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Second Language Learning Anxiety and Its Effect on Achievement in the Language

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Abstract

Second Language Learning research shows a strong relationship between second language anxiety and second language achievement. At present the disappointing level of achievement in English (L₂) of the Indian learners who are in native language medium schools demand a close look into the matter, but research in this area is very limited in India.

The purpose of the present study is to explore the level of anxiety of the Indian learners who learn English as second language. It also aims to find out the effect of L₂ anxiety on their L₂ achievement and the most influencing anxiety component. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986) was used for measuring anxiety of 146 Class X students

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studying in Bengali medium secondary schools in the state of West Bengal. The annual English Examination was taken as a measure of the students' achievement in English.

It is found that anxiety of most of the students inclines to the higher side of the range. Contrary to the findings of other related studies, test anxiety is found to be the predominating anxiety component in the students, as compared to communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation. Pedagogical implications of the study discussed at the end could prove to be valuable for teachers and policy makers in making the learning environment less anxiety provoking and better output giving.

Key Words: Second Language; Native language; Anxiety; Second language anxiety; Second language (L₂) achievement.

1. INTROUCTION

In India, English language was introduced by the imperial British government with the aim of serving its own administrative purpose. Since then the native people were willing to learn the language and even demanded it. The impact of English is not only continuing but increasing at a rapid pace. Today the use of English is widespread in India with the country having the third largest English using population after the USA and UK. India also has the distinction of being the third largest English book producing country. Obviously English in India has come a long way from its colonial days. The functional domains of its use have now encompassed not only administration but also education, employment and of course formal as well as informal communication.

According to Kachru (1986), English in India is used for two purposes. On the one hand it is used as a linguistic tool for cohesive administration of the country and for uniting people using diverse languages (India being a multilingual country and having no constitutionally accepted national language). Secondly it is used as a language of wider communication, national and international, formal and informal.

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Today English enjoys a special official status in India. It is learnt not only for economic reasons but social power and prestige are also associated with it. So it is not surprising that 99% of English speakers in India are second language speakers whereas in many Indian languages there are no non-native speakers. (Mahapatra 1990)

English is now taught as second language in India at every stage of education, but acquisition of an adequate level of proficiency in English is one of the main challenges of India today. The actual scenario is that many of the Indian students who learn English as a second language and are in regional medium schools fail to achieve a satisfactory level of proficiency in English. So special attention should be given to find out the ways to help them out of such a depressing situation and adapt themselves to the demands of the day.

Affective Variables in Learning a Second Language – Role of Anxiety

Early SLA (Second Language Acquisition) research put a heavy emphasis on cognitive variables such as intelligence, language aptitude, and learning styles, etc. However, since 1970s after the pioneering research of the Canadian psychologists R.C. Gardner and Wallace Lambert (1972) about attitudes and motivation in second language learning, SLA researchers have started considering the affective or emotional variables and how these factors may facilitate or hinder language acquisition (Horwitz, Tallon, & Luo, 2010, p. 95). Affective variables mean those “emotionally relevant characteristics of the individual that influence how he/she will respond to any situation” (Gardner and MacIntyre 1992). Specially after Stephen Krashen’s affective filter hypothesis in his Theory of second language acquisition (1985) a plethora of researches have been done in this field. This hypothesis describes factors that can act as a filter that impedes acquisition. The 'affective variables' he has mentioned are *motivation, self-confidence and anxiety*. Krashen argued that people acquire second languages only if they obtain comprehensible input and if their affective filters are low enough to allow the input ‘in’. (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). According to Arnold and Brown (1999) “anxiety is quite possibly the affective factor that most pervasively obstructs the learning process”. (Arnold and Brown, 1999, cited in Dornyei, 2005, p. 198). Even after ten years Tallon (2009) points to the Language in India www.languageinindia.com

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same factor, 'language anxiety', as one of the most important affective variables in learning a foreign language.

Many researchers have noticed negative influence of anxiety and this type of anxiety is called *debilitative anxiety*. Liu (2006) explored the language anxiety of 100 EFL students at three different proficiency levels. The results showed that students with advanced English proficiency tended to be less anxious.

Na (2007) surveyed 115 Chinese high school students and found that these learners have high anxiety in learning the English language. Specifically she discovered that males have higher anxiety in learning English than their female counterparts. Moreover, she also found out that high anxiety plays a debilitating role in high school students' language learning. This type of language anxiety causes the learner to flee from the learning task to avoid further anxiety.

Liu and Jackson (2008)'s study of the unwillingness to communicate, and anxiety of Chinese learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) in English language classrooms revealed that (a) most of the students were willing to participate in interpersonal conversations, but many of them did not like to risk using/speaking English in class; (b) more than one third of the students felt anxious in their English language classrooms, and they feared being negatively evaluated and were apprehensive about public speaking and tests; (c) their unwillingness to communicate and their foreign language anxiety correlated significantly with each other and with their self-rated English proficiency and access to English; and (d) many of the variables of interest were good predictors of the students' unwillingness to communicate and of their foreign language anxiety, which were also powerful predictors for each other.

Kao, P.C., & Craigie, P. (2010) investigated the effect of foreign language anxiety on 101 Taiwanese university students' English achievement. Results suggested that students with highest achievement in English (top 1/3 of all participants) experienced lower levels of foreign language anxiety than students whose English achievement fall in the middle 1/3 and bottom 1/3 of all participants, while the middle group of students had less foreign language anxiety than the Language in India www.languageinindia.com

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students at the bottom level of achievement. The results highlighted that foreign language anxiety is an important predictor of university English-major students' English achievement.

Wang (2010)'s study also asserts that 'Foreign language anxiety' is one of the best predictors in accounting for individual differences in language learning success in SLA, and that it is proved to be one of the most essential and influential affective factors. The study covered 125 Chinese students with English major and found the existence of certain negative correlations between English listening classroom anxiety and listening achievement.

Khan and Zafar (2010) reported a significant increase in state anxiety in the students when the video camera was introduced, and concomitant deficits in vocabulary acquisition were observed.

Latif, Mansor Fadzil, Ramli Bahroom, and Wardah (2011) reported a negative impact of anxiety on performance in English as a second language.

However, it is not that everything about anxiety is set to impede language learning. A certain amount of anxiety is often said to drive a student to exert to the optimum level to learn the second language and this type of anxiety is called *facilitative anxiety* (MacIntyre, 1995; Oxford, 1999). According to Oxford (1999) anxiety can be regarded as helpful and facilitating in some ways, such as keeping students alert.

Mills and Pajares (2006) also found a positive correlation between listening anxiety and listening proficiency in both males and females.

Vazalwar (2011) explored the role of anxiety in L2 reading. Though the result shows, on the one hand, a negative correlation between anxiety and reading comprehension in English, on the other, it establishes that normal level of anxiety gives positive affect in reading comprehension.

So anxiety can be both helpful and impeding for second language learning and that can be explained with the Yerkes-Dodson Law (1908). The law asserts an inverted U-shaped curvilinear association between arousal and performance. (Wilson, 2006, p. 45).

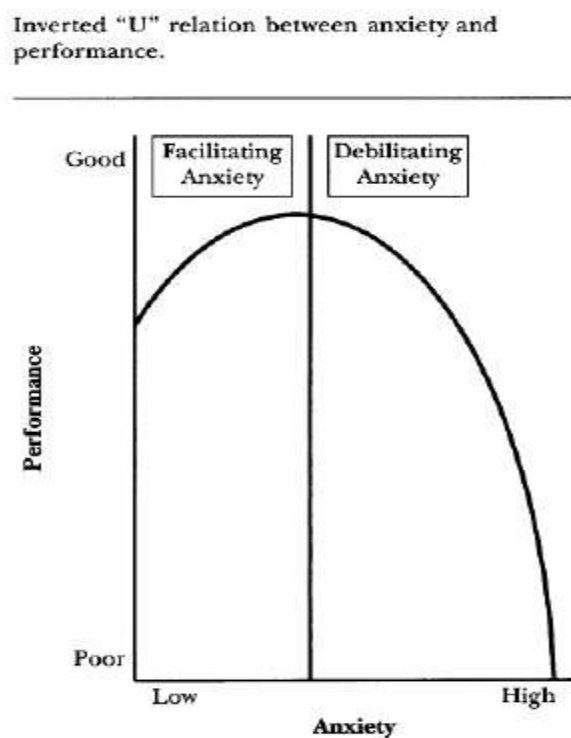


Figure 1. Relation between anxiety and performance

Source: MacIntyre, 1995, p. 92

The graph shows that that performance increases with anxiety, but only up to a point. When levels of anxiety become too high, performance decreases. So anxiety up to a certain limit is facilitates second language learning. When levels of anxiety become too high, performance decreases. That means too high a level of anxiety is detrimental to language learning.

The above mentioned research findings assert the prevalence of anxiety, in its facilitative or debilitating form, in L₂ learners. Interesting thing is that there are researchers whose findings restrict us from calling L₂ anxiety as either facilitative or debilitating. They found no significant correlation between L₂ anxiety and L₂ performance. Yusuke Kondo investigated the relationship between language anxiety and proficiency in a speaking test and found that language anxiety in

the speaking test was only a poor predictor of English proficiency of the Japanese Students. Ya-Chin Tsai and Yi-Chih Li (2012), too, found that reading proficiency difference between Low Anxiety Testees and High Anxiety Testees was not significant. At the same time the reading-proficiency difference between Low Anxiety Readers and High Anxiety Readers did not reach a significant level, either. Tóth (2011) found that anxiety does not depend on the proficiency level of the learners.

Focus of This Research

The present research has much significance in second language learning and teaching in India. The approach presently adopted in India for second language teaching is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). It emphasizes on activities involving the learners in communication. It tends to enhance learners' anxiety of being exposed to others about their weaknesses in the use of the second language. As review of literature reveals anxiety is universal in learners of second language, but its effect on language achievement is not always consistent.

Though most of the language researchers found a negative relationship between anxiety and achievement, there are a few who assert the existence of a positive or facilitating anxiety (Oxford, 1999; Mills, Pajares & Herron, 2006, cited in Kao & Craigie, 2010; Vazalwar, 2011).

Again Yusuke Kondo found that language anxiety was only a poor predictor of English proficiency of Japanese learners, Ya-Chin Tsai and Yi-Chih Li and Tóth (2011), too, found no significant correlation between anxiety and L₂ proficiency.

Moreover, study in this field is fairly small in India. These considerations encouraged the authors to investigate the second language learners' anxiety and its effect on their achievement in second language (English, in India).

An understanding of learners' second language anxiety will sensitize the teachers to the probable causes of their students' low achievement in English, the second language. This in turn, will boost up their efforts in bringing down the affective filters of the learners, to which anxiety contributes to a great extent (Krashen, 1985). Consequently they (the learners) will be able to receive greater 'language input' resulting in better learner output.

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DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

It was a pilot study done with the help of a moderate sample drawn from seven schools situated in the districts of Kolkata, Nadia, Paschim Midnapur, and South 24 Parganas in West Bengal. The type of school is restricted to Government or Govt. aided Bengali medium schools. The students were from class X. The marks of the achievement test in English were compared with anxiety score. No oral test was considered in the present study.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the present study were to find out

- The nature of L₂ anxiety in the students
- Whether anxiety has any effect on learners' second language achievement.
- Whether gender has any effect on anxiety
- Whether place of residence has any effect on anxiety
- How anxiety and learners' second language achievement are related.
- How the different components of L₂ learning anxiety namely communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation are inter-related.
- Whether second language achievement can be predicted from anxiety.

HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were formulated for this study:

- H₀1 There is no significant difference between the anxiety scores of the boys and that of the girls
- H₀2 There is no significant difference between the anxiety scores of the students residing in urban area and that of the students residing in urbanized rural area.
- H₃ There will be positive correlation among the various components of second language learning anxiety.

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- H 4 There will be negative correlation between the L₂ achievement scores and anxiety scores.
- H 5 Second language achievement can be predicted from the different components of anxiety.

DEFINITIONS AND EXPLANATIONS OF KEY CONCEPTS

Foreign Language: A foreign language is that language for the use of which there is no immediate reinforcement in the surrounding environment. As defined in The Longman Dictionary of language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (Richards, Platt, and Platt, 1992), a foreign language is a “language which is not a native language in a country. A foreign language is usually studied either for communication with foreigners who speak the language, or for reading printed materials in the language” (p.142)

Second Language: The Longman Dictionary of language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (Richards, Platt, and Platt, 1992) defines second language as “a language which is not a native language in a country, but which is widely used as a medium of communication (e.g., in education, in government) and which is usually used alongside another language or languages”. In India, a multilingual country, the second language may or may not be a native language, but the other parts of the given definition neatly fit to the Indian context.

Native Language: It refers to the primary language of a community a person listens to or speaks from his/her earliest childhood. India is a land of diverse languages. People in different regions use different languages. The VIIIth Schedule of the Constitution of India approves of twenty three official languages. Besides these there are other varieties or dialects used in the country. In the Indian context, therefore, any of these indigenous varieties of languages may be termed as a native language.

Anxiety: Anxiety comprises “worry and emotionality” (Morris, Davis and Hutchings, 1981). Worry refers to cognitive aspects like “negative expectations and cognitive concerns about oneself, the situation at hand, and possible consequences”. Emotionality refers to “one’s

perceptions of the physiological-affective elements of the anxiety experience, that is, indications of automatic arousal and unpleasant feeling states such as nervousness and tension” (p. 541).

According to Spielberger (1983) anxiety is the “subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system” (p. 1).

Types of Anxiety

Three of the most well-known types of anxiety are —

1) Trait Anxiety: It is a stable feature of personality referring to a “permanent predisposition to be anxious” (Scovel, 1978: cited in Ellis, 1994: 479).

2) State anxiety: It is a transient in nature and refers to a “transitory state or condition of the organism that varies in intensity and fluctuates over time” (Spielberger, 1966, p.12). It is the apprehension that is experienced at a particular moment in time (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, p. 90). In other words, it is a response to a particular anxiety-provoking stimulus such as an important test (Spielberger, 1983, cited in Wang, 2005, p.13, and cited in Tanveer, 2007, p. 4).

3) Situation specific anxiety: It refers to the persistent and multi-faceted nature of some anxieties (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991: cited in Horwitz, 2001, 113). It is an individual tendency to be anxious in a particular situation. It is aroused by a specific type of situation or event such as public speaking, examinations, or class participation (Ellis, 1994: 480). According to MacIntyre and Gardner (1991), situation-specific anxiety can be considered as trait anxiety, which is limited to a specific context. This perspective examines anxiety reactions in a “well-defined situation” such as public speaking, during tests, when solving mathematics problems, or in a foreign language class (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, p. 90).

Second / Foreign Language Anxiety: Anxiety, when it is associated with learning a second language, is termed as ‘second language anxiety’. According to Gardner & MacIntyre

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(1993), language anxiety is "the apprehension experienced when a situation requires the use of a second language with which the individual is not fully proficient", this apprehension being characterized by "derogatory self-related cognitions ..., feelings of apprehension, and physiological responses such as increased heart rate"(1993). Horwitz et al. (1986) define foreign language anxiety as a 'distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 128). In this sense it is a situation specific anxiety, not a trait anxiety which recurs consistently over time within the given context of language learning situations, i.e. the language classrooms (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Horwitz, 2001).

In the Indian context 'English' is not the native language, but it is widely used along with the native regional languages. So majority of the learners learn it as a second language, though it is a foreign language by origin. That is why the term '*foreign language anxiety*' is considered synonymous with '*second language (L₂) anxiety*' in this study. While considering the learners' L₂ anxiety, this study refers to the three factors, communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation as mentioned by Horwitz et al (1986).

Communication apprehension is a type of shyness characterized by fear or anxiety about communication with people. It is either real or perceived and usually associated with personality traits like shyness, quietness and reticence.

"Test anxiety refers to a type of performance anxiety stemming from a fear of failure."
(Horwitz et al., 1986, p.127.)

Fear of negative evaluation is "apprehension about others evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively" (Watson and Friend, 1969, cited by Horwitz et al., 1986.)

Second Language (L₂) Achievement: Language achievement refers to "a learner's proficiency ... as the result of what has been taught or learned after a period of instruction"

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(Richards et al., 1992, p. 197). Language proficiency is “a person’s skill in using a language for a specific purpose . . . refer (ring) to the degree of skill with which a person can use a language, such as how well a person can read, write, speak, or understand language” (p.204).

In this study, internal assessment of learners’ L₂ achievement in the last summative examination held by individual schools is taken to be the yardstick of the learners’ achievement in second language. This score is the dependent variable of the study.

METHOD

SAMPLE

The sample was drawn from seven schools in West Bengal where the learners’ first language is Bengali. A three-tire sampling method was taken. At the first two stages of selecting the districts and schools for survey convenient sampling technique was used keeping in mind the requirement of data from urban and urbanized rural areas, from girls and boys. Convenient sampling technique was used as the study was a pilot one for the more extensive doctoral work. Data was collected from seven schools in the four districts of Kolkata, Nadia, North 24-Parganas and Paschim Medinipur. At the third stage of selecting the participants random sampling technique was adopted. The sample comprised a total of 146 students of class X and included 87 boys and 59 girls. There were 82 students from urbanized rural area and 64 from urban area.

TOOLS USED

Two research tools were selected.

i) **The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)** constructed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) adapted to the Indian context was used for measuring the second language anxiety. All the 33 items from the original FLCAS had been retained only with a few changes in them, as shown below –

‘language class’ → English class

‘foreign language’ → English language

‘native speaker’ → those who can speak English fluently

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‘when on my way to language class’ → before the English class

The 33 items are related to three components – ‘communication apprehension’, ‘test anxiety’ and ‘fear of negative evaluation’. It is a Likert-type scale with five possible responses ranging from ‘Strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’.

The following table shows how the items are categorized in to three components. The Cronbach alpha was found to be 0.879 indicating high reliability of the test.

Table I

| <u>Components</u> | <u>Item Numbers</u> | <u>Sample item</u> |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Communication Apprehension | 1,4,9,14,15,18,24,27,29,30,32 | 9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class |
| Test anxiety | 3,5,6,8,10,11,12,16,17,20,21,22,25,26,28 | 16. Even if I am well prepared for language class I feel anxious about it. |
| Fear of negative evaluation | 2,7,13,19,23,31,33 | 31. I am afraid that other students will laugh at me when I speak in English in the class. |

Different components of L₂ anxiety scale

ii) **The annual examination** (at the end of Class IX) conducted by individual schools is taken as a measure of the learners’ achievement in English (L₂). Though not a standardized tool, the test result is used as all the schools are under the same School Board (West Bengal Board of

Secondary Education) and they follow a uniform evaluation system. The scores in English (L₂) Achievement Test of different schools are, therefore, considered as of same standard.

PROCEDURE

The adapted version of FLCAS of Horwitz et al. (1986) was administered on 146 students of Class X to assess their anxiety level. The technique of ‘group administration’ was opted for. The FLCAS had been administered in their classroom before their lesson started. Some of the items were translated into their mother tongue, Bengali. The students took 14/15 minutes (approximately) to complete their responses to the 33 items. Their scores in English in the last summative examination (annual examination of Class IX) had been collected from the school records. Then quantitative analysis was done.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table II

| | | |
|------------------------|---------|----------|
| N | Valid | 146 |
| | Missing | 6 |
| Mean | | 101.4726 |
| Median | | 102.5000 |
| Std. Deviation | | 17.60141 |
| Skewness | | -.314 |
| Std. Error of Skewness | | .201 |
| Kurtosis | | -.220 |
| Std. Error of Kurtosis | | .399 |

Anxiety score of the total population

The frequency distribution of the scores shows that distribution is slightly negatively skewed indicating that scores are piled at the positive end. It implies that most of the students

reported to feel a high level of second language anxiety while learning it. The figure below (histogram) graphically represents the distribution.

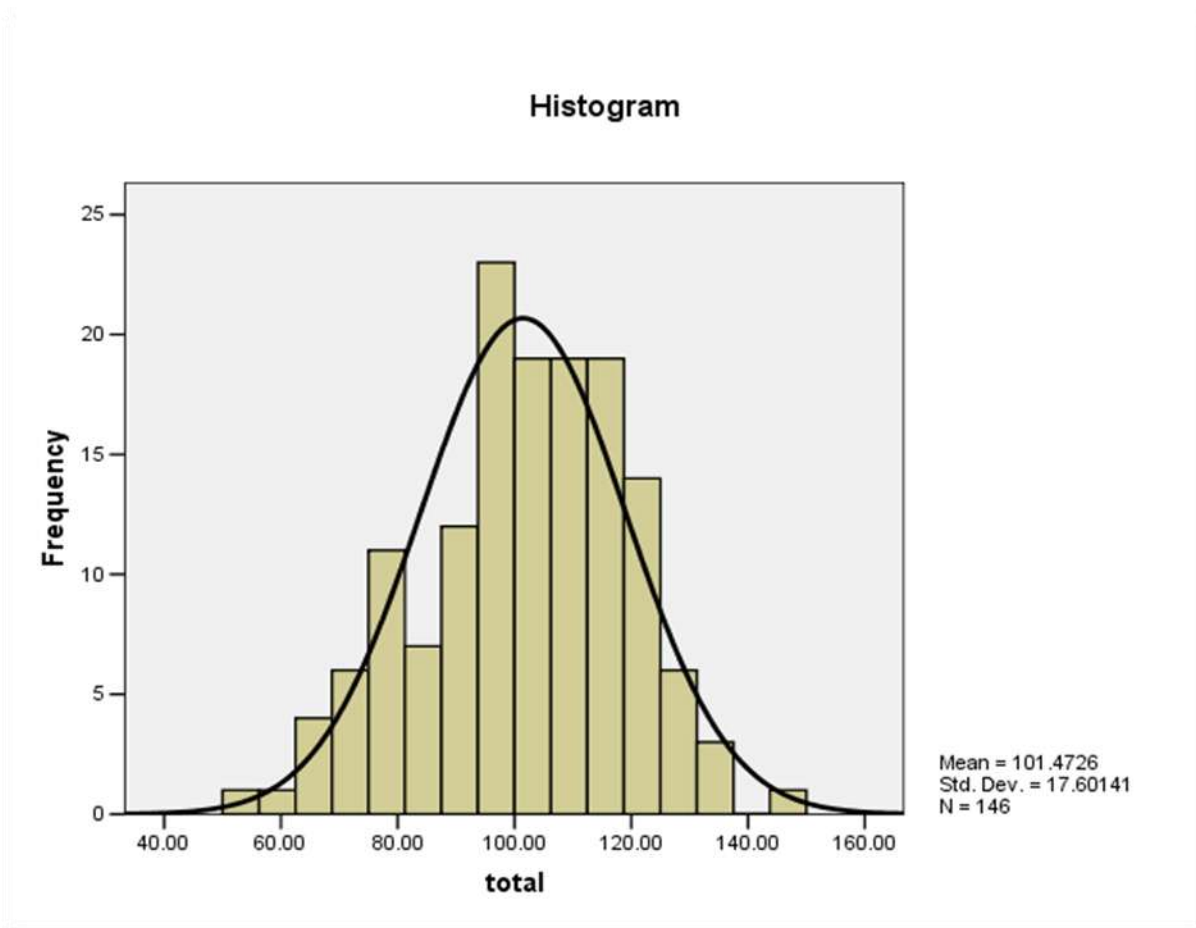


Figure 2. Histogram with normalization of anxiety score

Table III

| Sores | Means | Standard Deviation |
|-------|-------|--------------------|
|-------|-------|--------------------|

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| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Anxiety | Boy 101.26 | Girl 101.89 | Urban 113.19 | Urbanised rural 104.43 | Boy 18.83 | Girl 15.59 | Urban 16.77 | Urbanised Rural 16.01 |
| Achievement | Boy 54.29 | Girl 56.44 | Urban 53.68 | Urbanised rural 45.92 | Boy 16.31 | Girl 16.81 | Urban 14.98 | Urbanised Rural 21.05 |

Means and standard deviations of anxiety scores and achievement scores in English

Table IV

Correlations

| | | anx | eng |
|-----|---------------------|----------|----------|
| anx | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -.361 ** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 146 | 146 |
| eng | Pearson Correlation | -.361 ** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 146 | 146 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Correlation between anxiety score and English achievement score

Table IV shows that correlation between English achievement test scores and anxiety scores is negative and statistically significant (r value is -.361 which is significant at .01 level). So H4 that says ‘there will be negative correlation between the L₂ achievement scores and anxiety scores’ is retained. Interestingly Table III shows that the L₂ achievement of the urban students is higher than that of the urbanized rural students, though urban students have higher level of L₂ anxiety as compared to the urbanized rural ones. It implies that L₂ anxiety is not the only factor influencing achievement. The higher level of anxiety of the urban students is due to the fact that they are more stressed with career considerations, parental expectations, and academic competition. Another probable cause of such a difference in the levels of anxiety is the urban

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students' perception of the knowledge of English as a symbol of social status. All these factors make the learners motivated to learn English and this is one of the causes of their better L₂ achievement (as shown in Table III). The urbanized rural students are free from such psychological pressure and, therefore, they are less prone to L₂ anxiety. The higher L₂ achievement of the urban students as compared to the urbanized rural ones is, also, to be attributed to better educational facilities (better infrastructure, better teachers) that they enjoy and to the fact that they come from educated, well off families having greater exposure to English. That is to say that the effect of the educational facilities surpasses the effect of anxiety and this is the cause of the apparent disagreement between the two tables.

Table V

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: anx

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Eta Squared |
|-----------------|-------------------------|-----|-------------|----------|------|---------------------|
| Corrected Model | 2137.895 ^a | 3 | 712.632 | 2.365 | .074 | .048 |
| Intercept | 1420192.957 | 1 | 1420192.957 | 4713.563 | .000 | .971 |
| gender | 34.668 | 1 | 34.668 | .115 | .735 | .001 |
| resi | 1933.192 | 1 | 1933.192 | 6.416 | .012 | .043 |
| gender * resi | 443.976 | 1 | 443.976 | 1.474 | .227 | .010 |
| Error | 42784.495 | 142 | 301.299 | | | |
| Total | 1548239.000 | 146 | | | | |
| Corrected Total | 44922.390 | 145 | | | | |

a. R Squared = .048 (Adjusted R Squared = .027)

ANOVA of anxiety scores in relation to gender and types of residence

The ANOVA table (**Table V**) also shows that there is no difference between the anxiety scores of the boys and girls (p value .735). However, statistically significant difference is

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observed between the students residing in urban and urbanized rural areas. (p value 0.012). The mean score of urban students is more which indicates that they are more anxiety prone in this regard. Hence Ho1 that says 'there is no significant difference between the anxiety scores of the boys and that of the girls' is retained and Ho2 that says 'there is no significant difference between the anxiety scores of the students residing in urban areas and that of the students residing in urbanized rural areas' is rejected.

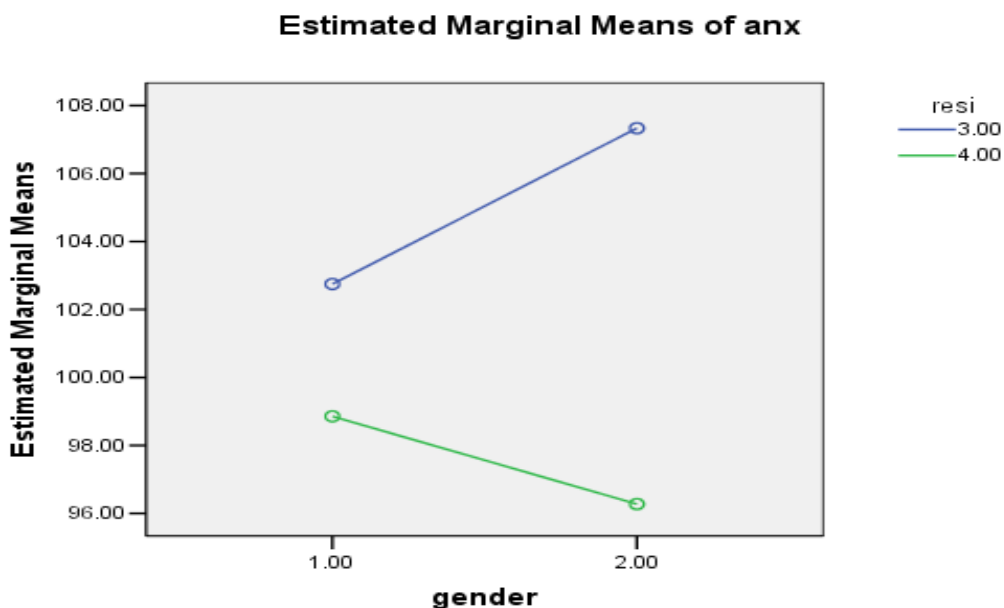


Figure 3. Interaction of the anxiety scores in relation to gender and place of residence
1=Male, 2=Female, the blue line presents urban and the green line presents the urbanized rural students' anxiety.

The ANOVA table shows interaction is not significant (p value .227). However, the interaction graph in Figure 3 shows that there is mean differences among the male and female students when the place of residence is taken into account.

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Table VI

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| | Communication apprehension | Test anxiety | Fear of negative evaluation |
| Communication anxiety | 1 | 0.648** | 0.673** |
| Test anxiety | 0.648** | 1 | 0.578** |
| Fear of negative evaluation | 0.673** | 0.578** | 1 |

Correlation matrix of the three components of Anxiety scale.

Table VI shows correlation matrix which indicates that the components of anxiety scale are interrelated as all the r values are highly significant. So the H3 that says ‘there will be positive correlation among the various components of second language learning anxiety’ is retained.

Table VII

Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .361(a) | .130 | .124 | 17.72081 |
| 2 | .478(b) | .228 | .217 | 16.75043 |
| 3 | .506(c) | .256 | .240 | 16.50080 |

a Predictors: (Constant), anxiety

b Predictors: (Constant), anxiety, gender

c Predictors: (Constant), anxiety, gender, residence

The above table shows that English achievement score can be predicted from anxiety score, gender and place of residence. While 12% variance in English score can be predicted from anxiety score, 24% variance can be explained from anxiety score, gender and place of residence.

Table VIII

Coefficients^a

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | Sig. |
|-------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | t | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 88.685 | 8.610 | | 10.300 | .000 |
| | anx | -.388 | .084 | -.361 | -4.640 | .000 |
| 2 | (Constant) | 104.912 | 8.985 | | 11.677 | .000 |
| | anx | -.381 | .079 | -.354 | -4.822 | .000 |
| | gender | -12.043 | 2.826 | -.313 | -4.262 | .000 |
| 3 | (Constant) | 79.747 | 14.018 | | 5.689 | .000 |
| | anx | -.346 | .079 | -.321 | -4.356 | .000 |
| | gender | -12.651 | 2.796 | -.329 | -4.525 | .000 |
| | resi | 6.519 | 2.816 | .171 | 2.315 | .022 |

a. Dependent Variable: eng

Standardized Beta coefficients of anxiety scores, gender and place of residence

Table IX

Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .510(a) | .260 | .255 | 16.33966 |
| 2 | .555(b) | .308 | .298 | 15.85811 |

a Predictors: (Constant), test anxiety

b Predictors: (Constant), test anxiety, communication apprehension.

Table X

Excluded Variables^f

| Model | Beta In | t | Sig. | Partial Correlation | Collinearity Statistics | |
|-------|---------|-------------------|-------|---------------------|-------------------------|------|
| | | | | | Tolerance | |
| 1 | commu | .287 ^a | 3.143 | .002 | .254 | .580 |
| | negeval | .170 ^a | 1.950 | .053 | .161 | .666 |
| 2 | negeval | .053 ^b | .548 | .584 | .046 | .512 |

- a. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), test anxiety
- b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), test anxiety, communication apprehension
- c. Dependent Variable: English

Table IX and Table X are related to Hypothesis 5 which says that different components of the anxiety scale will predict the English achievement score. One interesting finding is that test anxiety and communication apprehension components are the predictors of English achievement score. The regression analysis, however excluded the component of fear of negative evaluation, whereas test anxiety and communication apprehension were found to be predictors of English achievement score.

CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the present study are consistent with previous studies. Aida (1994) used the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Test (Horwitz 1988) and observed that high anxiety students fared worse on examination. Saito and Samimy (1996) concluded from their study that anxiety was the best predictor of examination result at the intermediate and advanced level of learning foreign language. Rodriguez (1995) found high negative correlation (-0.57, $p < .001$) between anxiety and foreign language achievement score. Most of the recent studies, too, as discussed while reviewing related literature consistently reported a negative impact of L₂ anxiety on L₂ achievement.

Thus it may be concluded that anxiety related to learning English (L₂) makes a learner feel insecure and nervous and aggravates the difficulty in using the language or taking test. It may be due to the fact that Indian system of teaching English as a second language is not conducive to the development of all the four language skills in the learners. The skills of reading

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and writing get greater emphasis than listening and speaking. It is quite evident from the fact that the Board examination at the end of Class X makes no provision for testing the L₂ oral skill of the students. However, other factors like a feeling of competition, parental expectations, or minimum or no exposure to the language in their day to day life outside the classroom, too, might be at the root of their L₂ anxiety. Anxious learners make persistent errors in spelling or syntax. They may have studied the language well, but at the time of test they freeze and forget.

Although a consistent negative correlation has been observed between anxiety and test result, it is difficult to say whether anxiety is a cause or an effect of poor achievement in language learning. Anxiety may lead to the loss of self-confidence and motivation for learning English and as a result anxious learners are mostly poor achievers in English. Poor achievement, in turn, may make the learners even more anxiety-prone. Whichever may be the cause or the effect, the facts found out in this study suggest that the anxiety level of the learners needs to be brought down to help them fare well in English tests.

The study suggest that an unsuccessful L₂ learner is not necessarily a dull or inattentive student, that L₂ anxiety may be the cause of his / her poor achievement. So a teacher should feel the need to concentrate on reducing the students' second language learning anxiety. Creating a learner-friendly classroom is a solution to the problem of reducing L₂ learning anxiety. This can be done by making them understand that committing mistakes is no offence, rather mistakes are universal in learners and also helpful for learning the correct use of the language and becoming successful learners. This will reduce their communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation by others. Offering positive reinforcement is also a very good strategy that a teacher should make use of to reduce the communication apprehension of the students. Group work that necessitates cooperation among the students and thus negate the apprehension of failure and at the same time any unhealthy competition, make L₂ learning non-threatening. Ample scope for L₂ use as provided by group work is conducive to improvement in the use of the language and so helpful in reducing students' communication apprehension. For avoiding interruption in communication the teacher should allow mistakes to be corrected later, if possible indirectly.

That means instead of threadbare analysis of a mistake the correct form or use should be given

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by the teacher through natural conversation. This will help the learners correct their own mistake/s in an anxiety free environment.

Of the findings of the study two are very much important for policy makers. First, the study shows that the effect of anxiety can be reduced by providing adequate educational facilities. The policy makers, therefore, should emphasise on infrastructure development. Sharing of efficient teacher is a way to lessen the cost of infrastructure development. They can plan for reshuffling of teachers in urban and urbanized rural areas. An easier and economically beneficial way of sharing efficient teachers is Teleconferencing. A greater emphasis on teaching English through English as much as possible is required for giving the learners a greater exposure to English, a practice seldom followed by the English teachers. Plans for including activities that make learning a fun (e.g., English films, suitable for their age, as the basis of language activities) can also be thought of for greater exposure to the language.

Secondly it is clear from the study that a continuous process of evaluation instead of occasional tests is to be emphasized as test anxiety is found to be the predominating anxiety component in the students.

Finally the fact that language learning anxiety is still a comparatively new area of research in India and it is a psychologically intricate phenomenon (Horwitz 2001) cannot be ignored. Evidently more research work is needed in this area.

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Appendix

Adapted version of the FLCAS

English Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

Directions: Each of the following Statements refers to how you feel about your English language class. Please put a tick (√) in the suitable box next to each statement to show whether you –

- Strongly agree = SA
- Agree = A

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- Neither agree nor disagree = N
- Disagree = D
- Strongly Disagree =S

Please give your first reaction to each statement. Please do not leave any statement unanswered.

| Statements | SA | A | N | D | SD |
|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| 1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English language class. | | | | | |
| 2. I don't worry about making mistakes in English class. | | | | | |
| 3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class | | | | | |
| 4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English. | | | | | |
| 5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English language classes. | | | | | |
| 6. During English class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course. | | | | | |
| 7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am. | | | | | |
| 8. I am usually at ease during tests in my English class. | | | | | |
| 9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class. | | | | | |
| 10. I worry about the consequences of failing my English language class. | | | | | |
| 11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over English language classes. | | | | | |
| 12. In English class, I get so nervous I forget things I know. | | | | | |
| 13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class. | | | | | |
| 14. I would not be nervous speaking in English with those who speak English fluently. | | | | | |
| 15. I get upset when I don't understand what my English teacher is correcting. | | | | | |
| 16. Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it. | | | | | |
| 17. I often feel like not going to my English class. | | | | | |
| 18. I feel confident when I speak in English in my language class. | | | | | |

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| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 19. I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make. | | | | | |
| 20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in English class. | | | | | |
| 21. The more I study for an English class test, the more confused I get. | | | | | |
| 22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for my English class | | | | | |
| 23. I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do. | | | | | |
| 24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students. | | | | | |
| 25. English language class moves so quickly that I worry about getting left behind. | | | | | |
| 26. I feel more tense and nervous in my English class than in my other classes. | | | | | |
| 27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English class. | | | | | |
| 28. Before the English class, I feel very sure and relaxed. | | | | | |
| 29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English teacher says. | | | | | |
| 30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak English. | | | | | |
| 31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak in English in the class. | | | | | |
| 32. I would probably feel comfortable around those who speak English fluently. | | | | | |
| 33. I get nervous when our English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance. | | | | | |

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