

## The Effects of Anxiety in Language Teaching

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### Abstract

Anxiety can be beneficial and detrimental, enabling or hindering, boosting or demotivating. Investigating anxiety is important since it affects how competent people are considered. The purpose of this study is to look at the causes of anxiousness. The study aims to determine whether language learners who experience language anxiety benefit or suffer. Additionally, it looks at how different educational systems affect students' perceptions of their ability to acquire a language. The results show that the subject felt anxious in the classroom, especially when she was expected to give an oral presentation. This was a result of her upbringing in a distinct linguistic environment and educational system. Although the subject felt nervous when speaking in front of the class, she was able to control it by carefully planning her presentation.

**Keywords:** Anxiety, Language Teaching

### Introduction

English has become a world language that must be mastered by everyone in order to keep up with the times. English is not only used as the medium of instruction in the business world but also in the world of education. To be proficient and mastering English is of course not an easy thing because students are required to master the four language components namely the Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing components. Of the four components, speaking ability is considered very important because it can be seen and applied as soon as someone speaks English. An important element affecting students studying a foreign or second language in the classroom is language anxiety. Anxiety has also been recognized as an important factor for understanding as a foundation of interpersonal behavior and psychological functioning (Greca & Lopez, 1998; Leary, 1983). Depending on how the language learner responds to it, it could have both positive and bad effects. Numerous studies on language anxiety have been undertaken from the perspectives of language specialists (Young, 1992) and teachers (Ohata, 2005), but the results were inconsistent and perplexing (Scovel, 1991).

Several research were done in the past to look into how language anxiety affected foreign language learners. Similar to Price (1991), who researched linguistic anxiety and spoke with several extremely worried students, the subjects of Price's study were perfectionist students, therefore the results were not particularly noteworthy. Additionally, the research was carried out in a nation with a history of a similar educational system. It is a given that the educational system affects students' classroom language anxiety. This educational system challenges students' presumptions that learning a language, particularly English, is stressful. This study will examine the effects of anxiety on a learner's performance as well as the causes of the anxiety. This paper will also examine how learners' perceptions of language acquisition are influenced by various educational systems.

### *Definition of Language Anxiety*

There are several ways to define language anxiety. Language anxiety is described as "a feeling of tension and trepidation uniquely linked with the context of a second language, including speaking, listening, and learning" by MacIntyre and Gardner (1994, p. 284). Communication anxiety is another name for language anxiety. Communication apprehension, according to Daly (1991), is "the fear or

nervousness an individual feels about vocally communicating". Other psychologists define anxiety as a state of apprehension or a generalized fear that is only tenuously tied to an item (Hilgard, Atkinson & Atkinson, 1971 as cited in Scovel, 1991). Two methods are used by Horwitz and Young (1991) to categorize language anxiety:

1. It is possible to consider language anxiety as a symptom of other, more widespread anxiety disorders (such as test anxiety)
2. It is also possible to perceive language anxiety as a unique type of worry that is a reaction to language learning.

These two strategies demonstrate how anxiety can cause communication anxiety. According to the first theory, communication anxiety and exam anxiety in language learning performances are both manifestations of language anxiety. According to Ohata (2005), this strategy is advantageous when defining language anxiety. This fear may manifest in a particular setting, such as a classroom. According to the second theory, language anxiety is a particular kind of anxiety. It causes anxiety for someone to learn a language. Language anxiety is described by MacIntyre (1999) as fear and unfavorable emotional reactions sparked by learning a second language. The worst thing that might happen to language learners is for them to experience stress. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1991) categorize anxiety into three types: communication anxiety, exam anxiety, and dread of receiving a bad grade. They contend that communication anxiety is a type of shyness that is followed by dread or worry when speaking. They also believed that communication anxiety and language anxiety are related, as noted in McCroskey (1977). This anxiety is frequently prevalent in language classrooms where students are less engaged in class activities, particularly oral presentations (Horwitz et al, 1991)

Exam evaluation is referred to as test anxiety in language learning. Test anxiety is defined by Gordon & Sarason (1955) and Sarason (1980) as a sort of performance that results from a fear of failure, according to Horwitz et al. (1991). According to Horwitz et al. (1991), students can place unrealistic expectations on their performance, particularly in oral test situations. It appears that students put a lot of pressure on themselves to do well on the test, yet as a result, they can perform poorly. Fear of receiving a bad review falls under the last category of anxiety. Fear of negative assessment, according to Watson & Friend (1969 as described in Horwitz et al., 1991), includes anxiety about other people's opinions, avoiding situations where people are being evaluated, and anticipating that people will adversely judge oneself.

It is generally acknowledged that language anxiety plays a significant part in language acquisition. Although it exists in language learning, teachers and students should be conscious of where it originates whether it be from the teacher, the student, or the learning environment. Young (1991) lists six factors that contribute to language anxiety: personal and interpersonal concerns, learner attitudes about language acquisition, instructor beliefs about language teaching, instructor-learner interactions, classroom procedures, and language testing. In order to address linguistic anxiety in the classroom, the teacher should be able to identify these factors.

It's still unclear how language anxiety affects language learners. While some studies (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991) suggest a connection between anxiety and proficiency in a second or foreign language, other research Young (1991) suggests there is no such connection. Although Scovel (1991) found conflicting and inconsistent results, it is thought that language anxiety affects language learning.

## Methods

In this study, the researcher review some literature including the journal related to the topic about The Effects of Anxiety in Language Teaching and including the Definition of language anxiety, factors contribute language anxiety in language teaching and the effect of language anxiety to language learning. The participant of this research was English Study Program Students of STKIP Insan Madani Airmolek. The first step was to interview the subject to determine whether or not they had anxiety. Numerous inquiries were made of the subject, and the session was taped. The 10 minute interview was broken up

into two sections. The initial portion of the interview, which lasted around 10 minutes, was divided into two parts. The interview's first section covered the background of the participants, while its second, more focused section focused on the students' experiences with anxiety. The person was questioned specifically about the following:

1. Can you describe your feelings regarding your English classes?
2. Did you feel the same level of anxiety in each of the four skill areas?
3. How did your anxiety show up in class?
4. Did your anxiety impact how you performed?
5. How did your teacher help you to feel less anxious in language classes?

There were the questions already given to the students that related to the topic of this research. And for the last step, the results of this research or the interviews were then analyzed by listening to and transcribing recorded interviews.

## Results and Discussion

### *Can you describe your feelings regarding your English classes?*

Students have no issues at all in class once they learn English. Students must be engaged, read widely, write in English, and learn vocabulary. However, when asked to present in front of their peers, pupils felt inadequate. This experience is consistent with certain linguists' theories. According to Ommagio Hadley, when asked to perform in front of another class, particularly in a group, kids often feel anxious.

### *Did you feel the same level of anxiety in each of the four skill areas?*

Students' degrees of anxiety and language proficiency varied. Speaking causes the student more anxiety than his writing and reading abilities. This is as a result of the student lack of prior experience giving teacher in front of large crowds. Oral performance is probably the most evident cause of nervousness, as many linguists point out. Concern over linguistic abilities might range in intensity. Based on the unique characteristics of each students, such as personality qualities, L2 proficiency level, or learning style. For instance, a timid student may find oral presentations stressful and prefer to study independently. On the other hand, engaged students find it intriguing and helpful when they are asked to speak in front of the class. Skills in listening have also been linked to anxiety. Understanding what is being heard has been hampered by anxiousness. This result is consistent with what the listeners reported experiencing. He clarified that listening to a natural English speaker speak was really challenging.

### *How did your anxiety show up in class?*

Regarding question number 3, the student wasn't sure if he was experiencing psychological or bodily symptoms. But he said that when he was anxious, he would halt for a second before continuing. Rardin observed that concerned students will convey their anxiety in a clear manner. The most noticeable examples are voice distortion, the capacity to mimic the rhythm and intonation of the target language, freezing when called upon to perform, forgetting the words of a recently learned sentence, or simply refusing to speak. Taking a brief break frequently happens when a student is restless or anxious before giving an oral performance. Disaffiliate behavior is what this behavior is known as. The students has noticed that he frequently avoids making eye contact with the audience when giving presentations in class. This can be the case because he experiences anxiety when speaking in front of the class as a whole. the teacher to perceive their pupils' sentiments of worry unless their fear is plainly displayed. This behavior can be identified by the teacher if students exhibit symptoms of anxiety such as messing with their hair, avoiding eye contact with the teacher, shaking, etc (Ohata, 2005).

### *Did your anxiety impact how you performed?*

We can see from the outcomes of the presentations the students gave that anxiety has an impact on their performance, particularly while speaking. Compared to other skills, speaking received a higher score

from him. Taking writing and reading as examples. Additionally, her teacher advised her to maintain eye contact and project confidence. There is evidence from numerous researches that there is a connection between anxiety and confidence in oneself. According to the study's findings, behavior might be influenced by one's own perception. It is evident that the student experiences are consistent with earlier studies as a result. Thus, it can be said that anxiety has a major impact on pupils' oral performance.

### ***How did your teacher help you to feel less anxious in language classes?***

When giving a presentation, the teacher advises students to write notes beforehand. When the student presented a presentation in front of the class, he became aware that he was anxious, but it did not bother him. On the other hand, he thinks that if he does everything in advance, including making notes and memorizing his speech, he would be able to deliver his presentation well. It is obvious that he will benefit from the teacher's corrections and recommendations to advance his language skills. The teacher needs to stop offering free corrections. In other words, the teacher shouldn't cut off a student's conversation. It is obvious that offering corrections is a good technique to help pupils develop their skills, but it must be done correctly. The rhetoric used by teachers must not be little kids. Among other things, you performed a good job. The presentation was fantastic. Continue honing your English.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the results of research that has been done, it is evident that language anxiety is a complicated phenomenon that is challenging to observe and evaluate. Although it has both positive and negative effects on a learner's language learning successes, it aids in the improvement of such achievements. Some pupils experience more fear when speaking than when utilizing other language abilities. However, this issue is not just related to a learner's conception of language acquisition. It is thought that a learner's uneasiness may be caused by the language of an educational system. When asked to speak in front of other pupils, a learner who has never performed in front of a group of peers will be at a disadvantage. In a classroom, a teacher is also crucial in lowering students' nervousness. The learner may be more engaged in any task the teacher assigns if there is teacher-student interaction. Finally, it can be said that language anxiety is not always linked to poor language learning performance; rather, it is caused by circumstances that affect the learner's behavior.

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