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وعى الانتباه اليقظ وعلاقته بالتواصل الشفوي لدى طلبة الجامعة العراقيين دارسي اللغة الانكليزية
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المستخلص:

يُعدّ التواصل الشفهي مهارةً صعبةً لطلاب اللغة الإنجليزية الدارسين اللغة الانكليزية لغة أجنبية في العراق، لا سيما في مؤسسات التعليم العالي، حيث يعدّ التحدث مهارةً أساسيةً يجب على المتعلمين تطويرها للتواصل بطلاقة. ويتطلب التحدث باللغة تركيزاً ذهنياً واعياً. وقد أبرزت الأبحاث الحديثة أهمية الوعي الذهني في التواصل الشفهي باللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية، خاصةً في العراق، نظراً لقلّة الدراسات التي تناولت هذا لموضوع حيث انه لم يُدرس بشكلٍ كافٍ. هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى بحث العلاقة بين الوعي الذهني وأداء التواصل الشفهي لدى طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية في الجامعات العراقية. استخدمت الدراسة منهجاً كمياً وصفيّاً ارتباطياً لاستكشاف هذه العلاقة. وشملت الدراسة ٥٠ طالبة من طالبات المرحلة الثانية في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في كلية التربية للبنات بجامعة بغداد. جُمعت البيانات باستخدام مقياس الوعي بالانتباه الذهني (MAAS) لكارلسون وبراون (٢٠٠٥)، ومعيار تقييم العرض الشفهي التحليلي، لتقييم أداء الطلاب في التواصل الشفهي. استُخدمت الإحصاءات الوصفية، واختبارات t لعينة واحدة، ومعامل ارتباط بيرسون، وتحليلات الانحدار الخطي البسيط للحصول على النتائج. أظهرت النتائج أن الطلاب حققوا مستويات متوسطة من الوعي بالانتباه



الذهني وأداء التواصل الشفهي. كما أوضحت النتائج أن الوعي بالانتباه الذهني يُعد مؤشراً على أداء التواصل الشفهي. كما تشير النتائج إلى وجود علاقة ايجابية بين المتغيرين. وفقاً للنتائج تم وضع عدد من التوصيات والمقترحات لدراسات مستقبلية.

لكلمات المفتاحية: الانتباه الواعي؛ التواصل الشفهي؛ التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية؛ اليقظة الذهنية؛ طلاب الجامعات العراقية.

Mindful Attention Awareness and Its Relationship to EFL Iraqi University Students' Oral Communication

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Abstract

مجلة العلوم الأساسية
للعلوم التربوية والنفسية وطرائق التدريس للعلوم الأساسية

Speaking is not an easy task for English as a foreign language (EFL) students in Iraq, especially when the language is used in higher education, which requires students to learn to speak the language fluently. The students will have to speak the language; therefore, mindful attention is used. Recent research has focused on the significance of mindful attention awareness in EFL oral communication, particularly in Iraq, since it has not been extensively explored. This study investigated the relationship between mindful attention awareness and oral communication performance among Iraqi EFL University Students'. The study employed a quantitative, descriptive, correlational design to explore the relationship between mindful



attention awareness and oral communication performance. It involved 50 second-stage EFL students at the College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad. Data were collected using the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS), Carlson and Brown (2005), and an analytic oral presentation rubric adapted from Abdelmadjid (2016). For assessing students' oral communication performance. Descriptive statistics, one-sample t-tests, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression analyses were used to obtain the results. The results showed that students achieved moderate levels of mindful attention awareness and oral communication performance. The results further showed a positive relationship between the two variables, and mindful attention awareness predicts oral communication. Although no causal conclusions can be drawn, the results indicate a relationship between attentional awareness and EFL speaking performance in Iraqi academic contexts. Accordingly, several recommendations and suggestions are put forward.

Keywords: mindful attention awareness; oral communication; EFL speaking; mindfulness; Iraqi university students.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the importance of oral communication in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning has been widely applied, especially within academic settings. Oral communication is a productive language skill essential for effective human interaction. The importance of oral communication in language learning is recognized globally, as it provides students with the confidence and practical ability to use the language in real-life situations. For Iraqi university students, the ability to communicate effectively in English is not only a requirement for academic success but also a vital skill for future career opportunities. However, many EFL students in Iraq face challenges in oral communication, such as anxiety, lack of confidence, and limited authentic language use (Azzahra et al., 2018).

At the same time, increasing attention has been given to the concept of mindful attention awareness, which refers to an individual's ability to focus



on the present moment in a non-judgmental, open-minded attitude. Mindfulness has been linked to various positive outcomes in education, including improved focus, reduced anxiety, and enhanced academic performance (Amaro & Singh, 2020). Although the extent of research on mindfulness in education has been increasing, few studies have been conducted to investigate mindfulness, especially in the context of learning EFL and regarding the oral communication skills of students. This paper fills this gap by investigating the connection between mindful attention awareness and oral communication in a group of Iraqi university students who study the English language as a foreign language.

The main objective of the research is to determine whether oral communication skills are well-linked to high levels of mindfulness. The results can be of importance to teachers and curriculum designers who would like to improve EFL teaching through mindfulness-based programs.

In theory, mindful attention awareness may be viewed as a way that amplifies the ability of individuals to distribute attentional resources effectively and disengage from thoughts relevant to a task. Attentional control theory suggests that anxiety negatively affects performance by focusing attention on threat-related stimuli and self-monitoring issues and causes the consumption of fewer cognitive resources to perform a task (Eysenck et al., 2007). Mindful attention awareness can change this effect by helping people relate meta-awareness to these cognitive and emotional processes so that they become aware of anxious thoughts, but not consumed by them. This ability is especially appropriate in oral communication activities where constantly evaluating oneself and worrying about being judged negatively can easily disrupt concentration.

Another weakness of the current studies involves the operationalization of oral communication. Numerous studies consider speaking to be a one-dimensional construct, which is measured by world proficiency scores or self-reports. These methods are blind to the multidimensionality of oral communication and hide the possibility that psychological variables could be



correlated with particular performance constructs in different ways. The competence of oral communication as addressed earlier includes organization of content, linguistic accuracy and range, and delivery characteristics, which include fluency, pronunciation, and non-verbal behaviour (Fulcher, 2015). Analytic assessment frameworks allow studying the relationship between the variables of learners with regard to every domain, providing a more detailed insight into the performance of speaking.

In this regard, mindful attention awareness may be connected in different ways to various aspects of oral communication, such as the ability to maintain sustained focus, which could help with the organization of the content because students can keep track of the process and follow the logical flow of the discourse when focusing on it. Equally, attentional control can contribute to language application through lessening the cognitive interference and promoting more effective lexical access and grammatical encoding. Delivery-wise, mindful attention awareness can assist the students to be with their audience, manage the rate of speech and intonation, and the non-verbal demonstrations of communication. There is little empirical research on such domain-specific relationships, especially in the EFL settings (Zeilhofer, 2023).

Oral presentations are very common in the Iraqi colleges of education to test the academic speaking skills, and also in the preparation of future teachers on the skills of professional speaking. Such presentations usually involve the students planning and organizing the content, proper academic language use, and speech with high levels of confidence within time limits. These activities create significant pressure and anxiety for many students, which can negatively affect their performance even when they are well prepared. Research into the realization of mindful attention awareness in this respect, thus, carries theoretical and pedagogical significance in that it might illuminate psychological issues that are favourable or disruptive to oral communication in evaluative circumstances (Hussien, 2012).



Combined, the current literature suggests a necessity for the empirical study that combines mindfulness theory, attentional control, and multidimensional models of oral communication in the underrepresented EFL settings. Precisely, research is needed that considers (a) mindful attention awareness as a dispositional variable, (b) the correlation between mindful attention awareness and objectively measured performance in oral communication, and (c) the correlation between mindful attention awareness and specific constructs of speaking competence. A solution to these questions can help build a more holistic perspective on how attentional awareness influences oral communication in the process of learning a foreign language (Hui Yang and Yijie Li, 2025).

To address these gaps, the current study examines how mindful attention awareness is related to oral performance of communication in EFL students of an Iraqi university. The study will contain empirical findings based on the relationship between attentional awareness and speaking performance in an academic EFL setting using a validated measure of mindful attention awareness and an analytic oral presentation rubric for assessing content, language, and delivery. The study plays a major role in extending the current research and thus adds to the emerging body of literature on mindfulness as a means of language acquisition by identifying a neglected group of learners and using a multidimensional method of assessment.

2. Research Objectives

1. Determining the degree of mindful attention of EFL students at the Iraqi university.
2. Determining the oral communication performance of the said students in English.
3. Exploring the correlation between mindful attention awareness and oral communication skills.
4. Investigating the impact of mindfulness on attention to oral communication in EFL situations.



5. Investigating the complete causality between the three constructs of oral communication: content, language, and delivery.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Mindfulness

Mindfulness, which is frequently described as paying attention in a certain manner: intentionally, here and now, and without judgment, is also looking into gaining popularity in the field of education as a means of improving the learning process, concentration levels, and emotional stability of students. Within the language learning context, Mindful attention and awareness can be understood as students' ability to remain consciously engaged in communicative activities, to observe their thoughts, feelings, and language performance (Kabat-Zinn, 1994).

Mindfulness could be defined as a heightened awareness that is observed when people direct their awareness to the immediate present without any judgment and reactionary behavior (Kabat-Zinn et al., 1992). This notion includes the dispositional mindfulness, which is the individual differences in the innate mindfulness qualities, and the intentional mindfulness with nonjudgmental awareness of attention on the present. The dispositional mindfulness is a behavioral trait that is manifested in the capacity to maintain a state of mindfulness over a long duration (Keng et al., 2011).

Mindfulness is also defined as the act of being mindful of the present moment in a non-judgmental manner. According to Kabat-Zinn (1994), mindfulness is paying special attention intentionally, now, none. This notion does not only involve the focus of attention, but also the skill of observing thoughts and feelings without responding to them. Mindfulness skills can be seen in many aspects of individual behaviors and can lead to a range of results. For instance, individuals with superior mindfulness capacities tend to experience higher life satisfaction (Henriksson et al., 2016) and show improved well-being (Brown et al., 2007).



Individuals with higher levels of dispositional mindfulness experience mindful states more often and to a greater extent, and for longer durations. When individuals possess a heightened capacity, it encourages them to focus on the present moment, observe their evolving thoughts and emotions without judgment, and maintain an accepting, open mindset (Bishop et al., 2004).

Additionally, individuals with higher mindfulness levels tend to show stronger achievement-related self-regulation (Amani et al., 2022). Mindfulness encourages students to reflect on their learning processes. By being mindful of their strengths and weaknesses, students can establish more realistic objectives, monitor their progress, and adapt their strategies, when necessary, thereby improving self-regulation (Shapiro et al., 2011).

Moreover, within a mindful state, individuals possess heightened awareness and attentiveness to the present moment. Through the attentional self-regulation cultivated through mindfulness practice, individuals can develop an enhanced ability to resist distractions and maintain focus, as well as flexibly shift their attention by selectively attending to stimuli (Chambers et al., 2008).

3.2 Attention: Definition, Types, and Importance

William James (1890), often considered the father of psychology, defined attention as: "Taking possession by the mind, in clear and vivid form, of one out of what seem several simultaneously possible objects or trains of thought... It implies withdrawal from some things to deal effectively with others." Anderson (2019) describes attention as: "The process of concentrating mental resources on sensory or mental events." (Kennedy, 2004). states that "Attention is the ability to focus on specific stimuli or locations in our environment." Attention is the mental process of concentrating on certain aspects of the environment while ignoring others. It is a selective process that allows us to manage the overwhelming amount of sensory information we encounter daily.



According to Sternberg & Sternberg (2012), Attention can be divided into the following types:

1. Selective attention :Refers to the ability to concentrate on a specific task or stimulus while filtering out surrounding distractions. For example, focusing on your teacher's voice in class despite background noise.

2. Divided Attention: The ability to attend to and process multiple stimuli or tasks simultaneously.

Example: Talking on the phone while cooking.

3. Sustained Attention: The ability to maintain consistent focus and attention over a long period without becoming distracted.

Example: Encouraging the person to read a book for an hour with full concentration.

4. Alternating Attention: It refers to the capacity to switch between two or more tasks involving different mental tasks. Case in point: When it comes to writing an email and answering a phone call.

3.3 Importance of Attention

Attention is the key to learning and performance as it allows allocating the limited mental resources, suppressing distractions, and remaining engaged in task demands. During speaking activities, when students have to take into consideration several competing tasks at the same time, including planning what to say, keeping track of language correctness, and responding to the reactions of the audience, good attentional regulation will be especially crucial. Lacking the capacity to sustain task-oriented attention, students can easily get distracted by mistakes, responses of the audience, or self-comparisons to fall out of the flow of fluency and communicative success (Eysenck et al., 2007).

Effective learning is important with attention. When one focuses on information, there are higher chances of it getting encoded in the long-term



memory. This may be impaired by distractions and multitasking, resulting in worse memory and comprehension. Attention influences performance and productivity in a working and academic environment. The continuity of attention to work results in better quality of work and improved accomplishment of goals. On the other hand, we may not work effectively when there are numerous interruptions and distractions (Pernilla, 2024).

3.4 Mindful Attention and Awareness

Mindful attention awareness is the inclination of any individual to be attentive to the current moment experiences without affecting automatic pilot mode, but being open and judgment-free (Brown and Ryan, 2003). This construct is based on the mindfulness theory by focusing on the perception of the current internal and external experiences with no overevaluation, rumination, or reactivity (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) conceptualizes mindfulness as a unidimensional trait representing the presence of attention and awareness in everyday life and has been extensively tested in different cultural and academic settings (Brown et al., 2007).

The mindful awareness scale consists of two main elements, which are self-regulation of attention and orientation to experience. The former can be described as the capacity to keep in mind the current moment and divert attention elsewhere. The second, on the contrary, is a free and nonjudgmental approach to thoughts and feelings (Bishop et al. 2004).

Brown and Ryan (2003) reasoned that mindful awareness can lead to metacognitive interaction, which helps the students to take note of their speech, manage anxiety, and stay focused when communicating. Moreover, he differentiated two important elements in the mindfulness of self-regulated attention and attention orientation, which are important in maintaining effective oral communication.

It has always been proven that psychological studies show that mindful attention awareness correlates to better attentional control, emotional management, and lower stress and anxiety (Brown et al., 2007; Chambers et al., 2008). With a greater amount of mindful awareness, these subjects are more



likely to exhibit the ability to observe the amount of distraction and emotional responses without being enamored by them and react more adaptively to cognitively demanding and evaluative scenarios. These attributes indicate that mindful attention awareness can be especially useful in relation to EFL oral communication tasks, which need to be performed with the focus on sustained attention and emotional control due to the pressure of performance.

3.5 Mindfulness in the Context of EFL Learning

Gregersen et al. (2014) note that mindfulness can help students to manage the anxiety associated with speaking and to direct their attention to the communication purpose instead of language mistakes, as well as to be more aware of their emotions during communication. Mindful students tend to manage their anxiety and stay mentally present when carrying out oral tasks, and hence, confident, more fluent speech production may be achieved. With regards to the acquisition of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), mindfulness has proved effective in several areas of language production, particularly the oral language acquisition, where students might experience some issues related to fluency or confidence. Being mindful allows one to monitor speech and feel less afraid of judgment, as well as become more adaptable in the process of interaction.

3.6 Oral Communication: Definition, Types, and Benefits

Oral communication means passing information and ideas verbally between an individual or a group of individuals. It refers to the act of communicating through word of mouth (Bovee and Thill, 2013). This involves formal and informal communication in different environments. It entails verbal communication, tone, rhythm, pitch, and body language, and is extensively applied in learning, workplaces, and everyday communication.

3.7 Types of Oral Communication

1. Face-to-face conversations
2. Meetings and discussions



3. Telephone or video calls
4. Classroom lectures
5. Public speeches and presentations

3.8 Benefits of Oral Communication

1. Real-time Response: In oral communication, it is possible to clarify instantly, ask follow-up questions, and engage (Robbins and Judge, 2015).

2. Enhances Relationships: It promotes trust and emotional connection, especially in face-to-face interaction (Tubbs & Moss, 2012).

3. Time-Saving: Compared to written communication, it's faster for exchanging urgent information (Adler & Elmhurst, 2008).

4. Effective Persuasion and Influence: Tone of voice and body language help influence decisions and inspire others (Lucas, 2015).

5. Encourages Collaboration: Teamwork becomes stronger when members can openly discuss ideas (Guffey & Loewy, 2015). Examples:

- A teacher explaining a lesson in class.
- A doctor giving verbal instructions to a patient.
- A team leader discussing a project with colleagues.
- A student giving a presentation.

Speaking skills represent one of the most demanding aspects of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), particularly in higher education, where students are expected to express ideas, present academic content, and communicate effectively in English (Richards, 2008; Nation & Newton, 2009). It plays a significant role in students' future careers, as the ability to speak a foreign language enables them to share thoughts, exchange ideas, and demonstrate their level of proficiency in real-life contexts. Effective speaking benefits both students and teachers, as it facilitates the learning process, supports goal achievement, broadens learning opportunities,



strengthens student–teacher interaction, and enhances confidence (Télez et al., 2018). Moreover, speaking proficiency reflects not only overall language competence but also the learner’s readiness to communicate. Despite its importance, research shows that speaking is one of the most challenging skills for EFL students (Horwitz et al., 1986; Skehan, 2018). Learners often struggle with issues such as limited fluency, incomplete or fragmented sentences, restricted vocabulary use, hesitation, reluctance to participate, and low self-confidence, all of which hinder effective oral communication.

Oral communication tasks, including academic presentations, seminars, debates, and classroom discussions, are used extensively in university-level EFL teaching and testing (e.g., Unit with Augmented Reality). Although these tasks are beneficial in teaching, they usually entail performance pressure, audience exposure, and peer review, resulting in increased fear of negative evaluation and disrupted attentional control (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre, 2017). The attentional control theory (ACT) posits that anxiety reduces performance through increased task-irrelevant processing at the expense of task-relevant processing (Eysenck et al., 2007). Therefore, if students fail to regulate their attention, it may lead to a breakdown in fluency, coherence, and delivery in oral communication.

These challenges are frequently exacerbated in EFL settings where English is taught largely as a school subject rather than as a medium of communication. Students in these environments are generally provided with few opportunities for unscripted verbal exchange and often depend on form-based teaching, which may not necessarily lead to communicative ability (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Fulcher, 2015). The discrepancy is that, beyond the linguistic capacity students possess, they cannot perform certain speaking academic tasks that require a longer period of production and a higher level of cognitive awareness.

The challenges in oral communication appear to be particularly prominent in the situation of EFL studies in Iraqi universities. In empirical research, the willingness to communicate among the students of the Iraqi EFL university was generally low, as were the speaking activities, and anxiety levels among the



students were high, despite students having sufficient grammatical and lexical knowledge (Dhari and Al-Mohamad, 2025). Such difficulties are explained by contextual factors, including teacher-centered pedagogy since ancient times, the lack of an opportunity to exercise spoken English beyond the classroom, and exams that evaluate grammatical correctness and lexical wealth, instead of functional communication (Alahmed, K., 2023). As a result, many Iraqi EFL students have difficulties in oral production in both academic and semi-academic situations.

The studies on assessment of oral communication also emphasize the intricacy of the procedure when assessing speaking performance in EFL classes. According to the scholars, oral speech should be presented as a multidimensional phenomenon and not a single global skill (Fulcher, 2015). Usually, analytic methods of assessment differentiate between multiple, interrelated constructs, the most prevalent of them being content organization, language use, and delivery features. Content is sense-making, the way the ideas are logically organized and developed, with references to the effectiveness of introductions, transitions, and conclusions. Language includes lexical variety, grammatical correctness, coherence, and fluency. Delivery entails a paralinguistic and nonverbal element, which includes pronunciation, intonation, eye contact, posture, and use of visual aids (Abdelmadjid, 2016).

Although it is recognized that oral communication is a complex process, in most EFL settings, instructional methodology still emphasizes linguistic accuracy and knowledge-based performance, and less emphasis has been directed to cognitive and affective processes of speaking performance. Consequently, there has been a growing call by academics to further investigate learner-internal psychological variables that govern how learners go about oral communication tasks in real time (MacIntyre and Doucette, 2010; Dornyei and Ryan, 2015). Attentional regulation is one of those variables that has been established to be a core mechanism of both cognitive processing and emotional control in the process of performance.

Expanding on the intellectual and attentional requirements of oral language, more recent studies in applied linguistics have turned to the educational psychology constructs to gain more insight into the ways students cope with the stress of



speaking a foreign language. Mindfulness is one of these constructs, and as such, it has gained increased attention due to its ability to regulate attention, maintain emotional balance, and perform during stress (Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Brown and Ryan, 2003). Mindfulness-related abilities could provide an interesting perspective through which the variability in oral communication performances can be explored in the language-learning context, where oral communication is performed over an extended period and requires quick decision-making skills.

3.9 The Relationship Between Mindfulness and Oral Communication

Recent studies show that mindful attention and awareness can improve EFL students' oral performance by:

- Reducing speaking anxiety
- Enhancing concentration during conversation
- Increasing confidence in self-expression
- Encouraging active listening and empathy (Gregersen et al., 2014).

For Iraqi EFL students, integrating mindfulness into classroom activities may foster a calmer learning environment and promote better speaking performance and interpersonal communication.

Moreover, mindfulness encourages students to stay present and engage actively, leading to clearer pronunciation, better grammar usage, and improved interaction with others (Oxford, 2017).

3.10 Oral Communication in EFL Learning

Oral communication is a vital skill in EFL learning and is often viewed as the most anxiety-provoking domain (Horwitz et al., 1986). Effective oral communication entails fluency, coherence, pronunciation, appropriate use of vocabulary, and responsiveness in real-time interactions (Richards, 2008). These skills require not only linguistic knowledge but also cognitive control, emotional regulation, and interpersonal awareness, all of which may be influenced by mindfulness.



Speaking skills allow the speaker to use language as a tool for communication. Rahman (2010) mentioned that “speaking is a mode of communication most often used to express opinions, make arguments, offer explanations, transmit information, and make impressions upon others.” (p. 1). Thornbury (2006) has mentioned that “speaking is a multi-sensory activity because it involves paralinguistic features such as eye contact, facial expressions, body language, tempo, pauses, voice quality changes and pitch variation.” (p. 9). In the classroom, speaking fosters communication and participation, which are very important for effective learning. Regarding the importance of interaction, Mukalel (2005) stated that “interaction is a stimulus-response situation with some degree of verbal or non-verbal exchange that would result in positive or negative feelings in the individuals who function as the agents of the interaction” (p 104).

Moreover, MacIntyre and Doucette (2010) emphasized that oral performance is highly sensitive to psychological variables such as attention, self-efficacy, and anxiety. Therefore, the learner's ability to stay present and non-reactive plays a significant role in their speaking success.

3.11 Theoretical Foundations Linking Mindfulness and Oral Communication

The Cognitive-Affective Theory of Learning (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986) posits that both cognitive (e.g., attention, memory) and affective (e.g., anxiety, motivation) components influence language learning. Mindfulness can manage the two because it improves attentional control and anxiety, which, in turn, improves oral output.

Also, the Sociocultural Theory of Vygotsky focuses on the importance of self-regulation and conscious awareness in the development of language, which proves the assumption of mindful students to be capable of controlling their communicative activity in the social environment.



3.12 Previous studies

Other recent research has examined how mindfulness training can positively influence EFL students. Indicatively, Zhang et al. (2019) identified that mindfulness led to better fluency and less speech anxiety among the practicing students. A different study showed that mindfulness programs contributed to the emotional stability of EFL students when performing oral tasks (Gregersen et al., 2014). Moreover, Nguyen (2010) stated that mindful students reflected more on themselves and were more aware of their language use, which was converted to confidence in their oral performance.

These works contribute to the connection between mindfulness and oral communication competency in EFL students in the university, including Iraq, where students usually have few speaking activities and are frequently anxious.

4. Methodology

The study is a quantitative, descriptive, correlational design. The sample was selected based on the participants' willingness to participate, comprising 50 second-stage students in the Department of English, College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad. Two instruments were adopted to achieve the study aims: The first, Carlson and Brown (2005), the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS). This scale comprises 15 items scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (almost never) to 1 (almost always). The highest score on the scale is 90, and the lowest is 15.

The second is a rubric for assessing students' oral presentations, adapted from Abdelmadjid (2016). The overall score of students in their English Oral Presentations is 60 marks. The oral presentation is evaluated as follows: 'Communication is divided into three sections: Content (16 scores), Language (30 scores), and Delivery (14 scores).' *Content* is evaluated based on the introduction of the topic and its proper start, both of which are crucial for a student's presentation. Additionally, the body of the content requires the presenter to provide general information about the topic. Then the presenter



concludes the topic and provides a flow between the introduction, body, and conclusion to make the topic coherent, cohesive, and successfully presented. The *Language* focuses on several key aspects, including the selection of appropriate, clear words that suit the topic's context; accuracy and fluency; the ability to convey meaning effectively; the correct application of grammar; and cohesion and coherence. *Delivery* highlights the presenter's intonation, voice, visual aids, slides and graphics used, eye contact, speech, and adherence to the time limit.

The scores will be assessed according to a five-point Likert scale: 1= very poor (less than 12 marks), 2= poor (12-23 marks), 3= moderate (24-35 marks), 4= good (36-47 marks), and 5= excellent (48-60 marks). See Table (1).

Table 1

The students' scoring scheme.

Description		Scores					
Content (16)	Introduction including appropriate attention getter	1	2	3			
	Body	Provide general information about the Organization.	1	2	3	4	5
		Close match between ability, strengths, and organization.	1	2	3	4	5
	Closing: Memorable and impactful.	1	2	3			
Language (30 scores)	Clear pronunciation	1	2	3	4	5	
	Appropriate choice of words—able to Communicate meaning effectively	1	2	3	4	5	
	Appropriate and grammatically correct language use in a presentation	1	2	3	4	5	
	Appropriate and grammatically correct	1	2	3	4	5	



	language use in the visual aids					
	Coherent and cohesive	1	2	3	4	5
	Fluency (smooth flow of thoughts):	1	2	3	4	5
Delivery (14 scores)	Appropriate and effective eye contact with the audience, slides, and notes. No reading.	1	2	3		
	Voice projection: Speak loudly and clearly with enthusiasm.	1	2	3		
	Effective use of visual aids, graphics, and slides.	1	2	3		
	Appropriate gestures and postures	1	2	3		
	Adhere to time limit (<5minits=0, 5-7minits=1, 8-10 mints=2					
Total		60				

After ascertaining face validity by giving the instruments to many experts, the construct validity of the mindfulness attention questionnaire was assessed by computing item-total correlations, see Table 2, and item discrimination, see Table 3. The results indicate that all the items are valid.

Table 2

Item-total correlation of the mindfulness attention scale.

Items	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
1.	.899**	.000
2.	.939**	.000
3.	.952**	.000
4.	.874**	.000
5.	.827**	.000
6.	.785**	.000
7.	.929**	.000
8.	.809**	.000
9.	.811**	.000
10.	.880**	.000



11.	.752**	.000
12.	.850**	.000
13.	.824**	.000
14.	.762**	.000
15.	.950**	.000

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3

Discriminative power of the mindfulness attention scale

	Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Higher	4.2400	.59722	10.216	.000
	Lower	2.3600	.70000		
2	Higher	4.2400	.59722	14.176	.000
	Lower	1.9600	.53852		
3	Higher	5.0800	.40000	12.007	.000
	Lower	2.7600	.87939		
4	Higher	5.0000	.40825	9.295	.000
	Lower	3.8000	.50000		
5	Higher	5.1600	.37417	8.008	.000
	Lower	4.2400	.43589		
6	Higher	4.4000	.57735	6.326	.000
	Lower	2.8800	1.05357		
7	Higher	4.1200	.43970	12.686	.000
	Lower	2.3200	.55678		
8	Higher	4.1600	.37417	9.051	.000
	Lower	2.8800	.60000		
9	Higher	4.9200	.27689	7.927	.000
	Lower	3.9600	.53852		
10	Higher	4.2800	.45826	12.099	.000



	Lower	2.4800	.58595		
11	Higher	4.8000	.40825	6.874	.000
	Lower	3.9600	.45461		
12	Higher	4.6000	.57735	9.274	.000
	Lower	2.8800	.72572		
13	Higher	4.9600	.20000	11.355	.000
	Lower	3.5600	.58310		
14	Higher	4.8800	.33166	6.808	.000
	Lower	3.8400	.68799		
15	Higher	4.8800	.33166	11.215	.000
	Lower	2.8000	.86603		

The Alpha-Cronbach value of the questionnaire is 0.84, indicating good reliability. The construct validity of the oral communication scoring scheme was established by computing item discrimination as in Table 4 and convergent validity as in Table 5. All values are valid. The reliability of every construct is 0.91, 0.88, and 0.90 for content, language, and delivery, respectively; see Table (5).

Table 4

Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) Ratios

Pair	HTMT
Content – Language	0.78
Content – Delivery	0.82
Language – Delivery	0.79

**Table 5**

Measurement Model (Reliability & Convergent Validity)

Construct	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Content	0.89	0.91	0.55
Language	0.84	0.88	0.53
Delivery	0.87	0.90	0.58

All Cronbach's α values exceed 0.70, indicating adequate internal consistency. Composite reliability (CR) values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, and average variance extracted (AVE) values exceed 0.50, indicating that each construct captures sufficient shared variance among its indicators.

Furthermore, the discriminant validity was achieved for the three constructs. For discriminant validity, each diagonal value should be greater than its correlations with other constructs. The diagonal values (AVE) for each construct are greater than the off-diagonal. The reliability of the scale is assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which is 0.89. At the same time, the reliability of the scorer is achieved by the inter-rater method, which is 0.82, indicating an acceptable reliability of the scale.

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Results

The SPSS statistical analysis of the data yielded the following results, which will be presented in accordance with the study objectives.

The first objective is to identify the level of mindful attention among Iraqi university EFL students.

**Table 6**

One-sample t-test of mindfulness attention

Hypothetical Mean	arithmetic Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
52.5	58.20	12.45	49	3.24	.002

The result reveals that the students have moderate mindfulness awareness, as the significance level (0.002) is lower than 0.05 and the arithmetic mean of 58.20 is higher than the hypothetical mean of 52.5.

The second objective is to identify the students' oral communication performance in English.

Table 7

One-sample t-test of Oral Communication Performance

N.	df	Hypothetical Mean	arithmetic Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
50	49	30	35.65	9.35014	4.183	.000

The students showed a moderate level of oral communication. The level of significance is (0.000), and the arithmetic mean of 35.65 is higher than the hypothetical mean of 30

The third objective is to explore the relationship between mindful attention awareness and oral communication performance.

**Table 8**

The t-test value for the correlation between MF and OC

Variables	r	n	t	df	Level of sig.	Significance at 0.05
MF & OC	0.902**	50	14.50	48	.000	Significant

*Note. ** indicates correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

A Pearson correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between MF and OC. The results indicated a very strong positive correlation between the two variables ($r = .902$, $p < .01$). The computed t-value ($t = 14.50$, $df = 48$, $p = .000$) confirmed that this relationship is statistically significant. Therefore, higher scores in MF are associated with higher levels of OC.

The fourth objective is to determine the effect of mindful attention awareness on oral communication

Table 9

Simple linear regression analysis predicting OC from MF

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	R	R ²	F	Sig.
(Constant)	-1.729	2.665	—	-0.649	.520	.902	.814	209.706	.000
MF	.649	.045	.902	14.481	.000				

Note. Dependent variable: OC. $R = .902$, $R^2 = .814$, $F(1,48) = 209.706$, $p < .001$.

A simple linear regression was conducted to find out the OC from MF. The results showed that MF significantly predicted OC, $F(1,48) = 209.706$, $p < .001$, with an R^2 of .814.

The fifth objective is to determine the entire causal relationship among the three constructs of oral communication: content, language, and delivery.



To achieve this aim, the structural model is used. The structural model examined the causal relationships among **Content** and **Language** constructs on **Delivery**. See Table (10).

Table 10

The causal relationships among the oral communication constructs

Path	Standardized β	t-value	p-value	R ² (Delivery)
Content → Delivery	0.52	8.90	< 0.001	\multirow{2}{*}{0.68}
Language → Delivery	0.36	6.50	< 0.001	

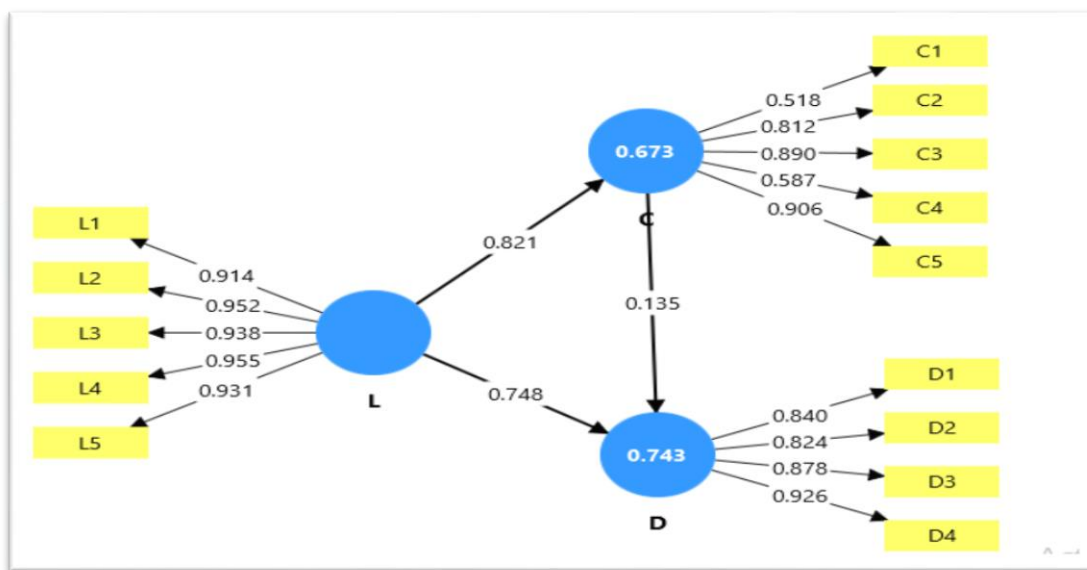
Both Content and Language have significant, positive effects on Delivery. The model explains approximately 68% of the variance in Delivery. Path Diagram

Below is a simplified visual representation of the structural equation model with standardized path coefficients.



Figure 1

The structural model of oral communication constructs.



Discussion of Results

The communication constructs of Content, Language, and Delivery exhibit strong reliability and convergent validity. Discriminant validity is demonstrated by both the Fornell–Larcker criterion and HTMT ratios. Structural modelling indicates that better quality content and more effective language use significantly improve delivery. This indicates that what is communicated (substance and organization) is more relevant in improving delivery compared to language, although language is also significant, as indicated by a relatively higher b (0.52) of Content. The large value of R^2 (0.68) shows that the model explains a significant part of the variability in the domain of the delivery. Therefore, it is worthwhile to concentrate on content and language to enhance the effectiveness of communication.



The current study was in accordance with the previous studies by Zhang et al. (2019), who identified that mindfulness led to better fluency and less speech anxiety among the practicing students. The study of Gregersen et al. (2014), which showed that mindfulness contributed to the emotional stability of EFL students when performing oral tasks. Moreover, Nguyen (2010) also stated that mindful students reflected more on themselves and were more aware of their language use, which led students to confidence in their oral performance.

The current research was done to examine the correlation between mindful attention awareness and oral performance in communication by Iraqi EFL university students. The results support the factual perspective that attentional and psychological variables are critical in determining the second language speaking performance, especially in academic settings where the oral communication tasks are characterized by prolonged cognitive activities and performance evaluation.

Conclusion

The current research will explore mindful attention awareness and the oral communication effectiveness of EFL students at the Iraqi university. To accomplish this objective, the study determined the mindful attentional awareness of students and their performance in oral communication. The findings found that both mindful attention awareness and oral communication performance of Iraqi EFL university students were moderately demonstrated. Such results are indicative of the teaching and situational factors of the Iraqi EFL environment in which the students tend to acquire the basic linguistic skills but still struggle to maintain the oral communication skills, especially in assessment-based academic situations. Notably, the research had found a very strong positive correlation between mindful attention awareness and oral communication performance, meaning that those students who reported a high level of attentional awareness were more likely to perform better in oral communication tasks.



Moreover, regression analysis revealed that mindful attention awareness explained a significant percentage of variance in the performance of oral communication. These results build on prior literature that has found mindful attention awareness to be associated with objectively measured oral communication performance, as opposed to younger studies that only measured speaking ability using self-report or affective scales.

In theory, the study has contributed to the research on the acquisition of a second language by highlighting the importance of mindful attention in oral communication. Combining the mindfulness theory and models of L2 speaking, the results substantiate the opinion that successful oral communication depends not only on linguistic competence but also on the ability of students to control their attention and fulfill the needs of cognitive and emotional skills when using language in real-time. This view is consistent with the modern method of thinking about communicative competence as a multidimensional concept, which includes such dimensions as cognitive, affective, and attentional.

Pedagogically, the results are indicative of the fact that the instruction of EFL in a tertiary educational institution can be more holistic in terms of the development of speaking. The attentional awareness of students and linguistic teaching can contribute to the process of involvement of students in oral communication activities and mastering the performance pressure. This is especially applicable in the teacher-education setting, where students are soon to be in the professional setting and need to communicate orally with confidence and efficiency.

To sum up, the current research offers empirical results that support that mindful attention awareness has a close relationship with oral communication performance in an Iraqi EFL university setting. The research fills in the gap of knowledge on the body that has been underrepresented and utilizes the assessment instruments that have proved their effectiveness in the research. Further studies based on these results can help to better understand how attentional awareness affects speaking performance and be able to



discuss the pedagogical activities that can contribute not only to language competence development but also to the development of psychological readiness for oral communication.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

1. Encouraging teachers to apply mindfulness techniques while teaching by including various speaking techniques.
2. Encouraging students' oral participation and enhancing students' self-awareness during communication.

Suggestions for Future Studies

Future studies suggested in this study include

1. Conducting experimental designs to determine the effect of mindfulness on oral communication.
2. Investigating the impact of mindful attention awareness on other skills, such as reading, listening, and writing.

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