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RESEARCH PAPER

Investigating English Language Speaking Anxiety and Writing Fear: A Case Study

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PAPER INFO	ABSTRACT
*Corresponding Author munazzah.6198 @wum.edu.pk	English language anxiety with the focus on speaking and writing fear has gained importance in the context of English language learning (Ewald, 2007; Liu & Jackson, 2008; Magogwe & Oliver, 2007). The present study aims to investigate classroom anxiety and its association with English writing fear and English-speaking fear in the context of The Women University, Multan (WUM). The participants of the current study were the students of WUM enrolled in different programs including pure science, social sciences and department of languages. The data were analyzed quantitatively by using SPSS and the results showed that classroom anxiety is positively correlated with English writing fear or English-speaking anxiety. Thus, the results demonstrated that both anxieties (speaking and writing) exist significantly in WUM students. Furthermore, English writing fear and speaking fear were also found to be significantly correlated with each other. Thus, the present study highlights that English teacher should take significant measures to reduce the level of anxiety among students. This study helps students to overcome their English writing or speaking fear in any context of language use.

Introduction

English language anxiety with the focus on speaking and writing fear has gained significant importance in the context of English language learning (Ewald, 2007; Liu & Jackson, 2008; Magogwe & Oliver, 2007). Furthermore, it has also been researched that both types of anxieties whether speaking or writing are interlinked with some particular language tasks such as listening, reading, speaking and writing (Nakatani, 2006; Sellers, 2000). As a result, when confronted with a specific language task, the anxiety language learners experience and the methods they employ might differ and also might be inter-linked as well, affecting their performance in the task.

However, the number of researches on the connection of such issues is not enough (Nakatani, 2010).

The present study aims to investigate classroom anxiety experienced by the students of The Women University, Multan, (WUM) enrolled in different programs. The students of WUM enrolled in different programs such as life sciences, social sciences and language and religion take functional courses in their first four semesters. Furthermore, the study also aims to determine that anxiety is correlated with English writing fear and English speaking anxiety. The hypotheses of the present study are:

1) Students generally experience anxiety in English classes.

2) Anxiety is positively correlated with speaking fear and writing anxiety.

The current study is significant because it highlights the role of anxiety in English language classes experienced by the students of The Women University, Multan. Furthermore, the study deals with the students of different disciplines of the university who are taking functional courses in English. After determining the role of anxiety in classroom environment, the teachers of WUM would be able to take some measures to reduce anxiety in classrooms settings.

Literature Review

In the second language literature, there were few studies that were focused on classroom anxiety and writing anxiety, and they have provided mixed and confusing results on the performance of learners in the context of second language writing (Hadaway, 1987; Masny & Foxall, 1992), on interest in taking more advanced L2 writing courses (Gungle & Taylor, 1989; Masny & Foxall, 1992), and on perceived L2 writing criteria in the students' majors (Gungle & Taylor, 1989).

Gardner (1985) and Horwitz et al. (1986) asserted that second language anxiety is a type of situation-specific anxiety. It has been usually adopted by studies using a scale especially designed to assess second language anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986; Phillips, 1992).

Cheng and Horwitz (1999) conducted a study regarding second language anxiety in context of Taiwan. They have investigated classroom anxiety particularly writing anxiety and speaking fear and whether this anxiety effects the performances of speaking and writing tasks in the classroom. The participants for this study were English majors who were at the same time taking classes for English writing and English speaking courses. A questionnaire was distributed among the participants to obtain their responses regarding classroom anxiety. The findings showed that second language classroom anxiety was a dominant form of anxiety in learning a second language (English).

Furthermore, the findings of many researches indicated that classroom anxiety is negatively affecting the performance of the students in the language tasks assigned (e.g., Aida, 1994; Cheng, 1994; Horwitz, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner,1991), although the clear-cut links between anxiety and language tasks achievement are under researched (MacIntyre, 1995; Sparks & Ganschow, 1995). The dominance of items related to speaking situations has led researchers like Aida (1994) to assume that language anxiety measurements such as the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) are in fact measures of anxiety related to situations that involved speaking in a second or foreign language.

Wörde (2003) conducted his study in order to determine the factors that can enhance anxiety or those factors that can reduce anxiety in learning a second or foreign language. This study adopted a mix method design approach (questionnaire and interviews) to collect the data. The findings of the study showed that students have extremely negative experiences in their language class. According to their perception, anxiety can lead to frustration and even anger.

Mahmoodzadeh (2012) conducted a study to explore speaking anxiety in English classroom in the context of Iran. The study focused on the connection between anxiety and component of interlanguage systems. Furthermore, the study aimed to highlight the difference between male and female participants in terms of FL anxiety. A questionnaire was administered among the students to gather the data. The findings showed that the participants of the study linked their speaking anxiety to the interlanguage meaning system.

Material and Methods

The research design for the present study is quantitative. The SPSS software has been used to analyze the results statistically.

Participants

The participants of the study were the students of Women University, Multan, and they were divided into 3 subgroups: the students of pure sciences departments, the students of social sciences departments, and the students of languages and religion departments. A self-reported questionnaire was designed and administered among the students and a proper time was given to them in order to fill it. The data were collected through simple random sampling. According to O'leary (2004, p.107), in simple random sampling, all elements have an equal chance of selection. It is considered fair and generalizations can be possible on the basis of it.

Instrument

The most well-known instrument for measuring Foreign Language (FL) classroom anxiety has been Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) during the last decades due to its high validity and reliability. However, according

to the requirements of the present study, some modifications were made in the FLCAS by Horwitz et. al., 1986. For the present study, a self reported questionnaire was developed mainly based on FLCAS due to its well-established validity and reliability. Some items of FLCAS were removed and some were modified in order to meet the needs of a current study. The designed questionnaire was based on 22 items. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first seven items deal with general anxiety experienced by the students in their English classes. Question#8 to Question#14 focus on writing anxiety of the students in English language and Question#15 to 22 deal with speaking anxiety of the students in the classrooms. Furthermore, the reliability of the scale was also tested by using SPSS.

Table 1
Reliability

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha Reliability	N
All Likert Scale Questions	0.932	22
Anxiety	0.818	7
Writing Fear	0.848	7
Speaking Fear	0.856	8

All likert Scale items were reliable because their Cronbach's Alpha Reliability is 0.932 that is greater than 0.85. Likewise, Class room Anxiety, Writing Fear, Speaking Fear are also reliable as their values are 0.818, 0.48, 0.848, 0.856 respectively.

Procedure

The necessary data for the present study were collected and a questionnaire was distributed among the students of WUM during the period of 1st May, 2020, to 15th June, 2020. Total 250 questionnaires were distributed among the students of the university and 150 students returned the questionnaire. In this way, the response rate remained 60%. The correlation and regression were applied on the collected data by using SPSS. Furthermore, the association was also tested between the items on the questionnaire by using chi-sq test.

Results and Discussion

The results of the statistical analysis are as follows:

Table 2
Correlation between Age, Speaking and Writing Fear with Anxiety

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	11.446	4.205		2.722	.007
	writing	.558	.084	.582	6.669	.000**
	speaking	.189	.075	.221	2.516	.013**
	age	-.369	.205	-.096	-1.802	.074*

**P<0.05, *P<0.10, R-sq = 0.591, Adjusted R-sq = 0.583, F (3, 146) = 70.30

The correlation was also found between age, classroom anxiety and English writing fear and speaking fear. The result showed that classroom anxiety significantly impacted English writing fear and English speaking fear as their values are 6.669, 2.516 respectively. However, negative value -.096 shows that as the age of participant increases, their anxiety decreases. The participants of the present study were mainly of 19 to 21 years old.

Table 3
Correlation between Writing Anxiety, Speaking Anxiety and Classroom Anxiety

	Anxiety	writing	speaking
Anxiety	1	.753**	.673**
Writing fear		1	.794**
Speaking fear			1

The statistical analysis showed that there is positive/significant correlation between classroom anxiety and speaking fear and writing fear. Anxiety is positively correlated with writing fear and its value is .753. Similarly, anxiety is positively linked with speaking fear as well and its value is .673. Furthermore, it is also found that writing anxiety and speaking fear are positively correlated with each other. And its value is .794.

Table 4
Comparison of Urban and Rural Respondents regarding Class Anxiety, Writing Fear and Speaking Fear

Study Variables	Area	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Df	p-values
Anxiety	Urban	120	19.5667	5.28631	-1.992	148	0.024*
	Rural	30	21.8667	6.97153			
Writing Fear	Urban	120	20.3083	5.90086	-0.512	148	0.304
	Rural	30	20.9333	6.28591			
Speaking Fear	Urban	120	24.9333	6.39818	1.201	148	0.116
	Rural	30	23.3000	7.66159			

*P<0.05

There is statistical difference as far as classroom anxiety is concerned between the residents of urban and rural areas. The students of rural areas were found to be more anxious in terms of classroom anxiety. However, the writing fear and speaking fear were same in the students of both areas.

Table 5
Comparison of Number of Courses with Anxiety, Writing Fear and Speaking Fear

Dependent Variable	(I) English Course	(J) English Course	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Writing	1	2	4.82963	2.87106	.217	-2.0031	11.6623
	1	4	3.67311*	1.33864	.020	.4874	6.8589
	2	4	-1.15652	2.73112	.906	-7.6562	5.3431
Speaking	1	2	8.15556*	3.09748	.026	.7840	15.5271
	1	4	4.97585*	1.44421	.002	1.5389	8.4128
	2	4	-3.17971	2.94650	.529	-10.1919	3.8325

*. The mean difference is significant at 0.05 level.

The statistical analysis shows that number of courses taught to the students is not making any difference to their classroom anxiety. However, there is an inverse relationship in terms of English writing fear and English-speaking fear. The anxiety or fear decreases as the number of courses increases.

Table 6
Association between Items on Scale

I feel anxious when I am attending English language classroom * I always feel that the other students speak English language better than I do. Cross tabulation

Count

		I always feel that the other students speak the English language better than I do.					Total
		SD	D	N	A	SA	
I feel anxious when I am attending English language classroom	SD	7	7	6	4	1	25
	D	2	14	15	13	0	44
	N	3	2	10	8	7	30
	A	0	6	9	20	5	40
	SA	1	1	3	5	1	11
Total		13	30	43	50	14	150

Chi-Square = 42.536, p-value = 0.000

The association between the items on the scale was also tested by using SPSS. For this purpose, chi-sq test was applied. The results showed that there is association between q1 and q17 on scale. For example, 14 respondents gave the same response 'disagree' to both the questions. Similarly, 20 respondents gave the same response 'agree' as well.

Table 7
Association between Items on Scale

I feel anxious when I am attending English language classroom * I am usually tensed while writing assignment for my English language course Cross tabulation

Count

	I am usually tensed while writing assignment for my English language	Total

		course					
		SD	D	N	A	SA	
	SD	10	10	1	4	0	25
I feel anxious when I am	D	4	29	1	10	0	44
attending English	N	1	11	8	7	3	30
language classroom	A	3	11	9	12	5	40
	SA	0	2	1	8	0	11
Total		18	63	20	41	8	150

Chi sq value = 62.9. p-value = 0.000

Similarly, the association was also found between item 1 and 8 on the scale. For example, 29 respondents gave 'disagree' response to both the items and 12 gave 'agree' response to both the items.

Table 8
Association between Items on Scale

I keep thinking that the other students are better at English language than I am * I get nervous and confused when I am giving presentation in my English class. Cross tabulation

Count

		I get nervous and confused when I am giving presentation in my English class.					Total
		SD	D	N	A	SA	
I keep thinking that the	SD	8	3	0	2	0	13
other students are better	D	1	22	8	10	2	43
at English language than	N	3	8	4	10	0	25
I am	A	2	11	5	21	7	46
	SA	1	3	3	10	6	23
Total		15	47	20	53	15	150

Chi sq value = 68.7. p-value = 0.00

Similarly, the association was also tested by using chi-sq test between item 4 and 19. For example, 22 respondents showed 'disagree' response to both the items and 21 showed 'agree' response to both.

Table 9
Association between Items on Scale

I am usually tensed while writing assignment for my English language course * I feel more tensed and nervous when I do some grammatical mistakes while speaking in my English class. Cross tabulation

Count

		I feel more tensed and nervous when I do some grammatical mistakes while speaking in my English class.					Total
		SD	D	N	A	SA	
I am usually tensed while	SD	5	6	5	2	0	18
writing assignment for my	D	2	19	11	27	4	63
English language course	N	0	2	5	8	5	20

A	1	7	6	23	4	41
SA	0	0	1	5	2	8
Total		8	34	28	65	15	150

Chi sq value = 43.2, p-value = 0.00

The association was also being tested between item 8 and 19 on the scale. For example, 19 respondents showed 'disagree' response and 23 showed 'agree' response to both the items.

Discussion

The present study aims to explore classroom anxiety and speaking and writing fear in particular. The study has been carried out in The Women University, Multan. The participants of the study were WUM students and they were randomly selected. The overall findings gave the answer of the two hypotheses described in introduction section. The statistical analysis showed that there is positive/significant correlation between classroom anxiety and speaking fear and writing fear experienced by the students in their English classes. Anxiety is positively correlated with writing fear or speaking anxiety; it has also been found that writing fear and speaking fear are positively correlated with each other. Furthermore, a comparison has also been drawn among the age of participants and their level of anxiety. The negative value -.096 shows that as the age of participant increases, their anxiety decreases. A comparison has also been drawn between the students of rural and urban areas: the students of rural areas were found to be more anxious in terms of classroom anxiety. However, the writing fear and speaking fear were same in the students of both areas.

Moreover, the association has also been tested by using chi-sq analysis. Different items on the scale which were logically connected were analyzed through this test and the responses of the participants have been given in table 4.5 to 4.8. The overall result showed that there is clear association between those items which were tested according to chi-sq. The association between the items on the scale not only reveals the reliability of scale, but it also develops the connection among classroom anxiety, English language writing anxiety and English speaking fear. Significantly, English writing anxiety is closely linked to speaking fear in English, this means that students of WUM are not proficient enough in these two productive skills i.e. writing and speaking.

It is suggested that the teachers of The Women University, Multan, should take some measures in order to reduce classroom anxiety in English classes. This will release the stress of the students regarding English classes in general and English writing and speaking skills in particular. Reduction in the anxiety will help learners to become proficient in these two productive skills.

Conclusion

The present research was a case study to measure the level of anxiety in the context of The Women University, Multan. The data had been collected through simple random sampling and it was analyzed quantitatively by using SPSS. The results gave the answer of the hypotheses and it was found that students experienced classroom anxiety in English classes. Furthermore, classroom anxiety is significantly linked with English writing fear or English speaking fear.

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