

The Effect of Language Learning Anxiety on English Oral Performance

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Abstract: English is one of the most spoken languages in all over the world. Not in every country, English is used or spoken as a native language and in countries where English is not commonly used, people of it when get to foreign countries for academic purposes or other purposes, face difficulties. One major problem they go through is anxiety which is known as language learning anxiety. All individuals go through language learning anxiety at some point of their language learning careers. It is actually the feeling of tension, nervousness and fear while speaking English language which ultimately affects their oral performances. English oral performance is directly linked to the ability and skills of a person speaking that language. Three types of language learning anxiety which include trait anxiety, state anxiety and situation-specific anxiety is discussed in the paper. Effective oral performance is very important for the successful delivery of English language which could be impacted by any of the types of anxiety. In classrooms also, students who suffer from anxiety in many cases are reluctant to perform oral communication activities because of the perception they have in their mind about the poor delivery of performance. Anxiety in language learning is not just about having feared of speaking in public but it is supposed to be the one most significant element which affects learner's English language learning in other aspects too.

Keywords: Language Learning Anxiety, Foreign Language, Second Language, Oral Performance, Speaking Skills, English Language

1. Introduction

1.1 Theoretical Background

Learning a second language is a difficult task that requires many elements such as social factors, psychological conditions of learners, learning environment, and etc. Internal variables that are a component of the learner's personality are involved in these elements. Since learning and using a language are essentially collaborative practices that rely on various sorts of interpersonal relationships, the second language learning process is heavily impacted by the learners' particular personalities (Hu & Wang, 2014). Our perceptions of ourselves and our talents can either help or hinder our learning. Intrinsic learner factors

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will have a mainly significant affect. Language anxiety occurs when a language learner performs in a second language which is not his mother language and he is not so good in it.

The anxiety is not only about having fear of speaking in public but it is one of the most important factors that affects learner's language learning in other aspects too, whether in an academic or personal situation. Foreign language students, according to Young (1990), perceive speaking to be the most anxiety-inducing situation and therefore often have an impact on their English oral performance. Zhang in 2004 discovered that language anxiety and oral performance are inversely related; the higher the anxiety level, the poorer the oral performance.

Learning English language as a second language is actually not easy, as students face a variety of challenges. These challenges can be broken down into three categories: learner, teacher, and language factors. Every component of these factors has been thoroughly explored, notably the learner factors, which have included psychological characteristics of the learners. One of the most important factors that impact students or individuals when learning English language or any other second language is anxiety which is itself a psychological factor. Earlier research on second language learning focused on cognitive factors such as potential, ability, and study habits as they relate to the complete cycle of acquiring a second language. The second language is also called foreign language. Later research, then also, concentrated on emotional factors that may help or hinder the entire process or cycle of learning a foreign or second language. Many subsequent researches focused on the effective or personality characteristics, which takes part in critical role in the process of language learning (Yassin & Razak, 2018).

Listening, reading, writing, and speaking are the four language abilities that Standard English foreign language (EFL) students may find the most difficult to acquire. Speaking skills may be underdeveloped if routine learning of words, spelling, and sentence patterns is prioritized over speaking practice (Liu & Chen, 2013). Scholars have worked to help EFL learners improve their oral skills in order to address EFL anxiety level. They discovered that the learners' largest challenge is a lack of practice time as a result of this approach. The majority of EFL teachers confront challenges such as a lack of class time. Instructional methods have not really kept pace with the dynamic obstacles that EFL students confront. EFL is still frequently taught as a conventional teaching topic, with lectures. Due to a lack of proper practice with students, as well as assistance and comments from the teacher, this usually results in poor EFL speaking progress (Chen & Hwang, 2020). Many academics believe that students have been flipped due to the foreign language anxiety in their oral or speaking performance as a result of target language learning. Due to language learning, second or foreign language anxiety is widely regarded as a detrimental element. While on the other hand, several researchers have discovered that, as a result of the language learning process, students' motivation to do well rise (Pamungkas, 2018).

1.2 The Problem and its Significance

Oral language skills should be strong enough since it builds the foundation of academic success and literacy. It helps the students to have the greater reading and speaking skills. Also, it aids in building the confidence of the children. The problem which is to be discussed in this paper is how the language learning anxiety impacts the English oral performance of the foreign students who do not have adequate English speaking skills because of the different mother or native language. This piece of paper or work will focus

on anxiety, one of the psychological elements or emotions that influence language learning, in order to understand and comprehend the learners and assist them in overcoming language learning challenges. Anxiety is one of the potential concerns showed by second language learners when they learn to speak in a second language. Such emotions or psychological elements are thought to have a severe and crippling influence on individuals' oral performance. When there is anxiety in the classroom, the learning effect is diminished. Anxiety has a negative impact on students' personality, optimism, communicative skills, and oral English performance. Because they are terrified of making mistakes in speaking, it makes students hesitant and worried in foreign language classes. They are so frightened in front of the teacher and other students that they avoid answering questions, or their answers are weak and vague, and they don't try to raise their voice. They are unable to focus their attention throughout the listening exercise due to their anxiousness. After listening, their brains go numb. They are unable to develop their abilities, resulting in language learning failure. Anxiety causes them to be apprehensive and fearful, which leads to poor oral performance, and ultimately to greater anxiety and even poorer performance. The cognitive aspect of anxiety, which is a concern, is linked to the feelings of fear and unease. The discussion of the problem is of great significance since teachers and a vast number of students think that oral communication is an essential and important part of the teaching in English. It is due to the fact that being able to express yourself orally in English nowadays is very important, because of this; students get to involve themselves in the use of English language. The study will expose us to a variety of viewpoints and new ideas. It would help to develop discernment and logical abilities to understand the reasons behind the concerned issue.

1.3 Aims of the Study

The overall purpose of the work or study is to enhance the knowledge about the issue of language learning anxiety. The aims of the study include:

- Understanding the impact of language leaning anxiety on English oral performance
- Exploring the fact that why anxiety is being triggered in students with different mother language
- Exploring the fact that what role teachers play in helping the students to cope with language learning anxiety
- To understand the relationship connecting anxiety and oral performance
- And also, how language learning anxiety lowers the confidence of foreign students.

1.4 Limits of the Study

No such thing as perfect study exists which gets succeeded in enveloping all the potential details of the study. Limitation of the study is due to its inefficiencies or shortcomings, which may be the result of a lack of resources. This research relies on having access to individuals, foreign institutions, data, or records, and the access is somehow limited due to us being in the one same region and therefore the method used to conduct the study is qualitative, not quantitative.

1.5 Procedures

A proper procedure for conducting the study will be followed. To begin, the problem must be identified, which in this case is how and why language learning anxiety affects English oral performance. A thorough

review of related literature would be added, a research design which includes the qualitative study, the results, the discussion and the conclusion then will be formulated.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Types of Anxiety

According to Thompson and Lee, (2014) all language students go through language learning anxiety at some point of their language learning careers. Anxiety is actually the emotion of nervousness, tension and fear linked with the arousal of autonomic nervous system but language learning anxiety differs from general anxiety. Language learning anxiety is due to the insufficient language abilities which causes problems in language speaking and there are many types of the anxiety which arise due to the speaking of language which is not the mother language and students get nervous speaking it. According to Amiri and Ghonsooly, (2015), learning a foreign or second language is a complex process which is influenced not just by linguistic variables but also by non-linguistic aspects such as cognitive, metacognitive, and affective factors. Anxiety is considered as one most significant affective elements which is responsible for affecting students' academic performance when learning a second language. Researchers looked at learning a foreign or second language as a multidimensional phenomenon involving self-perceptions, attitudes, sentiments, and traits associated to foreign language classroom learning. It's the anxiety and agitation of an unpleasant emotional outburst when learning a new language (Alnuzaili & Uddin, 2020). In this paper, the new language we are discussing is English. According to Naser and Nijr, (2019) language learning anxiety is divided into three types by Horwitz (2001): first one is trait anxiety, second is state anxiety, and last but not least is situation-specific anxiety. Foreign language anxiety is 'situational,' and it has a negative relationship with FL student learning. Anxiety, one of the most important emotional elements, does not work independently; instead, it works hand in hand with other affective components. It's linked to other personality factors as well; for example, introverts are shown to have more anxiety concerns than extroverts. Gardner's socio-educational model links anxiety to the attitude and motivation perspective, but Chao (2003) finds a link between FL anxiety and emotional intelligence.

2.2 Trait Anxiety

A person's predisposition to feel worried regardless of the settings they are exposed to is known as trait anxiety. In this context, Worde (1998) professes that trait anxiety is no doubt a permanent condition which is considered as a part of an individual's personality (Marwan, 2016). Language anxiety has also been identified as a serious concern for language learners. According to Anjaniputra, (2018) learners who are concerned about learning a foreign language may find it difficult to enjoy their studies. Learners that are anxious in their learning, according to Pappamihel (2002), avoid situations that can make them feel worried. In reality, in the sense of second language learning, proper and active participation of students is crucial to their successful outcome of oral performance as well. As a result, it is clear that FL anxiety is a severe issue that requires further investigation. As per MacIntyer, (2017) trait anxiety is a personality trait that does not alter depending on the environment. Trait anxiety, according to the researchers, demonstrates "stable personality differences in anxiety predisposition." Since, trait anxiety is a part of an individual's personality, so this aspect of anxiety persists steady throughout time. Trait anxiety can impair cognitive performance and cause memory problems.

2.3 State Anxiety

State anxiety is a kind of anxiety that emerges when students are exposed to specific settings or circumstances. Some students, for example, become nervous if they are asked to perform orally in front of the whole class or if they do not understand many of the teachers' words throughout class (Marwan, 2016). According to Naser and Nijr, (2019) state anxiety is defined as "an extreme response or trend of response that happens in an individual who considers a specific circumstance as personally risky or frightening, regardless of whether or not objective danger exists." This type of anxiety is also described as a sense of nervousness that shifts or alters over time and also differs in potency. Test anxiety is a type of anxiety in which pupils' sense state anxiety as a result of a certain test; however, this sensation might alter over time. Anxiety has an impact on a person's emotional state, thoughts, and actions.

2.4 Situation Specific Anxiety

As a result of a certain circumstance, a situation-specific perspective emerges at a specific point in time. According to MacIntyre and Gardner in 1991, situation-specific anxiety is a different kind of anxiety which occurs invariably across time in a particular circumstance. This type of anxiety is actually very strongly related to specific situations and every situation changes from each other but stable across time. Math anxiety and language anxiety are the two different examples of situation-specific anxiety. According to language scholars, learning a new language which is not your mother language is something which is related to situation-specific anxiety but not to trait anxiety, since trait anxiety is a due to a trait which is stable and causes concern in all circumstances but on the other hand, situation-specific anxiety is associated with certain situations (Naser & Nijr, 2019). According to Djafri and Wimbari, (2018) foreign language anxiety also occurs because of situation-specific anxiety due to the uniqueness of that foreign language study, especially when a person has very low knowledge about that particular language in communication skills. In some studies, anxiety has been proven to alter students' communication techniques in language classes. Anxiety is common among students who join a foreign language classroom. In classroom, students who suffer from anxiety in many cases are reluctant to perform oral communication activities since they think they are not good at speaking and are fearful that other classmates would make their fun.

2.5 The Importance of Oral Performance

According to Suwarno (2017) human language begins as an oral mode of communication; now, about half of the world's 7,000 languages do not have a written form. Because humans learn to talk before learning to write, learning a second language entails learning to speak that particular language. Since, learners of that particular language are considered as the speakers of that language, speaking is the most significant skill of all the four language abilities (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) at least in the early stages of learning. The primary goal of English language instruction is to equip students with the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in English. If reading is built on a foundation of a person's previously learned oral language competence, it stands to reason that improving one's oral language basis will improve one's reading ability. Oral language serves as the basis for reading, and it remains to do so as children develop into readers. Also, the reader's oral language talents play a big role in understanding the

connected text, especially when it comes to grasping the meanings of the words that have been identified, as well as the grammatical and semantic linkages between them.

According to Turkan and Buzick (2016) no one understands the complexities of the English language like a pupil studying it for the first time. English learners, often known as ELs, require assistance in learning all parts of the language. When teachers focus on academic expressions, English language learners need the critical skills for the language so that they could be able to participate in oral performances, for example, debates, discussions and giving their own viewpoints. Oral language is a vital area of learning for ELs for these reasons and many more.

According to Gravellier et al. (2021) oral language includes linguistics, syntax, vocabulary, terminology, speech, and discourse. For ELs, each of these places poses a unique problem. Some people may difficulty with discourse, or appropriate language use, which encompasses social practices such as conversational switch and cooperative debate interactions. Others may struggle with more academic aspects of English, such as building a linguistic competence, understanding morphological characteristics, and learning grammatical structures.

Since, academic performance is something which is built on good oral language skills, hence, students who possess a great oral performance core are supposed to be good language learners and speakers. Such skills may help in enhancing an individual's confidence and overall well-being.

2.6 Impact of Learning Anxiety on Oral Performance

As per Liu, (2018) language anxiety's role in second language learning has increasingly been known. Anxiety study began with native speakers after psychologists saw that people exhibited anxiety in a variety of settings, including traveling, studying, and performing live. Anxiety is defined as "a feeling based on a threat assessment, which includes representational, predictive, and other uncertain elements." When people are unsure of what will happen next, when they think that their performance will be concluded poor, when they are concerned regarding the outcome of an event, or even when they feel awkward or intimidated in a scenario, they experience anxiety. Anxiety appears to be harmful. Anxiety, on the other hand, might be beneficial to people since it developed character, increase cognitive flexibility, and heightened recognition of life's potential, whereas abnormal anxiety is really not.

According to Subekti (2018) English, being an international language is used for a broad scope of purposes and activities. As a result, English has become a required subject in secondary schools and universities. Researchers had to acknowledge that psychological qualities including self-esteem, repression, fear, vulnerability, and extraversion may play a role in eventual language mastery success. Students with anxiety disorders have a passive approach toward their education, with little interest in weak speaking skills or oral performance. Students with higher degrees of state anxiety tend to make mistakes in their oral language performance, whereas those who are more extroverts leave good impressions during their oral performance. Language anxiety, in which the learner is fearful of spontaneous communication in the FL, is more likely to damage oral communication abilities. Anxiety is defined as a state of mind that develops in response to a circumstance or scenario, like public speaking, tests, or class involvement.

According to Chen and Hwang, (2020) one of the most important skills for hospitality professionals is the ability to communicate in a foreign language. English is also very important for other purposes, for example, having an anxiety and a poorer communication skill in English would cause management in Restaurant in a non-English speaking country to communicate badly which ultimately result in not so good hospitality. English language learning courses are being provided to students for professional purposes in non-English speaking countries but still students experience anxiety during that learning time and that anxiety in speaking would cause them cons in their professional career as well.

3. Methodology

The type of methodology used to collect information and data is qualitative method. The purpose of qualitative method is to have a better understanding of the concerned problem which in this case is language learning anxiety and its effect on English oral performance. The aim of the qualitative method is to investigate why and how language learning anxiety impacts the speaking and oral performance of individuals.

3.1 Participants

The participants chosen for the qualitative study are from one of the universities of the same region. The students were those who were taking English language classes. It was being asked to the teachers from the language teaching program to shortlist those students who were shown to have anxiety in language learning. There were also students who expressed nervousness and fear while speaking English.

3.2 Population and Sample

The population of the students was 25 and they were asked if they want to take participation in the study. The population was totally those who experiences anxiety in English language learning.

3.3 The Instrument of the Study

Information about the students experiencing language learning anxiety was collected by using specific instruments, for example, interviews, audio self-reports before and after an English class and oral presentation. Oral presentation was taken two times, first to the researchers before presented in classroom and then the presentation in the classroom. The presentations were being recorded to analyse and evaluate in depth.

3.4 Data Collection

The data were collected by taking interviews from the students. Audio-self reports and oral presentations were also the source of data collection.

- Oral presentations

Oral presentations are the part of the semester system and students had to do some oral presentations in their semester. They were being asked to record one of their presentations which

are in English language. The oral presentation was done in two parts. Firstly, the presentation was presented to the researchers and then in the classrooms.

- Interviews

Interviews were being taken from the students learning English language. The questions were included in the interviews which could help to gather qualitative information regarding the experiences of language learning anxiety of students.

- Self-reports

Self-reports were collected in order to gather the information of how students feel, what their attitudes and beliefs are about the concerned issue. The participants were asked to tell about how they feel before and after English language class.

3.5 Data analyzing

The participants in this study were students enrolled in an English course at the language program, as stated in the methodology. Several instruments were used to obtain qualitative data during this process which were discussed above. Data were collected with the help of English language learning students and analyzed.

3.6 Ethical Consideration

A set of principles were kept in mind that is necessary for the qualitative research being conducted. When data were being collected, some ethical points were considered significant to maintain. These ethical considerations include voluntary participation which means the participation of the students in the study is totally up to them, if they want to quit the participation at any point, they can. Informed consent is the other ethical consideration which means participants must know the aim of the study before deciding to join. Confidentiality of participants should also not be compromised at any cost.

4. Results

This part of the methodology presents the results which was obtained as a result of interviews, self-reports and oral presentations. The results of the analysis were obtained with 25 students of English language learning going through language learning anxiety. The interviews taken included open questions, self-reports included the information about the feelings of the students and oral presentation helped in assessing the effect of language learning anxiety on English oral performance. Students expressed their desire to study English during the interview, as well as their anxiety about their low competency in the English language, despite the fact that they were in the last English level. They admitted that their English level was lower than that of other peers, which made them nervous and insecure when they had to speak in class. Many of the students when have to give an oral presentation, they get up early in the morning to study and prepare for it. Over-studying is one of the characteristics of nervous persons, according to Horwitz. "They feel like everyone are judging them," many of the students said. "They feel like people around them know more English, and they blame themselves for not knowing anything." Because of this, they are considering cancelling their English class. When those students had to give an oral presentation,

they were nervous. Based on the analysis of the two presentations, it was analyzed that their English language skills in oral performance were weak due to anxiety in language learning.

5. Discussion

Anxiety, which is a psychological component, is one of the most essential aspects that affect students or individuals when learning English or any other second language. Earlier studies on second language learning focused on cognitive aspects such as potential, ability, and study habits as they pertain to the entire cycle of learning a second language. The study conducted with the help of English language learning students using qualitative method showed and proved that anxiety can have a very adverse effect on language learning especially in oral performance. When learning a foreign language, we must develop a variety of abilities (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), which can be learned in a variety of ways. The students of English language learning anxiety somewhere lacked the confidence and motivation to do well in their learning process. Therefore, teachers should keep relevant on theories related to language learning and teaching. These theories assist teachers in understanding why the abilities listed above are not learnt in the same way, as well as providing techniques to assist students in improving the skills listed above. Speaking is, in my opinion, the most difficult ability to master during the language study process. Teachers must consider the students' requirements, sentiments, preferences, surroundings, and psychological aspects such as ambition, self-esteem, anxiousness, and so on in order to appropriately develop such talents. When a student is learning a second or foreign language, I believe personality plays a vital and crucial part, because language can be learned more easily depending on the level of each aspect of the personality. As I previously stated, I believe that among the abilities listed above, speaking is one of the most difficult to grasp because numerous variables, such as those listed above, might impede good performance of this critical talent. It can also raise or diminish feelings of safety, self-esteem, apprehension, and vulnerability, so on and so forth, depending on the situation in the classroom. As a result, these are the aspects that have the potential to detract from the primary aim of communication. Generating, collecting, and processing information is all about the process of creating meaning to words which is known as speaking. The circumstance in which participants take participation in speaking all forms its meaning. To put it another way, speaking can be seen of as the exchange of meaning and comprehension, with the end objective of communication, which includes elements such as phrases, gestures, and actions that make contact between the speaker and the audience valuable. Hence, students suffering from English language learning anxiety must try to tackle their anxiety by the help of the teachers so that their oral performance could be enhanced. Motivation and giving confidence to students may help in this regard.

6. Conclusion

The study concluded that foreign language anxiety which in this case is English language has an impact on English oral performance. High levels of anxiety can have an effect on the performance of speaking which could result in low English proficiency. If the level of anxiety is high in language learning, it could result in more number of mistakes in oral performance in a stressful atmosphere. The fluency of the language could be impacted by the anxiety in language learning which could ultimately result in poorer oral performance. Since, the students have the perception about themselves being exposed in a stressful

environment where their oral performance would be judged and made fun of, they are unable to tackle the English language learning anxiety which lowers their confidence also.

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