers. These suggestions are sort of resolutions that EFL/ESL teachers need to maintain to help alienated students. These suggestions are i) paying attention to students' voice (Mitra, 2004 & 2008; Rudduck, 2007; Rudduck and Flutter, 2004), ii) attending to students' matters and learning issues, iii) giving opportunities to students to participate and iv) recognizing all students as part of classroom community (Asfaranjan et al. 2013; Ozdemir & Rahimi, 2013; Mann 2001, 2003; Yi Zhu, 2013). Teachers' adherence to these pieces of advice may lead to a more constructive classroom environment and a better teaching-learning experience.

Paying attention to the teachers' role in EFL/ESL context, many research studies have been conducted. However, the role of teacher' talk or interaction in EFL/ESL classroom has been dealt less extensively. A study by Shankar (2012) reports the responses of pre-service ESL teachers in a reaction to the negative feedback comments made by the advisor as well as their peers in the Training for Language Teaching Course. Teachers as students felt defensive towards the feedback remarks, in turn losing the actual pace of the teaching practice and its challenges. Hardman's (2016) classroom discourse analysis highlights how teachers' interaction with their students can provide them with a fertile ground for the active, highly collaborative and cognitively stimulating learning process. In this connection, Hardman has proposed sets of question and feedback techniques with their descriptions for teachers so that they may improve their classroom discourse practices. However, it is noted that this paper takes classroom discourse with a general emphasis with no particular focus on EFL/ESL context.

Similarly, in the Indonesian context, a study has been conducted by Agustina and Cahyono (2016) which tried to prove teacher-student positive interaction to be playing a vital role in building ESL learners' self-confidence, in turn, leading to enhanced linguistic experiences. The researchers video-recorded the teacher-student interaction in the classes with a special focus on lecturers' speech acts (face-saving and face-threatening acts). The study showed that the instances of using face-saving acts by lecturers were more than those of face-threatening acts in 12-meetings observation. As per students' perception, face-threatening acts, whenever used by lecturers, felt to be a threat and, in their opinion, the use of politeness strategies can lessen the threatening effect.

It is noteworthy that, in these studies, the teacher feedback remarks are presented to have both positive and negative impact on students' linguistic experience. However, their role as alienation triggering agent has not been dealt in the previous literature. Additionally, there is not a single evidence of teacher talk and evaluative feedback instilling or accelerating sense of alienation among ESL students. Thus, the present study is unique of its kind as it aims to prove feedback remarks of ESL teachers as a source of instilling or accelerating sense of alienation among ESL students, which, in turn, leads to low achievement in acquisition/learning of the second language that is English.

3. Methods

It was an exploratory sequential mixed method research design (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018) to prove the afore-mentioned hypotheses and research objectives (see 1. Introduction). With QUAL priority, the Quan was the second step making the research 'a sequential design'. The QUAL-strand of the study was carried out in two phases. The first phase was to collect the range of evaluative 'F' remarks through an open-ended questionnaire (Q1) (see Appendix A). In the second phase, the evaluative remarks received were transcribed, translated and sorted to set another open-ended questionnaire (Q2) (see Appendix B). The Quan-strand in the form of a close-ended questionnaire (Q3) was developed based on the responses collected through QUAL-strand (see Appendix C). The exploration-development design helped to reflect the crucial role of teacher-talk and evaluative remarks in an ESL context.

The research sites were three public sector institutes i.e. Departments of English from The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Government Sadiq College for Women University and Government Sadiq-Egerton College for Boys, Bahawalpur City, Punjab, Pakistan. The selection criteria used for research sites were:

    i.   At least, BA (Hons.) program is run.

    ii.   Maximum, M. Phil. Program is offered.

The study was conducted with two sample groups purposively selected. One group was of those who enter ESL context as experienced learners having maximum exposure to their teachers' remarks (S1). The other group is of those who enter the ESL context with no prior exposure or low prior exposure (S2). The S1 participants were 470 senior students studying in BA (Hons.) (session: 2015-19) and M. Phil. (session: 2017-19) programs whose feelings and experiences were recorded through an open-ended questionnaire (Q1) which helped to set the second phase of QUAL-strand. Whereas, the S2 participants were 390 fresh students enrolled in BA (Hons.) 1st and 2nd semesters (session: 2019-23). The Q2 consisted of the list of only 'face-threatening acts' (as per the focus of the study) as evaluative 'F' remarks to explore fresh students' feelings on seeing that list (as if they had received those remarks from their teachers).

The last in the sequence of the design was Quan step which was carried out with the help of a closed-ended questionnaire (Q3) consisted of two parts 'A' and 'B'. The 'A' section was set to find the average range of sense of alienation and in the 'B' section the average range of the types of alienation experienced by ESL learners during various classroom activities due to the evaluative 'F' remarks (face-threatening acts) of their teachers.

4. Analysis

4.1 The Qualitative Analysis

The QUAL analysis of Q1 responses collected from S1 gave rise to the list of evaluative 'F' remarks of ESL teachers which were sorted in terms of 'face-threatening acts' (see appendix B). The Q1 part 2 consisted of open-ended item purposefully set to see the impact of face-threatening acts of ESL teachers remarked during language-related tasks. The responses are inferred and summed up descriptively as below:

    i.   Most of the students take the remarks of their ESL teachers at heart. They feel shy about getting involved in the activities for which they receive the evaluative feedback remark. They believe they would never do well ever in the tasks for which they once received the straightforward evaluative remark.

    ii. They feel as if they do not belong to the context and they may not do the activities will not be fruitfully well. So they feel better to remain aloof, and do not get engaged in the activities.

    iii. They feel it would be better to do a bunk than attending the class of the teacher who usually remarks negatively. They feel to be in a cross with not only the teachers but also the second language itself.

    iv. They also feel like getting stubborn in their behaviour towards ESL teachers. They tend to become challenging sometimes too. There seems to be a barrier developed out of their stubbornness and challenging behaviour that they hardly wish to do well in the tasks assigned to them.

    v. They think themselves to be utterly poor and incompetent language learners so they feel to be like odd-one-out in the class.

    vi. They fear that whatever hard work they would do will not make any good difference to achieve high, so their immediate goal shall be to pass the exams only.

The Q2 responses collected from S2 are not so different from those of S1's responses. But it is noteworthy that S2 responses also express fears which are highlighted in the form of following five points. According to S2 participants, on receiving critical 'F' remarks of their teachers, they believed that they would have either:

    i. Felt apprehensive whenever they get into the ESL context or

    ii. Lost self-confidence with self-esteem hurt or

    iii. Felt agitated with language-related activities or

    iv. Got their field of interest changed or even

    v. Quit the program.

Majority of the S2 participants recorded their future reservations in the form of fears cited above. They felt alarmed of the upcoming situation to be faced in their ESL classes. On seeing the list of remarks which their seniors received, they felt as if it was the reflection of the future ESL context they will be entering. The list of remarks also appeared to be positively impacting on some of the S2 participants who were found recording their future resolutions such as:

    i. Staying persistent in doing hard work or

    ii. Involving more and more in the language-related activities to avoid chances of unwanted agitation in future or

    iii. Getting rid of non-serious behaviour which is usually the cause of classroom agitation.

Apart from this positivity impacted by the remarks, the negativity generated by them cannot be avoided as a large number of students suffer due to such remarks, though true but harmful in the ESL context. The teachers' truthfulness, many times, is painfully received by the students. They do not understand that they are at fault. However, they expect their teachers to be very polite, caring, and emotionally supportive. Their definition of an ideal teacher in an ESL context gets shattered when they find them commenting truthfully but harshly. It would not be wrong to say that they like to hear sugar-coated white lies (Cook, 1997).

4.2 The Quantitative Analysis

The responses collected through Q3 were analysed statistically through SPSS version 20. Section A includes ten language-related tasks with 0-3 4-point Likert Scale. The Average was taken to show ESL learners' sense of alienation felt during language-related tasks assigned by the teacher. Those tasks are enlisted in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Average Sense of Alienation Experienced by ESL Learners

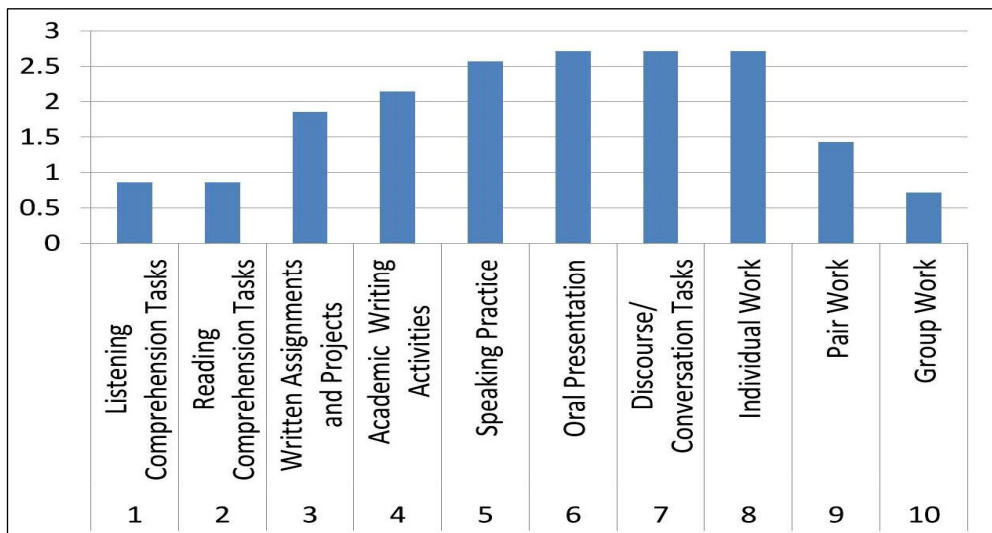| 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Listening Comprehension Tasks	Reading Comprehension Tasks	Written Assignments and Projects	Academic Writing Activities	Speaking Practice	Oral Presentation	Discourse/ Conversation Tasks	Individual Work	Pair Work	Group Work
0.857	0.857	1.857	2.142	2.571	2.714	2.714	2.714	1.428	0.714

Figure 2

As the aim of the study was to see the impact of ESL teachers' remarking practice during assigned activities, therefore, average students tend to feel highly alienated in the tasks 5, 6, and 7 (as shown in fig. 1) with an average of 2.5 and above. It shows that the students usually receive overt remarks when they get involved in speaking practice, oral presentation and conversation/ discourse tasks. Hence, whenever they are assigned these tasks, they feel highly alienated and do not volunteer for the fear of receiving direct remarks.

Comparatively, written assignments, projects and academic writing activities (like essay type tests, mid and final term papers) are tasks for which students receive less direct and covert remarks so their average impact on students, ranges from 1.8 to 2.0. The reason seems to arise from the fact that such remarks are mostly received in written form with fewer chances of disclosure in front of their peers. Another reason is that such remarks are usually language-related and impersonal without nominating any single being; thus, leave less negative impact than received during oral activities.

However, for listening and reading comprehension tasks, students experience slight alienation with an average range of 0.8 which is least among other tasks. As, students are assigned these activities in groups they feel a sense of support, unity and power, in turn, raising their confidence and motivation levels. Doing so, they form a community and feel shielded against any critical or evaluative remark coming from their teacher.

Last three items of Q3 are mode-related. Three modes of assigning tasks are popular in the ESL context. These are individual work, pair work and group work. Among these three, individual work causes students to experience a higher sense of alienation as there are equal chances for every student to be pinned point by the teacher. Comparatively, the other two modes especially group work is a comfortable mode of carrying out language-related activities for students. They feel almost no alienation when they work in groups. They tend to protect one another if they sense teachers' annoyance and get alarmed about it.

Section B of Q3 was administered to see if ESL learners' sense of alienation is instilled or accelerated. Table 2 shows the average of students feeling instilled or accelerated sense of alienation.

Table 2. Average of Types of Alienation Experienced by ESL Learners

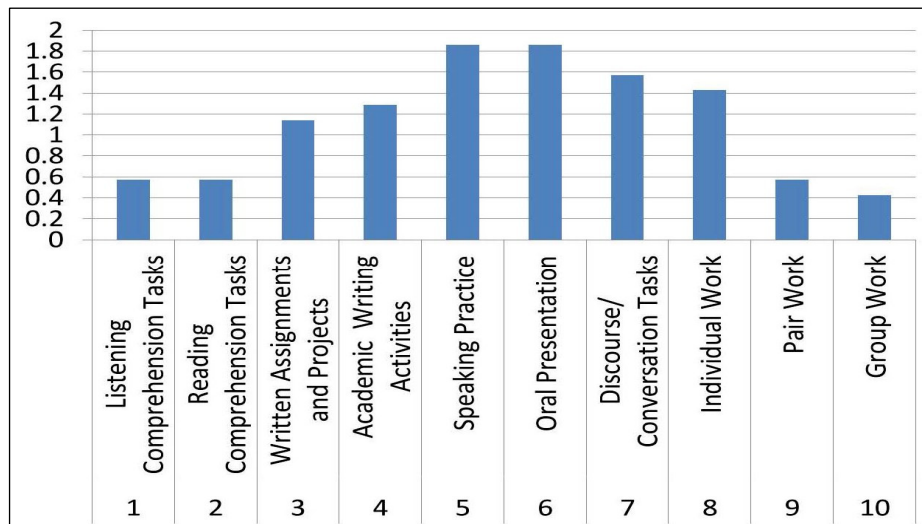| 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Listening Comprehension Tasks	Reading Comprehension Tasks	Written Assignments and Projects	Academic Writing Activities	Speaking Practice	Oral Presentation	Discourse/ Conversation Tasks	Individual Work	Pair Work	Group Work
0.571	0.571	1.142	1.285	1.857	1.857	1.571	1.428	0.571	0.428

Figure 3

The average ranges from 0.0 to 1.0 indicate instilled sense of alienation experienced by learners. However, the ranges from 1.1 to 2.0 show accelerated sense of alienation. Thus, according to the table above, ESL learners experienced instilled sense of alienation while carrying out tasks like 1 and 2; whereas, accelerated in the tasks 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. Similarly, in terms of mode, during 9 and 10 tasks students felt an instilled sense of alienation. From this result, it can be interpreted that students must have experienced sense of alienation before too when engaged in similar tasks. This also shows that the ESL teachers remain persistent in their remarking practice causing increase in students' sense of alienation.

5. Findings and Discussion

The study aimed to achieve its research objectives (see introduction) through a step-wise collection of qualitative and quantitative data. First, the range of 'F' remarks was collected from senior ESL learners which they usually receive during class activities from their teachers. Second, the feelings of senior and junior ESL learners were recorded and transcribed. Finally, the average range of sense of alienation, as well as its types in language-related tasks, was numerically measured and statistically presented. The qualitative and quantitative analysis resulted in important findings. These findings are presented with discussion and recommendations in this part of the paper.

The results show that the senior graduate students felt defensive towards the evaluative remarks uttered by their teachers. On receiving evaluative remarks, though truthful but bitter, the ESL learners felt discouraged to carry out language-related activities. This detachment results in challenging and defensive behaviour towards their teachers. This finding is in line with that of Shankar's (2012). It is noteworthy that junior ESL learners too could feel the agony of receiving negative evaluative remarks. They could see themselves as their seniors in the future classroom situation receiving the remarks from their teachers during class activities. Thus they got their future fears recorded too.

What is unfortunate is that ESL learners feel highly alienated in oral and discourse tasks than written and comprehension-based language-related tasks. Another point of note is that they feel highly alienated and fearful of carrying out individual tasks assigned in the class. However, the learners felt instilled sense of alienation in the less direct and passive class activities like in writing and comprehension-based ones. The sense of alienation gets accelerated on getting engaged in oral and discourse tasks which require the active participation of learners and the chances of receiving evaluative remarks get higher. Thus, learners prefer to avoid these tasks and try to stay indifferent to the teacher's call for participation due to the fear of losing their linguistic self-concept. One positivity has been recorded that the learners feel more secure and shielded when in groups. It means ESL teachers shall try to engage their students in group work more often than individual tasks.

It is noteworthy that these findings confirm the realization, causal hypothesis and set of associative hypotheses developed in the beginning (see introduction). This confirmation of hypotheses leads to the verification of the model proposed in the (1) Introduction. This verification leads to the understanding that ESL teachers need to stay cautious in making evaluative 'F' remarks as the learners who avoid getting engaged in the language-related tasks for most of the time, their performance gets very poor. Thus, it would not be wrong to say that ESL

learners perform well in subsequent language-related tasks if they once receive encouraging remarks from their ESL teacher. Conversely, on receiving discouraging remarks even for once they perform poorly in subsequent language-related tasks.

Here it appears that the truthfulness and conciseness of remarking are felt to be offensive in ESL context. Therefore, ESL teachers need to avoid the use of maxims of quality and quantity (Grice, 1976). They need to adhere to the Politeness Principle and pre-sequences to make students feel good. It is better to sugar-coat the remarks than getting bitter by staying truthful as learners' emotional well-being is very important which is, unfortunately, a less considered phenomenon in Bahawalpur, Pakistan. Emotions are termed as affective factors in the ESL context (Ross & Rivers, 2018). According to Swain (2013, p. 205), 'emotions are the elephants in the room – poorly studied, poorly understood, seen as inferior to rational thought'. That is why much of the agitation is caused in ESL context through teachers' negligence of what might be the emotional state of students if they remark truthfully but harshly leading to the agitation in the class and instilled or accelerated sense of alienation.

The learners' linguistic self-concept (Ellis, 2004; p. 543) gets alarmingly hurt and devalued when teachers' negative remarking practices persist in the ESL context. Students find themselves to be linguistic self-less beings who cannot achieve high in the language-related tasks. They start to find opportunities to detach themselves from the activities which are responsible for their loss of self-image and linguistic self-concept. Because, learners' self-image is the most precious possession they have which receives constant threat in a language class (Stevick, 1975) due to which students feel foreignness of language, and experience teacher-student power imbalance.

ESL Teachers' role is crucial in providing facilitation to their students when in need. A study by Sharp-Ross (2011) indicates the role of ESL teachers in instilling perceived academic self-competence in their students through targeted involvement supports, including acculturation strategies that perpetuate a sense of classroom and school belonging. Likewise, teachers can instil perceived academic self-competence among ESL learners by encouraging them and showing them a sense of support through the use of sugar-coated evaluative remarks.

Moreover, the present study's scenario approves what Dornyei's (2005, 2009a) L_2 Motivational Self System projects. ESL learners' hoped-for or desired future-self cannot be achieved when they feel detached, discouraged and de-motivated. Resultantly, their interest as a language learner lowers down and they try their best to narrow-escape the chances of getting targeted by the teacher. Therefore, their extreme step is to do the bunk of their classes or pretending to be busy in some important task other than learning the second language.

According to the findings and discussion, it is direly needed to resolve agitation issues of ESL learners when they are engaged in language-related tasks. Besides, the disinterestedness and low performance of learners due to instilled or accelerated sense of alienation are of serious concern too. Thus, this study recommends some resolutions as under:

i. ESL Teachers are not trained to what language chunks they shall use as remarks for their students. They speak out words even if they are enough to snatch away students' self-respect, self-esteem, confidence and even their self-image. So, the politeness theory of Lakoff (…), Levinson and Brown (1987) and Yule (1998, 2000), as well as Cook's (1998) theory of Face-wants and Acts, shall be included as part of the training sessions for teachers at all levels in Pakistan.

ii. Higher Education Commission of Pakistan is requested to arrange training sessions on ESL Teacher Talk, Remarking Practices and ESL Learners' Face-Wants both in Colleges and Universities nationwide.

iii. Teacher booklets and guides shall be published with a list of remarks as sugar-coated truths and possible sets of pre-sequences out of which they may use the best when required during class activities. We cannot forget that language is a social practise rather than an independent construct that 'creates and created' by certain forces and structures forming our functions in the society (Fairclough, 1989, p.vi).

iv. It is to request second language policymakers in Pakistan to introduce and implement the use of Community Language Learning (CLL) in all public and private sector institutions, so that ESL teachers may also use this method for second language teaching. The reason for this is put briefly here in terms of its introduction: CLL is a method that was developed by Charles A. Curran (1955). This method of teaching languages is based on the Counseling-Learning principle where the teacher becomes a Counselor and the learner as a client. As Curran was a Professor of Psychology at Loyola University, Chicago, he maintained that second or foreign language learning situation gets so complex for the learners at times that they need some counselling to get through it. So the

best counselling can be provided by the language teacher himself/herself. It is this method that guides language teachers to take the language learners as a whole person and not simply as students with intellect. It also guides to take care of learners' feelings with concerns. For this purpose, even it promotes the use of Learners' L_1 (by teacher-counsellor. This method emphasizes on learners' responsibility for their learning. A language teacher shall not threaten, by any way or means, the students if their language performance is not up to the mark. All students develop a community-like atmosphere within a classroom context. They protect and support one another whenever needed. So students feel confident and encouraged to be beside their fellows who care for them. Moreover, this method guides language teachers to help in inculcating harmony and cooperative atmosphere among students in groups or even provide counselling to individuals.

v.   The use of code-switching and learners' L_1 during class activities may reduce the sense of alienation among ESL learners. In the study by Fareed et al. (2016), the effectiveness of English language teachers' use of code-switching as a technique in ESL classes has been recorded by looking into learners' perception regarding it. This technique proved to help reduce the sense of alienation among learners. So English language teachers may use code-switching and mixing as a technique purposefully to avoid agitation in ESL context and reduce levels of alienation.

vi.   As general strategies to make ESL learners emotionally stable and healthy in ESL context, first their security and self-investment can be maximized by allowing them to learn from one another in the class than to do so directly from teachers (Ghaith, 2002; Stevick, 1975); second, the increase in student's voice in ESL context will be of help to re-engage alienated students by providing them with a stronger sense of ownership (Rudduck and Flutter, 2004; Mitra, 2004, 2008 & Rudduck, 2007); third preferring the use of 'We' inclusive remarks than 'You' remarks with emphasis on expressions of "courtesy" and "politeness" (Jucker et al., 2012); fourth avoidance of direct disagreement on any issue and making positive utterances to give opinions (Khusnia, 2017) should be maintained.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, the ESL students perform well in subsequent language-related tasks if they once receive encouraging remarks from their teacher. Additionally, reduction in the sense of alienation among ESL learners may positively impact their L_2 achievement through improved remarking practices of ESL teachers. But if it is not the situation, students get discouraged, resultantly detached and further alienated from carrying out language-related tasks. This sense of alienation is either instilled if students receive teachers' negative remarks for the first time or accelerated if they receive it again and again.

This study is significant in highlighting the sensitive role of second language teachers when they are in contact with their students in a classroom. They need to be careful in using words and making remarks. Any single remark perceived to be negative by a learner may lead to the loss of self-image and linguistic self-concept. This may further lead to agitation and frustration in the class with low interest and poor linguistic performance of students.

This study is conducted in the ESL context. A similar study can also be conducted in an EFL context with different research sites. The scope of this study is limited to only post-graduate institutes of Bahawalpur City. Such a study can be carried out in any other area of Pakistan or abroad to see the extent to which such a situation exists elsewhere. Moreover, a study can be carried out to investigate the role of sense of alienation (as an independent variable) in affecting stress levels (as dependent variable) among ESL/EFL learners. Finally, it is important to mention that there is a need to stay cautious in interpreting the results of this study as they represent the sample taken in SLL context of Bahawalpur City, Punjab, Pakistan.

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Appendix A

Open-Ended Questionnaire (Q1)

Section A

Sense of Alienation is a feeling of estrangement from some object, place, person, event, task or even our self. The present study attempts to investigate the ESL learners' feelings of estrangement from English language-related tasks leading to low linguistic involvement and performance in the class. It is believed by the researcher that the remarks made by ESL teachers turn to be evaluative and critical and sometimes personal, hence, leave a negative impact on learners. Thus, it is requested to put your teachers' remarks either said in Urdu or English on the given questionnaire to prove the research proposition as true or false.

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Section B

Write down in your words (either in English or Urdu) the impact your ESL teachers' negative remarks leave on you as under:

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Appendix B

Open-Ended Questionnaire (Q2)

Following is the list of negative remarks collected in the form of responses and then summed up as under. Read the given set of remarks. Think if you receive these remarks by your ESL teachers during your course of study, what impact will the remarks leave on you? Write your answer in the given lines.

Translated Version of the Responses Collected from S1 Taken as a Basis to Design Q2
You always do poor work.
I haven't seen such a duffer/ dull student in my life.
O Pendu (fool)!
I bet you can never do this.
It is very difficult so you can't do it.
You need to improve much.
S/he is much better than you.
I knew you can never do this.
I knew you can only achieve low.
I expect less from you.
S/he deserves better than you.
You are incompetent.
You need to choose a discipline other than English.
You don't have the calibre to complete your degree in the English Language.
Your competence in the English Language is too low.
You need to sit with someone more competent.
You cannot perform well in your oral tests.
I bet you are a loser.

[Write down below in your words (either in English or Urdu) the impact your ESL teachers' negative remarks would leave on you:]

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Appendix C

Closed-Ended Questionnaire (Q3)

Section A

Sense of Alienation is a feeling of estrangement from some object, place, person, event, task or even our self. The present study attempts to investigate the ESL learners' feelings of estrangement from English language-related tasks leading to low linguistic involvement and performance in the class. It is believed by the researcher that the remarks made by ESL teachers turn to be evaluative and critical and sometimes personal, hence, leave a negative impact on learners. Thus you are requested to check the relevant option (from no sense of alienation to highly alienated from the language-related tasks) for which you usually received ESL teachers' remarks.

KEY			
No Sense of Alienation (NSA)	Slightly Alienated (SA)	Alienated (A)	Highly Alienated (HA)

Sr. No.	Statements	NSA	SA	A	HA
1.	Listening Comprehension tasks				
2.	Reading Comprehension tasks				
3.	Written Assignments and Projects				
4.	Academic Writing activities such as tests, mid-term and final term papers				
5.	Speaking practice				
6.	Oral presentation				
7.	Conversation or Discourse tasks				
8.	Individual language-related tasks				
9.	In-Pair language-related tasks				
10.	In-Group language-related tasks				

Section B

ESL context is seen as a combination of activities carried out by teachers and students to enhance language-related knowledge. The activities mentioned in the table below are mostly assigned to ESL students for which they feel shy. Their shyness is caused by many factors but this time only one factor is taken into consideration which is the sense of alienation causing it. Here the aim is to investigate the type of alienation restricting students from carrying out these activities.

So, you are requested to check any one type of alienation either instilled a sense of alienation or accelerated sense of alienation as an option relevant to you against each activity. You can understand your situation by the given detail of the terms used:

    i.   Instilled sense of alienation (ISA) is the term used for those students who never felt a sense of alienation before.

    ii.   Accelerated sense of alienation (ASA) is the term used for those students who felt a sense of alienation before as well.

Sr. No.	Statements	ISA	ASA
1.	Listening Comprehension tasks		
2.	Reading Comprehension tasks		
3.	Written Assignments and Projects		
4.	Academic Writing activities such as tests, midterm and final term papers		
5.	Speaking practice		
6.	Oral presentation		
7.	Conversation or Discourse tasks		
8.	Individual language-related tasks		
9.	In-Pair language-related tasks		
10.	In-Group language-related tasks		