

Perception of HSSC Students' about 2nd Language Anxiety

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Abstract: Despite learning a second language opens the new windows for the development of the human brain, but most of the students face a lot difficulty to learn metaphor, words, concepts and specially conversation of second language. The focus of present article is to find out the relationship between variables (second language anxiety and the academic achievement) at Higher Secondary School Certificate HSSC level. Anxiety of second language has pulled in much attraction. In any case, little is thought about whether anxiety of second language influences learners' determination to contemplate a second language, which is accepted to be an essential beginning condition for learners to have the capacity to learn the second language adequately. This paper investigated restless learners' encounters to seek second language during the teaching learning process. The research tool was validated through experts in the field of education and SPSS was used to calculate the value of Cronbach alpha for reliability, which was found 0.987. Data were analyzed through descriptive statistics by using frequencies, percentages and tables. It was found that students feel nervousness while attending English class which is again another important factor of second language classroom anxiety.

Key words: language anxiety, second language, students' achievement

1. Introduction

The self-perception of learners provide foundation towards the level of academic growth during the teaching learning process, which includes emotions, feelings, motivation and behavior of learners in relation to language barriers in the classroom. The language barriers create obstacles for learners to participate actively in the classroom learning process, these obstacles create second language anxiety or foreign language anxiety among learners. Learners cannot participate properly and communication level of such learners is passive due to negative experiences of second language anxiety during the teaching learning process (Hewitt & Stephenson, 2012; Sparks & Ganschow, 2007).

The anxiety for the second language is considered as an essential variable which can barricade the learning process. Anxiety is a state of fear that results from a dread of a threatening event or may result from a threatening situation. Anxiety is the common feeling, but when it exaggerates and disturbs the normal functioning, then it is characterized as a neurotic disorder.

1.1 Statement of Problem

To clearly highlight the factors of anxiety that affect the learners' performance in understanding of second

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language or foreign language during the teaching learning process.

1.2 Research Objectives

The primary objectives of this study were consisted:

- 1) To understand the phenomenon of anxiety at Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC) Level of Education.
- 2) To identify the link between the second language anxiety and performance of students at intermediate level.

1.3 Research Hypothesis

Null hypotheses were constructed in relation to the objectives of the study:

- 1) There is no impact of anxiety on students' academic achievement.
- 2) There is no significant relation between anxiety and the academic output.

2. Review of Related Literature

English is an international language and have placed its position as lingua Franca around the globe. Most of the students who have not English as their native language, who are high achievers in different subjects but they feel anxiety in learning English as a second language, which creates a lot of obstacles in acquiring new knowledge or information. It was observed that learning of second language generates anxiety among students and this anxiety plays a vital role in the academic achievement of students. Different types of anxiety like social phobia, panic disorder, agoraphobia, stress disorder, obsessive disorder and post traumatic disorder are indirectly affecting the level of the academic achievement of students, while second language anxiety is directly associated with the academic achievement grades, retention of lessons, recall memory and stability in the teaching learning process.

2.1 Anxiety

The level of anxiety varies from individual to individual, some persons have common anxiety which can be controlled and managed, while some people have psychological effect of anxiety which sometimes creates obstacles in relief state. Learners feel anxiety because it is a complex phenomenon with psychological and physical learning disorders. Anxiety is a complex process which is associated with discomfort, exasperation, irritation, discouragement, disappointment and restless position in the learning process, which ultimately leads to poor performance in the subject area. There is a need and demand to overcome second language anxiety of the learners during language education, which creates obstacles in the acquisition of new knowledge and skills, in order to enhance the level of performance (Kun-huei, 2010; Zheng, 2008).

Pappamihel (2002) has argued that expressions of learners are based upon emotions, so anxiety is directly associated with emotions of learners, while Na (2007) has indicated that discouragement among learners is created by language anxiety, similarly Cui (2011) has illustrated that low performance level of learners is due to high levels of second language anxiety and vice versa.

2.2 Second Language Learning Anxiety

It has been studied that one-third of learners' around the globe face second language anxiety. Therefore, foreign language anxiety is a global issue for learners. So, besides other factors, one of the essential factor is second language anxiety, which affects the performance level (Dordinejad & Ahmadabad, 2014). Language learners feel anxiety during learning, these feelings are considered as language shock.

Second language anxiety also depends upon the classroom learning environment which is related to specific situations (Aydin, 2008). Thus, anxiety arises when learning of language is carried out in specific situations.

Maeng (2007) has studied communication anxiety at primary level by using Foreign Language Learning Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), it was found that language anxiety is a complex process about feelings, emotions, behaviors and perception of learners during classroom situation. It was also found the following factors of anxiety:

1) Communication Nervousness

It relates to an inability to express ideas, thoughts and feelings during language learning.

2) Examination Anxiety

It is an association of self-perception and fear of learners about the academic evaluation.

3) Phobia of Negative Ranking

It arises on the basis of negative perception of the learner, which needs to adopt positive impression on peers.

It was also found that speech anxiety arises due to lack of communication of oral skills (Kim, 2004). Examination anxiety is a fear about performance in language class. Kim (2004) has stated that foundation of anxiety may be labeled as teacher induced anxiety.

Low level of confidence is another factor of anxiety among learners (Kitano, 2001; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004), while Kitano (2001) argued that foreign language learners feel inferiority complex as compared to native expounder, which initiates language anxiety.

Zhang and Zhong (2012) have identified the causes of foreign language learning anxiety, which includes the inability of oral skills, peer pressure and lack of participation opportunities in various contexts. Kitano (2001) has argued that speaking skills are artefacts for learners to compare themselves with peers, which is the main source of second language anxiety.

It is the utmost responsibility of instructors to reduce stress during learning second language. Negative self-perception of learners can be eliminated through correction of mistakes in a positive manner.

2.3 Anxiety and Academic Achievement

Learners feel stress in speaking a second language, especially in the English class, which generates anxiety towards low level of the academic achievement. According to Kayaoğlu and Sağlamel (2013) have stated that the encouraging and discouraging aspects of second language anxiety in the academic achievement, while Bahrani (2011) has found that sometimes anxiety contributes encouraging role towards learning of a second language. In the same context, Andrade and Williams (2009) have defined the constructive role of anxiety, which motivates learners to enhance the level of expertise in completion of language learning task. Although Birjandi and Aemi (2010) have reported that anxiety creates intrinsic motivation among learners to overcome difficulty level and produce ability to fight against obstacles in order to achieve high academic achievement. However, Learners become weak and exhaustive with an excessive range of anxiety (Birjandi & Alemi, 2010). According to Riasati (2011), learners are not able to express their feelings and emotions properly when anxiety arises. Similarly, Bahrani (2011) has affirmed that learners want to escape themselves from the task under language anxiety state.

Understanding of grammatical rules of the second language is another factor to create anxiety, when learners are unable to understand properly and to correct errors they feel anxiety and fear (Kayaoğlu & Sağlamel, 2013). Similarly, Zhang and Zhong (2012) have also studied that oral skills may be improved through proper pronunciation of the language, and anxiety level can be overcome. Similarly, Kayaoğlu and Sağlamel (2013) have

found that vocabulary is the basic foundation of linguistic, higher the vocabulary lower will be the anxiety level. Tseng (2012) has mentioned that learners become anxious by applying pressure from parents. According to Hashemi and Abbasi (2013), the formal language classroom environment is another origin of anxiety because it requires to correct mistakes in real time. Furthermore, the condemnation from peers also provokes anxiety.

Second language anxiety can be eliminated in the learning environment with a positive collaborative approach among instructors and learners. Examination fear among learners can also be terminated with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

3. Research Design

Survey research, usually comprised of interviews and questionnaires. In this specific study, a questionnaire based on 12 statements related to anxiety in second language learning was used to analyze the response of selected students.

3.1 Population

In order to proceed with the research about the impact of second language classroom anxiety on the student's achievement at higher secondary level, the target population of the study comprised of ninety five students of intermediate level in Annam Girls College Rawal Town Rawalpindi Cantt.

3.2 Sampling

The sample of the study was consisted of twenty students of intermediate level in Annam Girls College Rawal Town Rawalpindi Cantonment. The sample was selected randomly for research purpose.

3.3 Instrumentation

A questionnaire consisted of twelve statements on a five point Likert scale regarding second language classroom anxiety and the academic achievement of intermediate level students was developed and administered to collect data for analysis. A questionnaire is an enquiring, instrument including a movement of request with the deciding objective of getting information from respondents. A pilot study was conducted to investigate the internal consistency of the research instrument.

3.4 Validity

Research tool was validated with the help of experts in the field of education. As per their opinion, weaknesses in the tool were removed before proceeding with further research. Grammatical errors were removed with the help of English language expert to obtain clear responses from respondents of the study.

3.5 Reliability

Reliability is the most important factor, required for a pilot study before the use of that instrument to continue with the specific research. To ensure Reliability of this specific research, software SPSS was used. By using this software reliability was ensured for further study. The value of Cronbach Alpha was found to be 0.987. The results are stated in following Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1 shows that the value of Cronbach Alpha for twelve statements of research statements was 0.987, which indicates strong internal consistency of the research tool.

Table 1 Reliability Statistics

S. No.	Cronbach Alpha Value	No. of Items
01	.987	12

Table 2 Total Item Statistics

S. No.	Items	Mean	Variance	Co-relation	Cronbach Alpha
1	During English class, I shall try to fully concentrate on my lesson	34.80	168.70	0.925	0.987
2	I face difficulty to speak English	34.60	155.80	0.952	0.985
3	I understand my concept in Urdu as compared to English	34.20	155.70	0.987	0.984
4	English test is always easy for me to attempt	35.80	157.20	0.936	0.985
5	I feel nervous while attending English class	35.00	164.00	0.957	0.985
6	I am not feeling responsibility to correct mistakes in English class.	35.20	168.70	0.925	0.987
7	My fellows are better than me in speaking English	34.80	147.70	0.979	0.985
8	Opportunities are given to me to speak English in classroom	35.80	157.20	0.936	0.985
9	I am afraid that when I speak English, students will laugh	34.00	160.50	0.886	0.986
10	I feel hesitation to answer in English class	34.80	162.70	0.916	0.986
11	I really enjoy when we do activities in English class	34.20	155.70	0.987	0.984
12	English test is fatigue for me.	34.80	159.20	0.869	0.987

Table 2 indicates that the value of Mean, Variance, Correlation and Cronbach Alpha for the 12 statements that were included in the questionnaire for students' responses, in relation to identify effects of anxiety level on student achievement at higher secondary level of private sector in Rawalpindi Cantonment. As the value of Cronbach Alpha is 0.987, which is strongly reliable.

4. Data Collection

The fundamental goal of this study is to clarify the affairs which go under the circumstance identified with tension of students happens in the classroom and how anxiety influences the accomplishment in their academics. The reason for this specific study is not only to give proposals or counsel to students to enhance academics or its motivation is not how they can adapt to nervousness. However inducement in performance and assessment may have great impacts first and foremost which clear up the circumstance and give the sound environment as far as helping the learners to enhance their condition, furthermore the design is the upgrade in ways pilot towards achievement. For the achievement of this goal factual and numerical references and computations are likewise utilized as a part of a request to have the unmistakable thought and knowledge about anxiety inciting circumstance and their subsequent impacts. For this reason information has been taken from the students of intermediate and after that it is being checked statistically for having a further analysis of the study.

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation (Results)

Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, tables) were applied through statistical package for social sciences SPSS on collecting data for analysis.

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tension of students happens in classroom and how anxiety influences in the accomplishment in their academics. For the achievement of this goal information has taken from the records of their scholastics exercises and after that has been appeared in measurable structure.

Table 3 indicates that 60% were trying to fully concentrate on lesson in the second language classroom, while 40% students were feeling a lack of confidence and facing difficulty in speaking English and it is obvious that the student's anxiety level is too high in the English classroom as 65% students understand their concept in Urdu than in English. In the reply of the statement about the difficulty level, 05% students were Strongly Agreed and 35% students were agreed, which shows that English test is always difficult to attempt for 60% students. Similarly, 50% students feel nervousness while attending English class. 50% students were showing care for committing errors or mistakes in English class. Table 3 also shows that 40% students were worried about other individuals in speaking English, while just 45% students were having opportunities of speaking English in their classroom. So responses of the students show that there is really a need for giving the students speaking English opportunities in their class and 25% students were afraid of facing the humiliation while speaking English. Responses about hesitation statement show that 35% students were feeling hesitant to answer in English class while 45% were disagreed for the mentioned feeling. In the reply of statement about enjoyment in activities, 40% students were agreed and 25% strongly agreed. It shows that 65% pupils enjoy for doing activities in English class, and it is quite obvious that the student's anxiety level is too high in the second language classroom as 45% students were feeling pressure to prepare for English class.

Table 3 Perception of 2nd Language Anxiety

S. No.	Statements	SDA	DA	UNC	A	SA
1	Concentration during English Class	1 5%	1 5%	6 30%	11 55%	1 5%
2	Difficulty level in Speaking English	4 20%	4 20%	4 20%	7 35%	1 5%
3	Urdu is easy as compared to English	1 5%	3 15%	3 15%	12 60%	1 5%
4	Feelings (Fear) for English Test	2 10%	7 35%	7 35%	3 15%	1 5%
5	Nervous while attending English class.	5 25%	5 25%	6 30%	2 10%	2 10%
6	Mistakes in English Language	3 15%	8 40%	5 25%	2 10%	2 10%
7	My Fellows are better in English language than me	1 5%	4 20%	7 35%	6 30%	2 10%
8	Opportunities for participation to speak English	1 5%	3 15%	7 35%	8 40%	1 5%
9	Enjoyment during activities in English class	4 20%	3 15%	8 40%	1 5%	4 20%
10	Feelings of hesitation to answer in English class.	0 0%	9 45%	4 20%	6 30%	1 5%
11	Enjoyment during activities in English class	0 0%	2 10%	5 25%	8 40%	5 25%
12	Feelings of anxiety in English class	0 0%	3 15%	8 40%	8 40%	1 5%

6. Findings

Based on the analysis of second language classroom anxiety at higher secondary level in Annam College,

Rawalpindi Cantonment, following are the main findings of this study:

- 1) 60% students try to fully concentrate on lesson in the second language classroom which shows that there is a lack of concentration on lesson in English class on the part of majority students.
- 2) The students might not have exposure in speaking English because of getting no chance to practice speaking English in their surroundings.
- 3) It is obvious that the student's anxiety level is too high in the English classroom as 65% students understand their concept in Urdu better as compared with English.
- 4) English test is always difficult to attempt for 40% students. This finding highlights that there is test nervousness (a type of second language classroom anxiety) among students of English class.
- 5) 50% students feel nervousness while attending English class which is again another important factor of second language classroom anxiety. The reason for this nervousness might be that the students have to speak without preparation and they felt very conscious about speaking in English in front of other students.
- 6) Responses of students also show that 55% students care for committing errors or mistakes in English class. It also highlights the level of anxiousness of majority students for learning English.
- 7) 40% students were worried about other individuals in speaking English as they were agreed with the statement that their fellows are better as compared to them in speaking English. They might feel that they don't have the same level of proficiency.
- 8) Responses of the students show that there is really a need for giving the students speaking English opportunities in their class as just 45% students were of the view that they are given opportunities to speak English in the class.
- 9) 25% students were agreed with the statement that they are afraid of when they speak English, students will laugh. It highlights the feeling of humiliation on the part of students.
- 10) There seem to have a lack of confidence among students of English class as 35% students were agreed that they feel hesitation to answer in English class. It confirms that many pupils experience communication anxiety when speaking to a group of people in a classroom.
- 11) Another finding shows that 65% pupils enjoy for doing activities in English class.
- 12) 45% students were feeling pressure to prepare for English class which highlights that student's anxiety level is too high in the second language classroom.

7. Conclusion

Higher secondary school students face higher level of anxiety in the learning of second language (English) due to various factors like lack of expertise of English teachers, low level of opportunities to participate in speaking with peers, poor attitude of learners, communal factors, too little knowledge of the language, ruthless behavior and insufficiency to use English language in daily life. Furthermore, inferiority complex among learners, fear of low level of academic achievement, low motivation level and hesitation are in charge of anxiety. The academic achievement of higher secondary school students is influenced through second language anxiety.

8. Recommendations

On the basis of the findings and conclusion of this study, it is recommended that:

- 1) Opportunities may be provided to higher secondary school students to speak English with peers in order to overcome anxiety issue.
- 2) Training programs may be arranged by administration for teachers to create awareness about the use of various activities in English classrooms for the involvement of students in the learning process and to cover up anxiety among learners.
- 3) Teachers should provide encouragement through proper feedback to reduce cognitive load anxiety.
- 4) Proper counselling might be provided to higher secondary school students to remove hesitation in speaking of the English language.

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