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Research Article

**A CROSS SECTIONAL ASSESSMENT OF SELF-PERCEIVED
ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND BARRIERS TO
IMPROVEMENT AMONG PHARMACY STUDENTS**

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Abstract:

Objective: The aims of this research were to determine pharmacy students' self-perceived English language proficiency level and barriers that affect the improvement of language proficiency among them. It also seeks to determine whether demographic variables such as gender and years of study will have any relationship to their self-perceived and barriers towards language proficiency.

Methods: A cross-sectional observational study was conducted among pharmacy students at University of Balochistan, Quetta. The validated research questionnaire was used as the tool for gathering the required data. The data collected was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences v.20.

Results: All but half of the students reported that they can communicate self-assuredly in English and a total of 69.7% respondents self-perceived that they have no problem in reading English materials. In the response of support from family and university in improving respondents' English language, 74.2% of the respondents (n=330) agree that their families encourage them to improve English language while 60% of the respondents (n=267) disagree that there is lack of support from university. In this study, gender does not show any significant association with their English language proficiency. Respondents' English language proficiency is significantly associated with their years of studies ($p < 0.05$) in four of the survey items which are: their ability to communicate fluently in English, write effectively in English, satisfactoriness of self know-how for clearing exams and to present various assignments. The barriers that affect the improvement in English language proficiency among pharmacy students have been identified to be the self-reliance of explaining their viewpoint and lack of time.

Conclusion: The present study managed to distinguished areas of trepidation among the respondents for recuperating their English proficiency. Therefore, faculty members and policy makers have to design certain interventions so that the students can advance to better language proficiency.

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INTRODUCTION:

English language adeptness for undergraduate / postgraduate is characterized as “*the ability of a student to use the language to make and communicate meaning in spoken and written contexts while completing their university studies*” [1]. The expression “*use*” arrays as of straightforward assignment to multifaceted responsibilities. This knack of English language is seen as the aptitude to sort out multiple communication and printed tasks that differentiates narrow focus of speech with the ceremonial system that is concerned with accurate use of syntax and structure.

English language skill and adaptability is a key factor and has become an imperative concern in higher educational institutes of Pakistan. One reason is the curriculum being in English and the other being the understanding of the functionality of English language in employment search later in the professional carrier. In addition to what is reported, there is augmented acknowledgment within higher educational institutes of the primary nature of English needed in erudition and educational accomplishment for every enrolled student. Last but not the least, undergraduates / postgraduates entering the universities should be adept in English so that they have a clear benefit in the professional environment and be superiorly geared up towards the confrontation of issues related to globalization [2].

As reported, English is the standard of tutoring within all higher edifying organizations of Pakistan [3]. However, this is often confronted by masses that highlight the need of either Urdu or the local languages to be replaced with English in the country [3]. Conversely, the Government of Pakistan approved English language to dislodge comparable with Urdu in higher educational institutes of Pakistan. It was reported that as the English language is indispensable for the economic and scientific expansion of the country, its importance should not be neglected. Even though, the Pakistani citizens had well inform know how of English language, widely held population is approximated to have a poor decree of English language [4]. It was also reported in literature that the Pakistani students were scratchy while using English and favoured to converse in their mother tongue or local languages [4].

This lack of proficiency among graduates is multi factorial. Amongst them, the key identified aspect is a poor English language background. The complaint of a weak “English based foundation” during primary or secondary educational years is deemed universal. Furthermore, little exposure to English language back at the residential

environment is another verity that can never be rejected [5]. Whatever the explanation are, detrimental effects are prominently observed within the Pakistani students’ community. A poor command of English language can develop unnecessary barriers especially in the field of science and technology [6]. The fact is not deniable that English is the most widely used language in the world and grasp of English is among one of the most important criteria that prospective employers look for in a candidate.

The Medical and Allied Health Science is an ideal example of an atmosphere where majority of the teaching process, material and text is in English. English helps the graduates to think and act at the national and international arenas. As per standards, health education moulds to produce health professionals with the right attributes to enter into the society. A good healthcare professional comprises of knowledge, practical skills, social skills and responsibility, values, attitudes and professionalism, communication, leadership, team skills, problem solving and scientific skills information management and lifelong learning as well as managerial and entrepreneurship. However, in order to cultivate these attributes among health graduates, English proficiency provides catalytic effect in achieving the traits as soon as possible in the professional carrier.

Shifting our concerns to the Faculty of Pharmacy & Health Sciences (FPHS) at University of Balochistan (UoB), English language yet again holds its prominent position and importance. The past years have seen the expansion of pharmacy profession whereas the traditional product based approach has shifted to a patient based level. Pharmacy is documented as a significant pillar in the multidisciplinary triad of a healthcare system. As the role of pharmacist involves more patient interaction, this transformation is not easy as pharmacists should be equipped with exceptional communiqué and management skills. At the same time, mainstream allusions, available evidenced based information and discourses are conveyed through English language [7]. For that reason, for improved counselling and pharmaceutical-based services, set of courses related to pharmacy give emphasis to the significance of good quality decree of English language [8].

To the best of our knowledge, preponderance of the information reported from Pakistan appraising English language proficiency of university students lacks information from the health domain. Therefore, this research was conducted to determine how pharmacy students perceive their English language proficiency. Besides that, it also

gave an insight into the barriers to improvement of the language.

METHODS:

Research design

A quantitative cross sectional survey design was adopted for the conducting the study with all pharmacy undergraduates enrolled at FPHS, UoB, Quetta. The data collected from the samples were analysed quantitatively in a specific time rather than over a period of time. Prior to the research, a pilot test was conducted to make sure the reliability of the items in the questionnaire. Data collected from the questionnaire were recorded and analyzed to ensure accurate results.

Population, sample and research instrument

We targeted all students who were enrolled in the morning session at FPHS, UoB, Quetta. Through an extensive literature review, a self administered questionnaire was constructed [9]. The tool comprised of 3 parts (demographics, perceptions towards English expertise and the barriers). Before using the questionnaire, we conducted the reliability and validity analysis. The finalized tool consisted of demographic information including gender, race, and year of study. Next 20 statements evaluated perception and barriers towards the language in a 5-point Likert format. ("strongly agree", "agree", "neutral", "disagree", "strongly disagree"). The tool has overall α value of 0.79584 hence rated as reliable (Hinton, 2004). Little modification in wordings was needed during the validation process.

Ethical Approval & Survey Administration

Departmental ethical committee at the FPHS, UoB approved the study. In addition, participants were also given briefings on the nature and objectives of the study. Verbal consent of the participants was obtained prior to survey distribution. The survey was administered by the principal investigator.

Statistical analysis

We used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 and applied appropriate statistics based on our objectives. The Mann-Whitney U-Test was used to compare the ordinal scale responses. This nonparametric statistic test calculates the significance between two means with unequal sample sizes and evaluates whether the medians of a test variable differ significantly between two groups [10, 11]. In addition, the data from the survey instrument consists of ordinal-level data; a conservative method of analysis was done with a nonparametric statistical test. An analysis of between the year of study and their self perceived English language proficiency was using the, with an alpha level set at 0.05 [12]. Where statistical significant association was reported by Kruskal-

Wallis test, individual post hoc analyses were done by using the Mann-Whitney U-test. With 3 post hoc analyses, the alpha level was corrected using the Bonferroni correction and was set at .017 [0.05 divided by the 3 post hoc comparisons] [12]. The test is frequently used when there is one characteristic variable and one dimension variable, and the measurement variable does not meet the assumptions of normality [11]. Like most non-parametric tests, it is performed on ranked data, so the measurement observations are converted to their ranks in the overall data set: the smallest value gets a rank of 1, the next smallest gets a rank of 2, and so on [11].

RESULTS:

Demographic description

A total of 542 students who were enrolled from year one till year five were approached for their participation in the survey (morning session). At the end of the study period, a total of 445 students had participated in the survey (response rate of 82.1 %). Out of the 445 respondents, 320 (71.9%) were males and 125 (28.1%) were females. The distribution of students was almost equal and comparable in all the years of study.

What is pharmacy students' self-perceived English language proficiency level?

Over half (52.1%, n=232) of the students either agreed or strongly agreed that they can communicate fluently in English. Three-quarters of respondents (78.7%) agreed that they can listen well in English. Regarding the reading capability of respondents, most of them (69.7%, n=310) self-perceived that they have no problem in reading English materials. About half of the respondents (46.1%, n=205) gave a neutral response on their capability to write in English. Nevertheless, most of the respondents (72.9%, n=369) agreed that their present language aptitude is sufficient for them to comprehend educational material. Besides, 86.1% of the respondents (n=383) also agreed that their current English proficiency is adequate to pass overall exam. With regards to respondents' English proficiency in interacting with patient or with peers and lecturers, a higher number of respondents (53.7%, n=239, 44%, n=196, respectively) disagreed that they are shy or unable to communicate effectively in English. Based on overall research question findings pharmacy students perceived positively towards their English language proficiency. A summary of students' responses for self-perceived proficiency level are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Pharmacy Students' Responses for Self-Perceived Proficiency Level

Items	Responses				
	SD n (%)	D n (%)	N n (%)	A n (%)	SA n (%)
I can communicate fluently in English	2 (0.4)	24 (5.4)	187 (42.0)	211 (47.4)	21 (4.7)
I can listen well in English	0 (0.0)	3 (0.7)	92 (20.7)	298 (67.0)	52 (11.7)
I do not have any problem in reading English materials	0 (0.0)	24 (5.4)	111 (24.9)	250 (56.2)	60 (13.5)
I can write effectively in English	0 (0.0)	35 (7.9)	205 (46.1)	184 (41.3)	21 (4.7)
My English language proficiency is good enough for me to understand academic books and lectures in my course	1 (0.2)	10 (2.2)	65 (14.6)	307 (69.0)	62 (13.9)
My English language proficiency is not good enough for me to interact with patients during community and hospital attachment	36 (8.1)	203 (45.6)	146 (32.8)	56 (12.6)	4 (0.9)
My English language proficiency is adequate for me to pass my overall examinations	1 (0.2)	10 (2.2)	51 (11.5)	314 (70.6)	69 (15.5)
My English language proficiency is good enough for me to present individual assignments and case studies to the class	0 (0.0)	12 (2.7)	103 (23.1)	279 (62.7)	51 (11.5)
My English language proficiency makes me shy to express my intellectual thoughts with my peers and lecturers	25 (5.6)	171 (38.4)	141 (31.7)	100 (22.5)	8 (1.8)
My English language proficiency makes me more confident to interact academically with foreign lecturers in the school	0 (0.0)	43 (9.7)	174 (39.1)	200 (44.9)	28 (6.3)

Note: SA= strongly agree; A= agree; N= neutral; D= disagree and SD = strongly disagree

What is the difference between male and female pharmacy students with regards to their self-perceived English language proficiency?

The response from both gender revealed that a slightly higher percentage of males disclosed that they have no problem communicating in English language. There was no statistical difference noted among both gender and their English language communication capabilities. In terms of their self-perceived response to listening, a total of almost 70% of both genders either agreed or strongly agreed that they have good English language listening capabilities. Similarly to the previous statement, there was no statistical difference noted among gender and their English language listening capabilities. Further analysis of the responses found that, a slightly higher percentage male student self-perceived that they have higher command on English reading compared to their female counterparts. There was no statistical difference found between responses to this statement between genders. In response to writing effectively in English, the results of the current study revealed that less than half of the respondents from both gender either agreed or strongly agreed that they can write effectively in English. It was also observed that there was no statistical difference noted among gender and their English writing capabilities.

Majority of the students from both gender (80%) were in agreement that that they have good

language proficiency in order to understand academic books and lectures in their course. Similarly, same percentage of students self perceived that their present language knack is passable for them to pass their assessments. There were again no statistical significant difference noted between the gender and response to these three questions. The present study also examined the students' self-perceived ability towards expressing their intellectual thoughts with their peers and lecturers in English. The findings revealed that between the genders, there is no statistical difference noted with this statement. Both gender almost equally responded either strongly agree or agree to this statement. In response to the statement on self perceived proficiency level and confidence to interact with foreign lecturers in the school, slightly less than half of the female respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement compared to their male counterpart (Table 4.2).

Although there was slight differences observed in terms of percentage to the agreement for overall statement between the genders, but there was no statistically difference observed when comparing these responses. Detailed statistical analyses comparing the responses between genders regarding their self-perceived English language proficiency is shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Gender Wise Assessment of Pharmacy Students' Self-Perceived Proficiency Level

<i>Part B : Pharmacy Students' Self-Perceived Proficiency Level: Survey question statement</i>	Male Mean (SD)	Female Mean (SD)	p-value*
I can communicate fluently in English	2.45 (0.72)	2.51 (0.68)	0.209
I can listen well in English	2.11 (0.61)	2.10 (0.57)	0.963
I do not have any problem in reading English materials	2.13 (0.76)	2.26 (0.73)	0.109
I can write effectively in English	2.53 (0.71)	2.59 (0.70)	0.532
My English language proficiency is good enough for me to understand academic books and lectures in my course	2.07 (0.65)	2.05 (0.62)	0.842
My English language proficiency is not good enough for me to interact with patients during community and hospital attachment	3.47 (0.91)	3.47 (0.82)	0.945
My English language proficiency is adequate for me to pass my overall examinations	1.99 (0.59)	2.02 (0.63)	0.815
My English language proficiency is good enough for me to present individual assignments and case studies to the class	2.14 (0.60)	2.18 (0.67)	0.515
My English language proficiency makes me shy to express my intellectual thoughts with my peers and lecturers	3.18 (0.92)	3.26 (0.93)	0.340
My English language proficiency makes me more confident to interact academically with foreign lecturers in the school	2.45 (0.70)	2.55 (0.77)	0.152

* *Mann-Whitney U-Test*, * *SD- Standard Deviation*
Items of questionnaire are presented as appendix

What are the differences between percentages of responses with regards to their English language proficiency among year of study?

The distribution of student within the five professional years was almost the same. The differences in responses were outlined as following:

Majority of students from the final year stated that they have better communication abilities compared to lower year students. A total of 70 (66.6%) of them either agreed or strongly agreed that their communication skills are better compared to the rest of the students. The ability to communicate in English was statistically significantly associated with year of study ($p=0.025$). After applying Bonferroni adjustment, it was revealed that in between the study year and English communication proficiency, students in year 5 had statistically significant relation with year 1 and year 2.

The respondents were asked about their English language listening proficiency. Overall, there were not much differences in the proportion of agree or strongly agree responses to the statement between first, second and fourth year students. However, as compared to study years, student from the first year highlighted a much lower response to the statement. Only 74 (65.4%) of first year students either agreed or strongly agreed to the statement and there was no statistical significant difference noted among year of study and English language listening proficiency.

Two third of the respondents from the overall cohort reported no problem in reading English language. Furthermore, 73 (64.6%) of the respondents from third year declared adequate proficiency in reading English language. No statistical significant difference was reported among year of study and English language reading proficiency.

The respondents were also asked about their English language writing proficiency. Forty six (41.4%) respondents from year 1, 50 (43.1%) from year 2, 44 (30.9%) from year 3 and 65 (61.9%) from year 4 and 5 either strongly agreed or agreed that they can write effectively in English language. A statistical significant difference ($p=0.015$) was observed among year of study and English writing proficiency. The Bonferroni adjustment revealed that in between the study year and English writing

proficiency, year 5 had statistically significant relation with year 1 and year 2.

There was an equal response when the students were inquired about their proficiency towards understanding of English language. Ninety (81.0%) students from the first year reported to have a command on understanding English language. This was followed by 97 (83.6%), 92 (81.4%) and 90 (86.6%) of the respondents from second, third and fourth year respectively. However, there was no statistical difference was observed among the study years and response to this statement.

Majority (80%) of the students from each year reported that they had good language proficiency in order to understand academic books and lectures in their course. No statistical significant difference was observed among the statement and year of study. Similarly, majority of the respondents from all study years self-perceived that their present English language proficiency is good enough for them to interact with the patients during community and hospital attachment. However, there was no statistical difference observed among the statement and year of study.

Respondents from all four study years were quite satisfied with their English language proficiency to pass their overall examinations. A statistical significant difference was reported among the statement and year of study ($p=0.036$). After adjusting the significant variables, it was observed that year 5 had statistically significant relation with year 1 and year 2. Consecutively, majority of the respondents reported that their language proficiency is good enough for them to present their assignments and individual case studies to the class. The result were statistically significant ($p=0.041$) whereby, after the adjustment, year 5 was found to be statistically associated with year 1 and year 2.

The respondents were inquired that whether they feel shy to express their thoughts in English language. Thirty (27.0%), 28 (24.1%), 27 (24.1%) and 23 (21.9%) from year 1, 2, 3 and 4 agreed to the statement. No statistically significant association was observed between the year of study and the statement. Detailed statistical analyses comparing the responses between year of study and self perceived English language proficiency is shown in Table 4.3

Table 4.3: Year of Study Wise Assessment of Pharmacy Students' Self-Perceived Proficiency Level

Part B : Pharmacy Students' Self-Perceived Proficiency Level: Survey question statement	Year 1 Mean (SD)	Year 2 Mean (SD)	Year 3 Mean (SD)	Year 4 Mean (SD)	Year 4 Mean (SD)	p value*
I can communicate fluently in English	2.55 (0.65)	2.45 (0.62)	2.60 (0.80)	2.37 (0.65)	2.89 (0.75)	0.025
I can listen well in English	2.05 (0.51)	2.10 (0.50)	2.21 (0.71)	2.04 (0.57)	2.74 (0.77)	0.096
I do not have any problem in reading English materials	2.25 (0.80)	2.26 (0.60)	2.26 (0.77)	2.11 (0.77)	2.65 (0.97)	0.356
I can write effectively in English	2.63 (0.66)	2.61 (0.65)	2.63 (0.77)	2.40 (0.71)	2.66 (0.51)	0.015
My English language proficiency is good enough for me to understand academic books and lectures in my course	2.05 (0.63)	2.10 (0.61)	2.06 (0.64)	2.01 (0.62)	2.00 (0.22)	0.720
My English language proficiency is not good enough for me to interact with patients during community and hospital attachment	3.34 (0.86)	3.43 (0.81)	3.61 (0.83)	3.51 (0.85)	3.11 (0.85)	0.074
My English language proficiency is adequate for me to pass my overall examinations	1.97 (0.54)	2.10 (0.59)	2.06 (0.65)	1.90 (0.64)	1.99 (0.94)	0.036
My English language proficiency is good enough for me to present individual assignments and case studies to the class	2.24 (0.67)	2.22 (0.60)	2.19 (0.67)	2.02 (0.63)	2.31 (0.66)	0.041
My English language proficiency makes me shy to express my intellectual thoughts with my peers and lecturers	3.09 (0.89)	3.28 (0.87)	3.27 (0.99)	3.30 (0.93)	3.21 (0.43)	0.283
My English language proficiency makes me more confident to interact academically with foreign lecturers in the school	2.66 (0.79)	2.45 (0.71)	2.54 (0.75)	2.44 (0.74)	2.46 (0.93)	0.109

* *Kruskal-Wallis Test*, * *SD- Standard Deviation*

What are the barriers that affect improvement of English language among pharmacy students?

In addition to assess the self-perceived language proficiency, the current study was designed to identify the barriers that are faced by the students towards English language proficiency.

The findings revealed that more than half of the respondents (58.9%, n=262) responded either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they have no confidence in their ability to write and speak in English. Half of the respondents (50.1%, n=224) agreed that time factor is a barrier for them to take up extra classes to improve. The ability of respondents to express their thought and opinion in English were found almost similar in the total number of respondents who agreed (32.6%, n=145) and disagreed (36.9%, n=164) to the statement. A total of 212 respondents (47.7%) disagreed that they have no English speaking role model to help in improving English language. A total of 44.8% (n=198) of the respondents disagreed that their social environment does not support the use of

English as compared to those who agree with the statement (31.9%, n=141). In the response of support from family and university in improving respondents' English language, 73.2% of the respondents (n=330) disagreed that their families discourage them to improve English language. The study findings also revealed that majority of the respondents (60%; n=267) reported that there is no lack of support from the university to improve their English language skills.

Results from the current study highlighted two major barriers towards English language proficiency. One of the barrier reported by 223 (50.1%) of the respondents is due to the lack of time to take extra classes. Another barrier which is reported by a total of 145 (32.6%) of the respondents is a difficulty in expressing their thoughts and opinion in English. The summaries of students' responses towards the barriers that affect their improvement of English are shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Pharmacy Students' Responses towards the Barriers that Affect their Improvement in English

Survey question/statement	Responses				
	SD n (%)	D n (%)	N n (%)	A n (%)	SA n (%)
I have no confidence in my ability to speak and write fluent English	40 (9)	222 (49.9)	109 (24.5)	67 (15.1)	7 (1.6)
I do not have time to take up extra classes to improve my English language	6 (1.3)	83 (18.7)	133 (29.9)	196 (44)	27 (6.1)
I do not have enough resources to help improve my English language	33 (7.4)	226 (50.8)	120 (27)	64 (14.4)	2 (0.4)
I cannot afford to attend private classes to improve my English language proficiency	17 (3.8)	156 (35.1)	126 (38.3)	123 (27.6)	23 (5.2)
Difficulty in expressing my thoughts and opinion in English is one of the barriers for me that affects my improvement in English language	22 (4.9)	164 (36.9)	102 (22.9)	145 (32.6)	12 (2.7)
There is a lack of good teachers in helping me improve my English language	28 (6.3)	198 (44.5)	132 (29.7)	81 (18.2)	6 (1.3)
I have no English speaking role models to help me improve my English language	31 (7.0)	181 (40.7)	125 (28.1)	103 (23.1)	5 (1.1)
My social environment does not support the use of English	36 (8.1)	162 (36.7)	103 (23.3)	122 (27.6)	19 (4.3)
My family does not support me in improving my English language	133 (29.9)	197 (44.3)	76 (17.1)	35 (7.9)	4 (0.9)
There is a lack of support from my university for me to improve English language skills.	60 (13.5)	207 (46.5)	129 (29.0)	43 (9.7)	6 (1.3)

Note: SA= strongly agree; A= agree; N= neutral; D= disagree and SD = strongly disagree

DISCUSSION:

Pharmacy graduates are expected to be proficient in English language not only for their study purpose but also as a preparation for their future professional duties which most of the time directly involved in communication process with patients and other health care providers. Spaulding and Flack in their review concluded that inadequate mastery of English always have an undesirable effect on academic performance, social interactions and general adjustment [13]. The present study revealed that most of the respondents perceived that they can read, write or speak confidently in English language.

On the other hand, majority of the respondents either disagreed or stayed neutral of being shy in expressing intellectual thoughts due to their English proficiency. This however is in contrast to a study reported by Teh which states that non native English students are shy to communicate with peers using English because they might feel uncomfortable to be involved in the conversation process [14]. Teachers play an important role in helping students to build up their confidence and to improve their English language proficiency [15]. This is in line with findings of Yahaya *et al* in which suggested that teachers had significant influence on students' English proficiency [16].

This is contrast to the findings of Burns (1991) which reported that more than 50% of non English background students perceived their English language proficiency as "poor" or "very poor" [17]. In the same study, it been reported that students ranked their writing skills as the lowest of the four dimensions, followed by listening, speaking and reading.

Although the effect of gender on language proficiency acquisition had been researched in many studies and there are contrasting findings, the gender impact may be more clearly understood through the attitudinal, motivational, and learning style differences generally associated with gender [18, 19]. Therefore a more in-depth exploration on differences of learning style between genders is needed and this is beyond the scope of current research.

However, the results from this study indicate that there were no statistical differences between male and female pharmacy students with regards to their perceptions of their English language proficiency. As been reported in chapter 4, male and female students self-perceived English language proficiency were about the same. They either strongly agreed or agreed to all ten of the items asked in the questionnaire. The current study finding is consistent with a similar study conducted

among Bachelors of Arts students in Palestine on self-reported proficiency in English [20]. One possible reason that may explain the study findings is due to similar self perceived response to each item among both genders.

The current study also revealed that one of the main reasons that affect English language proficiency is the level of confidence to express thought and opinions. Barriers towards improvement are closely associated with the students' self-esteem and personal affective factors [15, 21]. A case study revealed that a number of students faced problems in putting their thoughts into words [22]. In addition, students who were good in the language had more confidence contributing to the class discussions. Besides, as reported by Hiew, respondents did experienced difficulty in speaking fluently [23]. Thus they choose other local languages and dialects with English to incorporate and ensure their meanings or thoughts are clear. During group work, low confidence students are more likely to refrain from expressing opinions, and explaining their responses [15].

A study to identify the challenges in learning English discovered that one of the personal barriers involved in English proficiency was communication [24]. Most university students, either foreign or local, face major language differences when the course is taught in English. This increases reluctance to master English language. Students were afraid that they would be laughed if they commit mistakes when using English. Students were hence apprehensive about taking a further step to improve their English [24].

CONCLUSION:

The present study which had explored the pharmacy students self-perceived English language proficiency and barriers associated with it. The research findings managed to provide an insight for language educators to address some of the issues of concern that need to be considered for further improving language proficiency among this cohort of students. Although the study findings revealed that majority of the students reported to have good level of language proficiency in terms of speaking and listening, more than half of them are still having no confidence in expressing their thoughts and writing using English.

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