



RESEARCH PAPER

Effect of Gender and Institution Type on Students' Anxiety regarding Learning L 2

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ABSTRACT

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L2 learning anxiety is a widely studied topic in the field of language learning. Present study aimed to explore secondary school students' language learning anxiety. Anxiety is a psychological state which hinders students learning and it can also affect students' classroom performance. The fundamental reason of this anxiety is an artificial environment of second or foreign language learning. The main objective of this study was to find out the level of anxiety on the basis of gender and type of institution. Descriptive research design and survey method was used to explore and describe the phenomenon under study. Sample was selected conveniently from public and private institutions of Lahore city. Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied and no significant difference was found on the basis of gender and institution type. Detailed descriptive analysis helps to clarify that students are more anxious while speaking and they need preparation before speaking

Introduction

Anxiety becomes a great hindrance in learning L2 (Mesri, 2012; Nahavandi & Munkundan, 2013). Feeling of distress, nervousness, vague fear, and apprehension to a specific situation or event are the symbols of anxiety. Alrabai, (2014) said, "Anxiety is said to overlap with different types of learning, when it is linked to learning L2." In case of L2 learning anxiety there are many hidden reasons behind such as psychological factors like fear, lack of confidence and low motivation towards learning L 2 (Darmi, & Albion, 2012; Öztürk, & Gürbüz, 2013). A foreign language anxiety can directly affect the academic performance of a student. Abrar, et al.(2018) asserted, "It can also cause harm on the students' self-esteem and level of participation in classroom. Learning a foreign language or L2 is never a less difficult task, students are usually at greater fear and they do not feel easy and comfortable in such tight

environment." Öztürk and Gürbüz's (2013) said, "Significant differences are found between genders in terms of speaking anxiety levels. Female students demonstrated a moderate level of anxiety whereas male students experienced speaking anxiety at a low level. Female students also tended to be more anxious than male students while speaking English and this could have originated from females' fear of negative evaluation in a higher level."

De Costa, (2015) said, "Now a days' anxiety has become a very serious and arousing matter as it is a major problem and hurdle in case of learning." It is a reality that no other language has taken the place of English as a lingua franca in the world (Lucas, et al., 2011; Tercan, & Dikilitaş, 2015). English is a global language and also the language of modern knowledge (Gaibani, & Elmenfi, 2014). De Costa, (2015) English is a lingua franca and an international language to communicate with each other. It is a fact which can't be ignored by any nation.

It is considered by linguists that spoken proficiency is a fundamental skill in the context of L 2 (Teng & Sinwongsuwat 2015). A series of studies was conducted to find out effect of gender on L 2 learning anxiety but all the studies reached on the same conclusion that gender has no impact in this regard (Piechurska-Kuciel 2012; Gaibani & Fadil 2014; Dewaele & Ip 2013)

Liu and Huang (2011) said, "The relationship between students' language learning anxiety and academic performance is a widely studied subject and the area of interest for research scholars."

When students are unable to learn L2, it makes them annoying. If students face difficulty in learning, then it is important for teacher to lessen these obstructions by developing and implementing the strategies to help them (Taghinezhad, 2014).

According to Horwitz (1999) strategic process of learning L2 plays an important role in order to eliminate learning difficulties. Students will understand the process of thinking and how to apply the learning strategies when strategic knowledge will be possessed by them. If students know about this, then solution of the problems can be found by them (Dewaele, et al., 2008). It is important for this that language teacher should play vital role in enhancing learners' understanding and in order to complete different kinds of learning skills. There are three significant interacting factors which affect, cognition and language in order to learn. Feelings are related to affective behaviors, thinking is related to cognitive behaviors and language is associated with linguistic behaviors. Hence, following three assumptions are given: (i) learning is influenced by the way reader feels for himself or herself and environment, (ii) it is necessary to comprehend the concepts in the learning

Material and Methods

Descriptive research design and survey method was used to explore the phenomenon under study. Survey method of research helps to include larger number

of participants to collect the data. Male and female students learning in public and private institutions of Lahore city were the population of his study. Sample was selected in three phases. In 1st phase three towns were conveniently selected out of ten towns. At 2nd phase 5 secondary schools were selected from each town and at 3rd phase 40 students studying in 10th grade were randomly selected.

Self-constructed questionnaire was used to find out students' language learning anxiety. Questionnaire was developed on five point likert type scale and pilot study was conducted to ensure the reliability of the tool.

Table 1
Reliability Statistics

| N of Items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|------------|------------------|
| 25 | .896 |

Cronbach's Alpha value in the table confirms the reliability of the instrument.

The tool was sent to panel of four, tow researchers and two language teachers for validation and they ensured that it is an appropriate tool for the study.

Scale Scoring

Instrument consists of 7 factors the distribution of statements under each factor is described below:

Factor 1: Speak anxiety 1, 3, 9, 12, 18, 20, 24,

Factor 2: Fear of negative evaluation 7, 13, 23, 25,

Factor 3: Communication apprehension 4, 15, 29,

Factor 4: Test anxiety 8, 10, 21

Factor 5: fear of making mistake 2,19.

Factor6: hesitation to learn new language patterns5,6,11,16,30,17, 22

Results and Discussion

To analyze the data descriptive analysis was done to calculate mean and standard deviation of each statement. t test was applied to find out the difference in anxiety level on the basis of gender and institution type and inferences were made on the basis of results.

Table 1
Mean difference on each statement

| Statements | SA | A | N | DA | SD | mean | St.D. |
|------------------------------------|----|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| I need preparation before speaking | .9 | 10.7 | 12.7 | 58.3 | 22.5 | 3.70 | .975 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Due to anxiety I can't answer the questions. | 1.7 | 9.2 | 12.5 | 59.3 | 17.5 | 3.82 | .889 |
| I never volunteer to answer the questions. | 1.7 | 15.8 | 11.7 | 48.3 | 22.5 | 3.64 | 1.052 |
| I am a confident speaker of English | 10.0 | 16.7 | 10.0 | 59.3 | 4.6 | 3.73 | .775 |
| I feel nervousness while speaking. | 4.2 | 8.3 | 21.7 | 55.0 | 10.8 | 2.74 | 1.081 |
| I am the weakest speaker of L2 in my class | 5.8 | 34.2 | 27.5 | 25.8 | 5.8 | 3.26 | 3.890 |
| I am the most weak student of English class | 2.5 | 16.7 | 29.2 | 42.5 | 9.2 | 3.62 | 1.021 |
| I can't speak English in class | 14.2 | 16.7 | 18.3 | 42.5 | 8.3 | 3.14 | 1.218 |
| feel difficulty in understanding when teacher speaks English. | 10.8 | 15.8 | 20.5 | 52.8 | 3.3 | 3.83 | .882 |
| I feel anxious when others correct me. | 1.7 | 18.3 | 24.2 | 45.8 | 10.0 | 3.34 | .894 |
| I become confused if I am unable to understand teachers' words. | 2.5 | 9.2 | 15.8 | 40.8 | 11.7 | 3.30 | 1.089 |
| I am a bad learner of L2. | 1.7 | 19.2 | 25.8 | 37.5 | 15.8 | 3.47 | 1.028 |
| I need preparation to speak in language class. | .8 | 11.7 | 12.7 | 58.3 | 22.5 | 3.70 | .975 |
| Language rules make me confused. | 2.5 | 4.2 | 25.0 | 59.2 | 9.2 | 3.68 | .799 |
| I am unable to judge my proficiency in L2. | 4.2 | 10.8 | 15.8 | 50.0 | 19.2 | 3.69 | 1.035 |
| We learn through mistakes. | 2.5 | 17.5 | 26.7 | 40.0 | 13.3 | 3.44 | 1.011 |
| I am afraid of being called my name in class. | 10.8 | 22.5 | 18.3 | 48.3 | 10.0 | 3.74 | .884 |
| I don't like being corrected by teacher | 14.2 | 16.7 | 18.3 | 42.5 | 8.3 | 3.14 | 1.218 |
| I feel need to take extra language class. | 2.5 | 6.7 | 18.3 | 55.8 | 16.7 | 3.78 | .893 |
| I keep my mind busy in other things instead of learning language. | 5.0 | 13.3 | 15.8 | 52.5 | 13.3 | 3.56 | 1.044 |
| I always feel unprepared in English class. | 2.5 | 12.5 | 18.5 | 60.8 | 5.8 | 3.55 | .878 |
| I often bunk English classes. | 1.7 | 8.3 | 16.7 | 53.3 | 20.0 | 3.82 | .907 |
| I feel motivated in language classroom. | 5.0 | 13.3 | 18.3 | 44.2 | 19.2 | 3.59 | 1.096 |
| As compare to other subjects English is boring for me. | 5.0 | 10.0 | 17.5 | 52.5 | 15.0 | 3.60 | 3.38 |
| English grammar rules make me confused. | 4.2 | 22.5 | 20.0 | 41.7 | 11.7 | 3.34 | 1.081 |

The statement like "I get confused when the question is asked, I get confused due to unexpected questions, has the highest mean. This type of statements depicts that in case of foreign language anxiety students got confused and upset when they know that this is now the time to attend language class and questions would be asked even from outside the course. In the same case students were confused and more upset

in situation when teacher ask them different questions in general which they have not prepared in advance." The table given above shows high level of anxiety and it can be interpreted that learning L 2 is a night mare for most of the students.

Responses show that English is not the favorite subject of students and most of them like to communicate in their 1st language rather than L 2. Most of them said that they are unable to concentrate in their L2 class room and they feel that others will be unable to understand them in L 2 because they don't feel proficient in L2

Speaking is considered most difficult language and results in high level of anxiety in L2 learners. Therefore, L2 learning requires comfortable natural environment so that students acquire language in natural setting. When learning is done, anxiety level decreases. It starts from the lowest level to the highest level or from the precise understanding to the functional understanding.

Table: 2
t test among participants to find out the difference on the level of anxiety on the basis of gender

| Gender | N | M | SD | T | Sig. |
|--------|-----|--------|------|------|------|
| Male | 320 | 87..38 | 8.95 | 1.60 | 0.25 |
| Female | 280 | 89.19 | 8.99 | | |

Independent sample t test was applied to find out difference on the basis of gender. Mean score was (Male= 87.38, Female= 89.19). The significance value is 0.25 which is greater than .05 so it can be said that no significant difference was found between groups.

Table3
t-Test to find out significant difference in mean score on the basis of Institution type (Private/Public)

| Public/Private | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Df | t | Sig. |
|----------------|-----|------|----------------|---------|--------|------|
| Public | 250 | 2.34 | .413 | 298 | -2.426 | .616 |
| Private | 350 | 2.46 | .386 | 296.593 | | |

Independent sample t test was applied to find out the difference on the basis of institution type and it can be observed that significance value is = .616 which is greater than (p=0.05). So no significant difference is found between groups.

Discussion

In contrary to the results of this study Awan et al., (2010) conducted a study on undergraduate students in Sargodha University and found that male students are more anxious than female. Female students in this study show better confidence and ability to learn L2.

Different variables of language learning like "learning level", "activities of the course", and "behavior of language teacher" were studied by Hidayati, (2018)and it was found that these variable play differently while interacting with each other during

learning L 2. Another researcher studied learners' variables as sources of L 2 learning anxiety; and the variables were beliefs, gender, age, personality, and learning styles and it was found that poor performance should also be considered a factor which increases anxiety due to the negative notion attached with it (Hidayati, 2018; Yamat, et al., 2014).

Aljafen(2013) said, "Fear of negative evaluation arises when students do not perform well in a fear of being scolded or rejected. Anxiety in test situation arises when students do not feel good and confident in taking a test and perform ill ultimately." It is also found by Alrabai(2014) that hormonal imbalance and nausea are some other physical and psychological causes of anxiety (Al-Shboul, et al, 2013; Na, 2007; Tsai, 2013). Many researches in case of L 2 anxiety suggested that the students feel more anxious while speaking (Dewaele& Ip, 2013; Elaldi, 2016)). Gregersen, Meza, and Macintyre, (2014) asserted, "While speaking in the classroom, all of the students who were anxious about a foreign language anxiety behave just like any phobia like phobia from height or a snake. They were totally out of their senses. They were like freezing in classroom and unable to produce any good sound or pronunciation and creating rhythm." Toghraee and Shahrokhi(2014) explained, "Some of the students reported that we feel good in going to the classroom, our teacher is also very nice but we feel bad when we are being called in the classroom to speak."

Lian and Budin (2014) asserted, "Another aspect of foreign language anxiety was the understanding level while learning in a foreign language classroom." Gopang, A study found that girls perform better than boys in words recognition in L 2 classroom (Bugio, et al., 2015). Teng and Sinwongsuwat(2015) said, "Being afraid and allergic of a L 2 class they are least interested in the lessons of language class and they intentionally try to avoid the situation."

Conclusion

In general it can be said that gender has no direct effect on learning anxiety with special reference to L 2. Environment of public and private institution is somewhat different but it has no effective role in the terms of L 2 learning. Both types of institutions are not creating natural environment for language learning. It is recommended on the basis of this study that to overcome the fear of L2 language acquisition environment should be provided to learners of all levels.

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