



RESEARCH PAPER

An Exploration of the Kinds of Teacher Behaviour to address Students' Language Speaking Anxiety: An Investigation of Pakistani EFL University Students' Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

Foreign language anxiety researchers and scholars have conducted a sizable body of research, consistently reporting that various aspects of language teachers' personal and professional demeanour trigger higher levels of speaking anxiety (SA) in a language classroom. However, a far less attention has been paid, in international and particularly in the Pakistani context, to a relevant question that what kinds of teacher behaviour could help alleviate students' SA. This study aims to fill this gap in research by investigating the perspectives of Pakistani postgraduate non-major English language students about the kinds of teacher behaviour that may reduce SA. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 students while a questionnaire was administered to 170 students. The strategy of exploratory content analysis was used to analyse qualitative data while SPSS was utilised to analyse quantitative data. Findings of our study reveal a number of teacher behaviour that could decrease students' SA namely, teachers' personal attributes, providing students with a comfortable classroom environment, considering students' opinions about the learning process, encouragement by the teachers, teachers' professional attributes, and teachers' attitudes towards mistakes. Implications are discussed and recommendations for future studies are offered.

Introduction

English language is viewed as an instrument of power, prestige, and a guarantor for bright future in Pakistan (Malik et al, 2020). Consequently, it is the intense desire of students and their parents to attain proficiency in this language

(Ahmad & Rao, 2013). They are, particularly, interested in the development of speaking skills. However, besides the existence of this instrumental motivation, a number of EFL university students are not proficient in speaking skills and moreover, they feel uncomfortable when speaking English in various situations (Malik et al., 2020). Following the utility of English in Pakistan, it is important to explore the factors that could promote students' speaking skills.

Numerous factors may interfere with students' oral skills. However, the findings of various studies suggest that SA has debilitating effects on language learning and production (e.g. Horwitz, 2017; Naudhani et al., 2018; Oteir & Al-Otaibi, 2019). On the other hand, almost all anxiety studies agree that most of the anxiety is associated with language teachers' behaviour towards their students (such as Gregersen, 2005; Horwitz, 2017; Malik et al., 2020; Marwan, 2016; Milan, 2019). Therefore, it seems imperative to explore the kinds of teacher behaviour that could alleviate students' speaking anxiety (SA) in order that students' English learning in general and spoken competency in particular may be developed. Thus, this is the aim of this study.

Ewald's (2007) participants reported that the majority of their anxiety sources revolved around the language teacher and they further stated that the instructor could play a key role in minimising their anxiety. In the same line, Piniel, & Csizérc's (2015) study found that teachers' negative and unkind demeanour was reported as a main cause of anxiety. Likewise, many other anxiety studies have established that much of SA is associated with teacher-student relations (e.g. Horwitz, 2017; Malik et al., 2020; Aydin, 2016; Horwitz, 2016, Horwitz, 2017). Teachers and students may have different perceptions about various classroom procedures (e.g. learning and teaching styles, seating arrangements, classroom activities) and any incompatibility between their views may invoke students' anxiety. Although the studies suggest that language teacher provokes anxiety, a review of literature reveals that a little attention has been paid to explore various aspects of teacher behaviour that could reduce students' SA. Some studies (e.g. Marwan, 2016; Aydin, 2016) have strongly suggested that future studies should specifically focus on kinds of teacher behaviour that could reduce students' anxiety. Therefore, this study aims to enhance our understanding about this topic by filling this research gap. Likewise, no study in the Pakistani context has specifically explored type of teacher behaviour that could alleviate anxiety. Since Pakistani classrooms are teacher-centred (Shamim, 2005; Ali, 2016), it seems imperative to investigate this topic in the Pakistani context to fill the gap regarding the understating of anxiety.

Literature Review

Perspectives towards Anxiety

There are primarily three perspectives towards the examination of anxiety in the field of language acquisition including state, trait, and situation-specific anxiety (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). MacIntyre (1999) views trait anxiety as a stable feature

of one's personality and it does not depend upon any specific event or situation. Thus, it could be called an in-built anxiety. This type of anxiety could prove fatal as people with this anxiety feel frequently nervous. On the other hand, state anxiety is not permanent and it is felt in a specific time and situation (Horwitz, 2010). Since this type of anxiety depends upon a particular event, its level may decrease or increase in time. These two approaches of anxiety appear to link language learning to a general anxiety (MacIntyre, 1999). In turn, these approaches could not provide a clear explanation that how anxiety and language learning specifically interact (Horwitz, 2017). Later on, it was believed that language learning anxiety is unique and it is distinguishable from trait and state anxiety. Horwitz et al., (1986), defined 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). This view of anxiety offered theoretical foundations to future anxiety research (Gregersen, 2015). It implies that foreign language anxiety (FLA) is a specific anxiety because of the dynamic features of foreign language acquisition and its use in the classroom. A number of anxiety studies have informed that situation specific anxiety perspective gives a deeper and better explanation of language anxiety, compared with other two perspectives of anxiety. Horwitz et al. (1986) designed a language anxiety measure called Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). This measure comprises three building blocks: test anxiety, communication apprehension (CA), and fear of negative evaluation (FNE). CA refers to anxiety that is experienced during or before interaction with people. Likewise, test anxiety is experienced in terms of evaluative situations such as speaking tasks or presentations. Finally, FNE refers to a fear about others' evaluations.

Foreign Language Anxiety Research

Horwitz (2013) reports that studies have been proposing since the 1970s that anxiety can affect the foreign language learning and speaking process. However, earlier anxiety studies provided confusing and inconclusive results (Malik et al; 2020) perhaps due to the absence of a reliable anxiety measure and of the existence of too many anxiety types. However, FLA was acknowledged as a separate affective variable influencing language learning in the 1980s (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). For instance, Krashen (1982; 2003) offered 'affective filter' hypothesis to highlight the effects of anxiety on language learning process. This hypothesis assumes that anxiety blocks the mind of a student and he/she cannot comprehend the input thoroughly. Numerous studies have been carried out on language anxiety in various contexts and studies unanimously conclude that FLA may seriously affect language learning (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009; Yan & Horwitz, 2008; Aydin, 2016; Malik et al., 2020; Milan, 2019; Naudhani et al., 2018; Oteir & Al-Otaibi, 2019; Toubot & Seng, 2018).

Methods to Reduce Anxiety

Since students' lack of confidence has been found as a source of anxiety, the most important technique to alleviate students' SA could be boosting their

confidence (Aydin, 2016; Malik et al., 2020; Ewald, 2007). This can be followed through providing students with useful language learning techniques (Oxford, 1999), allowing students time for preparation, encouraging feedback, and praising their performance (Toubot & Seng, 2018). Moreover, professional characteristics of language teachers have been reported useful in alleviating students' SA. For instance, Duff (2001) conducted a two-year observational study that aimed to explore the relationship between instructors' instructions and learners' anxiety levels. The findings revealed that students felt relaxed, comfortable and performed well in the teacher's class who explained everything thoroughly, had a thorough understanding of their subject, and showed interest in students' learning. On the contrary, students whose instructors did not have above mentioned qualities performed poorly. Students could feel comfortable when they feel that their teacher is concerned with their progress, listens to their academic issues, and pays attention to their questions and concerns. Likewise, some studies (e.g. Cheng, 2005 and Toubot & Seng, 2018) found that students feel comfortable in the class of a teacher who is trained, well qualified and conducts class effectively. In the same line, Huang et al.'s (2010) study investigated the association between students' anxiousness and teachers' help. The data revealed that students are less afraid of being evaluated negatively and of making mistakes, when they feel that their teachers supports them academically. The same results have been shared by other studies (e.g. Piniel & Csizér, 2015). In fact, teachers' academic facilitation may improve students' speaking competency and when competency bolsters, anxiety may reduce. In this reference, one implication is that teachers may be academically and professionally judicious enough to make their classes effective and in turn, relieve students' of SA and frustration.

Some anxiety studies have argued that teachers' personal help is more useful than their academic assistance in alleviating learners' SA (e.g. Naudhani et al., 2018; Wang, 2005). For instance, Phillips (1999:127) concludes that instructors' "concern and empathy for the negative affect students may experience" has a paramount importance in addressing their SA. Likewise, a diary study of Cohen & Norst (1989) reported that learners preferred instructors' personal characteristics to their professional qualifications. Moreover, Huang et al.'s (2010) study found that students feel encouraged, less anxious and more interested in their language studies when they know that their teacher supports them emotionally. On the other hand, Sadighi & Dastpak (2017) found that teacher's cold and unfriendly attitude invokes anxiety for students. Moreover, this study found that learners whose instructors were social, friendly, encouraging and warm felt comfortable and motivated. In the same vein, Zhang (2010) and Malik et al., (2020) note that a teacher who is understanding, shows concern, gives compliments, appreciates students' efforts, is humorous, patient and social can be vital in alleviating SA. In the words of Price (1991:107), a teacher may be "like a friend helping them [students] to learn and less like an authority figure making them perform".

Additionally, an open, warm, social and comfortable classroom environment has been reported useful in reducing SA. For instance, Gregersen (2005) reported that

language teachers can alleviate their students' SA by providing them with a sociable and comfortable classroom. Similarly, Tsui (1996), Milan (2019) and Marwan (2016) suggested for teachers that a comfortable and friendly classroom atmosphere discourages many sources of SA. In such an environment students take risks, make mistakes and experience new things in language learning without fear of negative evaluation (Dewaele & Thirtle, 2009; Oteir & Al-Otaibi, 2019). It implies that a sense of community in class may motivate students and in turn may promote their speaking. This type of environment can be created through building friendly relations among students and encouraging student-teacher interactions (MacIntyre and Gregersen, 2012). This atmosphere in classroom can discourage SA sources such as competitiveness (Wang, 2005), reduces fear of mistakes and of negative evaluation (Milan, 2019; Aydin, 2016), motivates learners to volunteer and could promote their interest. A number of other studies have also highlighted this point in terms of reducing anxiety (for example, Horwitz, 2017; Sadighi & Dastpak, 2017; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2004). It is noteworthy that it appears impractical to give each and every learner an easy-going and favourite classroom atmosphere.

Material and Methods

This study followed mixed methodology to collect the data. Data were gathered through a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. Dependence on just one research tool in this study could prove a poor strategy as it may not give a wider and thorough view of the complex phenomenon of SA. Keeping in view the previous literature and aims of this study, the interview protocol and questionnaire were designed for this research. Piloting procedures were completed before the conduction of the actual study.

Research Sites and Sample

Research sites for this study include five public sector universities of Pakistan. The data were gathered from one department from each university. The questionnaire sample comprised of 170 postgraduate non-English major Pakistani students. The ages of the participants ranged from 19 to 24 and between 30 to 40 students were recruited from each of the five universities. In depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 students. Four students from each university were recruited to represent all universities.

Procedures of Data Analysis and Data Collection

The research commenced with the administration of the questionnaire. Then, interviews were conducted. All of the required ethical considerations (such as participants' consent and willingness, confidentiality, anonymity...etc.) were taken into consideration when gathering the data. SPSS was followed to analyse the quantitative data to gain frequencies and percentages of learners' opinions about items of the measure. The data are given in a table in the analysis section below. The

qualitative data were analysed through exploratory content analysis. Both qualitative and quantitative findings were presented together in the analysis section.

Data Analysis

According to the participants, the following teacher behaviour could be useful in reducing their SA and promoting their speaking skills in class. The following table (1) offers the subjects' views about the statements in the questionnaire.

Table 1
Participants' views regarding the teacher behaviour that could alleviate their anxiety

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	The teacher explains material and oral tasks well.	18.2%	50%	10%	17.6%	4.1%
2	The teacher is friendly.	30.5%	48.8%	5.8%	12.3%	2.3%
3	The teacher encourages me to speak English.	18.2%	59.4%	3.5%	14.1%	4.7%
4	The teacher has a good knowledge of the subject.	13.5%	51.7%	7%	20.5%	7%
5	The teacher asks me about my learning preferences.	20.5%	50.5%	9.4%	14.7%	4.7%
6	The teacher believes that everyone makes mistakes when speaking English.	35.2%	45.8%	11.1%	6.4%	1.1%
7	The teacher makes me feel comfortable in class.	31.1%	47.6%	13.5%	5.8%	1.7%
8	The teacher compliments me to make me feel valued.	15.2%	52.3%	10.5%	16.4%	5.2%
9	The teacher corrects my mistakes in a gentle and supportive manner.	28.2%	51.1%	10%	8.8%	1.7%
10	The teacher allows students to work in groups or pairs.	15.8%	52.9%	8.2%	17.6%	5.2%
11	The teacher is relaxed and has a good sense of humour.	18.2%	62.9%	6.4%	10.5%	1.7%
12	The teacher has good speaking skills.	10%	52.9%	13.5%	18.8%	4.7%

Teachers' Personal Attributes

The data revealed a number of aspects of instructors' attitudes that may reduce students' SA and in turn, may motivate them to take interest in class. The participants unanimously favoured a friendly, social, frank, supportive, humorous and sympathetic teacher. Some interviewees stated that they would feel better if their teacher pays attention to their oral performance and to their self-esteem. Students believed that such features discourage fears such as FNE, and of making mistakes and consequently, they would feel more comfortable and active in the classroom. Item 2 in table 1 supports this qualitative finding as 79.3% of students favoured this item. Similarly, item 11 in table 1 was endorsed by 81.1% of students. In interviews, it seemed obvious that students favoured an instructor who was "supportive", "understanding", and "encouraging". For example, Imran stated that he would feel relaxed and motivated if his teacher academically supports him and "teaches strategies that promote oral English and grammar". Similarly, another interviewee, Kashif, clearly stated that he would enjoy the class of a teacher and perform more comfortably in oral activities if his teacher is "friendly and he/she does not make a big deal out of mistakes". It was also noted in interview that teacher's positive attitude towards his/her students and care for their self-esteem may relieve them of anxiety. This result is endorsed by item 8 in Table 1 where 67.5% of students agreed with this item.

Providing Students with a Comfortable Classroom Environment

According to the data, students feel encouraged and motivated and they try to increase their participation and have less fear of errors and of FNE when their teacher provides them with a positive, comfortable, relaxed and warm classroom climate. They assigned the key role to the teacher to develop such a climate in the classroom. For instance, Huma clearly stated that if a class is informal, fun-like, where learning occurs in a fresh environment, she would feel encouraged to perform actively. She further stated that provision of such an environment depends upon the teacher. Likewise, interviews indicated that sense of community in class may help to create such an environment. A number of advantages of open and social classroom were highlighted in interviews such as Adil stated, "friendly relations among each other will encourage us to learn from each other and study together". The data also suggested that allowing students to perform oral tasks in pairs or groups may reduce their anxiousness. Item 10 in table 1 supports this finding as 68.7% of students agreed with this item.

Considering Students' Opinions about the Learning Process

Another teacher behaviour highlighted by the participants that may reduce students' anxiety was allowing students to share their opinions about language class. The qualitative data suggested that students do not favour a classroom that is teacher-centred. Likewise, they suggested that their teacher should take their opinions, concerns, and views about classroom procedures into consideration. In turn, students would feel actively involved in their studies. This result is supported by the majority of students as 71% of students agreed with item 5 in table 1. In this

reference, Tahir's following comment shows that students may not like teachers' undue authority and dominance in the classroom, *"The teacher should not decide himself/herself but rather he/she should get our opinions about classroom activities"*. In the same vein, some students suggested that their teachers should ask them about their learning preferences.

Encouragement by the Teachers

The findings suggested that the teacher's encouragement can relieve students of SA and improve their oral skills. The interviewees stated that they would feel encouraged, motivated and they would double their efforts in class if their teacher appreciates their classroom performance and encourages them to go ahead. Item 3 in table 1 supports this finding as 77.6% of students supported this item. An interviewee, Javed, highlighted that he feels motivated when his teacher encourages his classroom performance, *"I feel anxious due to my poor performance but teacher's positive and encouraging comments relieve me of anxiety"*

Teachers' Professional Attributes

The findings revealed three professional characteristics of a teacher that could decrease students' SA and better their spoken English. Firstly, students highlighted that the teacher should be well qualified. They stated that they would be satisfied with their learning if they feel that their teacher is capable. This result is endorsed by item 4 in table 1, as 65.2% of students agreed with this statement. Correspondingly, item 12 in table 1 shows that 62.9% of students agreed with it. Some students believed that they would feel motivated and secure if their teacher has good oral skills, good pronunciation and accent, and is fluent in English. Javed said, *"I can only be fluent and competent in spoken English if my teacher has good speaking skills"*. Another professional quality of a teacher that could reduce students' anxiety was that he/she should assign simple and easy topics, should explain instructions and tasks in detail and clearly, and should teach in an easy and simply way. This outcome is supported by questionnaire item 1 in table 1 where 68.2% of students agreed with this item. The last professional feature suggested by the interviewees was that the instructor should reduce students' SA to make them feel comfortable in the class. Item 7 in table 1 confirms this finding as 78.7% of students agreed with this item.

Teachers' Attitudes towards Mistakes

The interviewees were unanimous in stating that they would feel comfortable and motivated if their instructor's attitude towards their errors is positive, gentle and encouraging. This result is endorsed by statement 6 in Table 1. 81% of students agreed that they would feel at ease if their teacher considers mistakes as a common practice. Noman reported that his fear of making errors will decrease if his teacher says that everyone makes mistakes. His statement reveals that teachers may discourage the belief that mistakes signify and failure, *"I think many students would*

not have fear of negative evaluation and of making mistakes if our teachers regards mistakes as normal thing in a language classroom". Likewise, almost all students agreed that they would be less afraid of making errors if their instructor's manner of error correction is gentle and kind. This result is supported by item 9 in table 1, where 79.3% of students agreed with this item. In this reference, Adil suggested that he knows that error correction is important to improve but the teacher should correct gently.

Discussion

The results suggested that students prefer teachers who are: social; sympathetic, friendly, humorous, who offer themselves as mentors and facilitators, who show concern with their learning and who treat students respectfully. The same findings have been reported by many studies (e.g. Naudhani et al., 2018; Oteir & Al-Otaibi, 2019; Tóth, 2010; Malik et al., 2020). For instance, Abu Rabia (2004:719) found that, "the higher the students' evaluation of their teachers as supportive, encouraging, and understanding, the lower the students' level of anxiety in FL learning situations". It may be argued that positive interaction between students and teachers may result in positive relations of students among each other. Moreover, since teacher is considered as a major source of students' SA (Horwitz, 2013), it is reasonable to say that friendly relationship of teacher with their students may relieve them of anxiety. In turn, students may increase their participation in the class, take risks and focus on their learning instead of thinking of anxiety aroused by their teacher. This approach of counselling may be specifically useful in the Pakistani context where there is a lack of teacher-student interaction (Shamim & Tribble, 2005). This strategy could connect the students and teachers and in turn, teachers may address students' concerns and issues better. One caution is that teacher's basic aim is to teach and he/she is not there for addressing students' pastoral issues. Nonetheless, having knowledge of students' concerns and issues may enable teachers to find solutions to ensure effective learning.

A warm, psychologically secure, friendly, social, supportive and relaxed classroom environment was found as helpful in reducing students' SA. In light of the data, such an environment can be created through the development of a sense of community in the class. This, in turn, may discourage serious contributors to anxiety such as FNE, competitiveness, and fear of making mistakes. This result is comparable to that reported by Frantzen & Magnan (2005), who found that their participants' frequently quoted strategy "for what made students comfortable was a sense of classroom community". The teacher can play a key role in developing social classroom environment. However, this environment cannot be truly maintained without the instructor's positive interaction with his/her students. It could be argued that one of the major attributes of an effective teacher could be to develop a cohesive interaction between himself/herself and the learners to maintain a social classroom climate.

Another anxiety reducing teacher behaviour was involving students in the classroom procedures. They believed that this behaviour makes them comfortable

and confident when speaking. This could be accomplished by allowing learners to give their opinions about for example: learning styles, teaching styles, speaking activities, and students' learning requirement. One justification in the Pakistani context for this finding could be that students' voices and views are ignored in the Pakistani classrooms (Inamullah et al.,2008). I think knowledge of students' views about classroom aspects may be helpful in selecting suitable teaching materials and arranging classes more effectively.

Moreover, this study found that if the teacher does not make a big deal out of students' mistakes and encourages them when they cannot perform well, students' SA could reduce and they may give more time to their studies to improve. These results agree with Price (1991), and Aydin (2016). This point can be better explained with the help of

Bandura's (1989) self-efficacy theory that highlights that those learners who are given a positive reinforcement may incessantly strive until they attain their objectives. Reinforcement plays a major role in human's life. It boosts confidence and strengthens one's trust in oneself. This trust and faith is a major requirement to achieve desired aims. Students may not take interest in oral activities if their teacher has a negative attitude towards their performance. On the other hand, teacher's encouragement could build students' confidence. This reinforcement could be given through verbal (e.g. saying well done and excellent) and non-verbal (e.g. giving certificates, extra marks, trophies, and assigning roles in the classroom) ways. On the one hand, this practice may motivate competent students to repeat their good performance more enthusiastically, and on the other, it may motivate other learners to follow this path.

The teacher's gentle method of error correction and positive attitude towards students' mistakes was found very helpful in relieving students of anxiety. This finding concurs with the findings of Yan & Horwitz (2008), MacIntyre & Gregersen (2012), Sadighi & Dastpak (2017) and Toubot & Seng (2018). Teacher's sympathetic and positive manner of error correction may motivate learners experiment with language without being worried about mistakes. In turn, their speaking could be improved. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that the instructor could regard mistakes as a normal practice. It is suggested that teachers should be equipped with the competency to correct learners' errors in a supportive way. However, it does not mean that gentle manner of error correction may just eliminate students' anxiety. For instance, Natural Approach (Krashen, 1982) that gives a little attention to error correction could not provide students with an anxiety-free classroom atmosphere.

Implications

- Perhaps, the most important suggestion is that language teachers may accept that speaking anxiety exists in the classrooms and it may have severe effects on students' oral performance. Therefore, they may try to take required steps to reduce students' SA.

- Secondly, teachers should boost student's confidence for instance, through encouragement, positive feedback, assigning easy and familiar topics, and empathising with them.
- Thirdly, teachers' effective communication with students for example, regarding their anxiety, learning styles, and language learning beliefs may facilitate anxious students.
- Another suggestion for teachers may be to provide students with an open, comfortable, psychologically secure and easy-going classroom environment. Such an environment discourages strong contributors to anxiety such as FNE and fear of errors and encourages more participation and risk-taking.
- Moreover, teachers' attributes for instance, patience, humour, and positive attitude can reduce students' SA. Likewise, teachers should build friendly relationship with their students. They should assure their students that their teachers are facilitators and not dictators.
- Furthermore, students experience SA when singled out to speak. In this reference, incorporation of group and pair-work and of activities that require little exposure to the whole class may reduce students' SA.
- Another implication for teachers is that they should be careful regarding the frequency and manner of error-correction. Over-correction may discourage students' participation. Teachers are suggested to make a list of frequently made mistakes and they can discuss them with their students later. However, the most useful suggestion is that the teacher should correct mistakes gently. Gregersen (2003:31) believes that "one crudely, insensitively corrected error" can irreparably harm anxious students' confidence and self-esteem. Young (1991) highlighted that 'modelling' can be helpful in correcting students' mistakes. Through this strategy, the teacher does not spotlight the student's mistake but rather he/she repeats the correct version of that mistake. Likewise, self and peer correction can also be helpful. Above all, students should be assured that mistake is not bad but rather it improves one's learning.
- Moreover, keeping in view the finding that students' voices are ignored, it is suggested that teachers should get students' opinions about for example learning styles, classroom procedures, teaching styles, and classroom activities. Consequently, students will be more motivated.
- Finally, initiatives such as online teacher student consultation and learner counselling centres in Pakistani higher education institutions may be useful. Similarly, since teachers consider them as an authority in Pakistan, some teachers may misuse their power. Therefore, concerned authorities in Pakistan may address the issue of teacher authority in the classroom.

Similarly, giving students a role in the classroom and listening to their views about teaching and learning process may bring positive results.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It seems obvious that the majority of implications mentioned above are intertwined and considering one may influence the others too. However, as already highlighted, the part of language instructor is central in alleviating or inducing anxiety. Horwitz (2010) strongly highlighted that the majority of causes of anxiety are associated with methodological and pedagogical practices, and it implies that instructors are often following something basically unnatural. Providing students with an anxiety-free environment is often more difficult in doing than saying. Language learning situation will naturally produce some levels of anxiety; thus, it seems difficult to make language teaching and learning totally anxiety free. Nonetheless, it is suggested that teachers could be as sympathetic towards anxious students as possible. Equally, students should also try to lean independently and find ways to counter their anxiety. It may be beneficial for students to acknowledge that some levels of anxiety are inherent in the process of language learning. Teachers are suggested to have friendly and positive relations with their students, develop a relaxed classroom environment, and incorporate activities which alleviate SA and encourage spoken English. This will, hopefully, lead to better oral skills. The replication of this study is suggested with a larger sample in different areas of Pakistan. A longitudinal study on this topic could provide us with a deeper view of this topic. Finally, keeping in view the nature of anxiety, future studies could utilise various qualitative data collection tools such as classroom observations, journals, dairies and focus group interviews.

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