A STUDY OF ANXIETY OF ENGINEERING STUDENTS TOWARDS ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Abstract:
Education is the powerful tool which helps to modify the behaviour of the child according to the needs and expectancy of the society. Student's attitude is an integral part of learning and that it should, therefore become an essential component of second language learning pedagogy. Attitudes toward learning are believed to influence behaviours such as selecting and reading books, speaking in a foreign language etc. Especially in Education, if the students have positive attitude towards any subject, they can achieve many things in that specific area. There is an interaction between language learning and the environmental components in which the students were grown up. Both negative and positive attitudes have a strong impact on the success of language learning. There are many factors that might cause the students' low proficiency in English. One might be attributed to petroleum engineering students' motivation towards the English language. This is because learners' motivation has been widely accepted as a key factor which influences the rate and success of second/foreign language learning and "*motivation of the students is one of the most important factors influencing their success or failure in learning the language*". Another factor is learners' attitudes. This is because an ESL/EFL learner's motivation in language learning is affected by his/her attitudes towards learning the language.

Keywords: learning anxiety, engineering students, environmental components, students' motivation
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1. Anxiety during Second Language Learning

Anxiety in language is defined as the feelings of tension and apprehension during reading, speaking, learning, listening and writing English language. According to researchers, there is trait anxiety, state anxiety, situation-specific anxiety, and facilitating and test anxiety. Trait anxiety is a permanent predisposition to be anxious whereas state anxiety is related to some particular event or act. Situation-specific anxiety which refers to anxiety experience is a well-defined situation.

Speaking is an important skill to communicate with each other both in first and second language. Students of second language learner feel nervousness while speaking in classroom. Students are afraid of talking with each other in English because they are of the view that their peers would make joke of them. This reluctant becomes a severe problem for students in English language learning.

Students mostly deal with pronunciation, apprehension, grammar, fluency and vocabulary problems. Rural students have problem in both learning and speaking English.

Foreign language anxiety consists of "*self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process*". Foreign language learning process is a unique process, because learners are required to communicate using a language which they have not mastered perfectly.

Three components of foreign language anxiety have been identified:
a. communication apprehension,
b. fear of negative evaluation, and
c. test anxiety.

Students who exhibit communication apprehension do not feel comfortable communicating in the target language in front of others, due to their limited knowledge of the language, especially in relation to speaking and listening skills. Students who experience fear of negative evaluation do not consider language errors as a natural part of the learning process, but as a threat to their image, and a source for negative evaluations either from the teacher or their peers.

As a result, they are silent and withdrawn most of the time, and do not participate in language activities. Students who experience test anxiety consider the foreign language process, and especially oral production, as a test situation, rather than an opportunity for communication and skills improvement.

2.   Need for the Study

While foreign language speaking anxiety is a common phenomenon in the teaching of English as a foreign language, it seems that teachers do not always identify anxious students, and attribute their unwillingness to engage in speaking tasks to factors such as lack of motivation, or "*poor attitude*". An additional problem concerns the fact that although there is an abundance of theoretical articles on general language anxiety, there seems to be a relative paucity of empirical studies focusing specifically on the sources of foreign language speaking anxiety and providing practical recommendations and strategies to address it. Consequently, it was our intention to contribute to the literature on language anxiety by using a classroom-based case study in order to: a) examine the characteristics of anxious students and the sources of foreign language speaking anxiety, b) implement interventions to overcome it, and c) evaluate the effectiveness of these measures for reducing foreign language speaking anxiety in the English classroom.

Studies that examined anxiety and language learning may serve as a guide for language teachers in terms of helping them to increase their understanding of language learning from the perspective learners. Studies of this nature can also provide insights into how educators can develop appropriate interventions to decrease language anxiety among second/foreign language learners. In addition, by understanding the causes and effects of language anxiety and their relationship to language achievement strategies and interventions to boost the self-confidence of learners and lower their anxiety can prove beneficial to all stakeholders.

3.   Review of Related Literature

Mohammad Javad Riasati in his study "*Language Learning Anxiety from EFL Learners' Perspective*" demonstrated the causes of language learning anxiety from the learners' perspectives as well as the effects of anxiety. Implications of the study include what learners and teachers can do in order to reduce the debilitating effects of anxiety. This qualitative study is an attempt to investigate language learners' perspectives on language learning anxiety. Specifically, it seeks to figure out what factors make learners more anxious in the language learning environment. The data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with three individuals who have been learning English for several years.

Atef Al-Tamimi and Munir Shuib, (2009) in their study "*Motivation and Attitudes towards Learning English: A Study of Petroleum Engineering Undergraduates at Hadhramout*

University of Sciences and Technology" showed the students' positive orientation toward the English language. Interestingly enough, the results indicated that a high number of the students showed their interest in the culture of the English speaking. The study sample consisted of 81 petroleum engineering students at Hadhramout University of Sciences and Technology (HUST). A questionnaire and interviews were used for data collection. Personal reasons were also regarded as important motives by the students. However, regarding the integrative reasons**,** the results provided evidence that learning English as a part of the culture of its people had the least impact in students' English language motivation. On the other hand, data for the students' attitudes revealed that most of students had positive attitudes towards the social value and educational status of English.

Iakovos Tsiplakides,(2009) in his study "*Helping Students Overcome Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety in the English Classroom: Theoretical Issues and Practical Recommendations*" says that despite the fact that foreign language speaking anxiety is a common phenomenon in the teaching of English as a foreign language in Greece, teachers do not always identify anxious students, and often attribute their unwillingness to participate in speaking tasks to factors such as lack of motivation, or low performance. This article aims to contribute to the literature on language anxiety and to provide teachers with strategies for reducing foreign language speaking anxiety stemming from students' fear of negative evaluation from their peers and perception of low ability. Using qualitative research, it presents a classroom-based case study which aims at examining the characteristics of anxious students with a view to implementing classroom interventions to reduce foreign language speaking anxiety. The effectiveness of these interventions is also presented and evaluated, and the pedagogical implications of the findings are discussed.

Gajalakshmi, (2013) in her study, "*High school students' attitude towards English language learning*" revealed that there is a significant difference based on the gender, locality of the school, type of school, type of management. A standardized questionnaire was administered in the form of normative survey to 600 IX standard students (selected randomly from various high and higher secondary schools in Puducherry region) to collect their attitude towards learning English language. The collected data was statistically analyzed by SPSS ver-16. Hence, it was concluded that more classroom activities in the study of English enhance pupils' attitude to learn English.

Sadia Noreen, Mumtaz Ahmed and Asma Esmail, (2015) in their study "*Role of Students' Motivation, Attitude and Anxiety in Learning English at Intermediate Level in Pakistan: A Gender Based Study*" showed that the females have higher level of motivation

and attitude towards English language, while males have higher level of anxiety as compared to the females. The research is based on a close ended survey questionnaire on 5-point Likert scale, which describes about the ratio of students' attitude, motivation and classroom anxiety during English language learning process of grade 12 class students in a well-known college of Faisalabad, Pakistan. This research presents the affirmative views of equal number of 112 students both male (56) and female (56).

Terri Lee Nagahashi in his study "*Techniques for reducing language anxiety: Results of a successful intervention study*" stated that structured cooperative learning activities may be effective in reducing language anxiety by providing non-threatening, supportive environment in which to develop language skills. The purpose of this short term intervention study was to examine the effectiveness of cooperative learning techniques for reducing foreign language anxiety among freshman students enrolled in Akita University. A total of 38 students participated in this intervention study, all of whom are a subset of a larger cross-sectional baseline study that was conducted to assess levels and primary sources of language anxiety. Two survey instruments are used: The standardized foreign language classroom anxiety scale (FLCAS) (Harwitz, Harwitz and Cope, 1986) and a post intervention questionnaire.

4.   Statement of the problem

"*A study of anxiety towards English language of engineering students*"

5.   Objectives of the Study

1. To know the extent of language anxiety among the students of engineering.
2. To know the extent of language anxiety among male and female students of engineering.
3. To know the extent of language anxiety among Telugu medium and English medium students of engineering.

6.   Research Question

1. What is the extent of language anxiety among the students of engineering?
2. Does the extent of language anxiety among the students of engineering differ basing on their gender?
3. Does the extent of language anxiety among the students of engineering differ basing on their medium of instruction at the Intermediate level?

7. Sampling Technique

Convenience sampling technique was used to select the sample and size of the sample was 100. The sample consisted of engineering students.

8. Used Tools

The language anxiety scale was prepared and developed by Hemamalini H.C., University of Mysore. The questionnaire consisted of 18 statements. The students have to answer them as yes/no. 'Yes' carries 1 mark and 'No' carries 0 marks. The score ranged from 1 to 18.

9. Methodology

As survey method is one of the best methods to collect primary data from a large group, the author have chosen survey method for this purpose.

10. Data Analysis

S.No	Statement	Overall %	Male %	Female %	T.M %	E.M %
1	I am worried of not making any progress in English	43	47	42	57	38
2	I feel, I can't learn English grammar	56	60	51	64	52
3	I am worried that my pronunciation is not good	48	46	51	39	51
4	I fear I am not able to remember the particular word in English while speaking	53	56	49	57	51
5	I have fear of not speaking English fluently	55	55	56	57	54
6	I feel need to translate every word of English to my language to understand clearly	58	60	56	54	59
7	I fear I can't understand my teacher's explanation	54	53	56	69	50
8	I am anxious about my English marks	56	66	44	61	54
9	When a question is posed to me in English class, I will be upset	47	35	62	32	52
10	I feel I am not learning English quickly as others do	51	53	51	64	46
11	I feel nervous when I have to speak in English with my classmates	52	51	53	50	52
12	When my English teacher asks me to write	50	51	49	41	44

	something on blackboard I feel nervous that I may not write properly					
13	I feel nervous to go to school when I think of English class	52	73	53	50	54
14	I am always worried that I may not know correct spelling while writing English words	61	37	47	61	61
15	I feel nervous while reading English lesson in the classroom	54	51	58	39	59
16	I always have the fear of making mistakes in English classroom	67	71	62	61	69
17	I am worried that my handwriting is not good	50	46	56	39	54
18	My hands shiver while writing English test.	55	64	44	41	51

10. Discussion

10.1 I am worried of not making any progress in English

For the first statement, the overall percentage is 43. On the whole 43% of the sample of engineering students' has anxiety towards English language. Coming to the variable wise description, 47% of the males and 42% of the female sample expressed their anxiety. In comparison males exhibited higher level of anxiety than their counterparts. Fifty-seven percent of the Telugu medium students have more anxiety towards English when compared with their counterparts with 38%.

10.2 I feel, I can't learn English grammar

The overall percentage for the second statement is 56. On the whole 56% of the sample of engineering students has anxiety towards English language. The variable, males' 60% and 51% females showed anxiety towards English language. In comparison, males expressed higher level of anxiety than their counterparts. Sixty four percent of Telugu medium students have more anxiety towards English when compared with their counterparts with 52%.

10.3 I am worried that my pronunciation is not good

On the whole 48% of the sample engineering students exhibited anxiety towards English language. For the variable wise description, the males expressed 46% of anxiety towards English and females showed 51% of anxiety. For this statement, females expressed higher level of anxiety than their counterparts. Telugu medium students showed 39% of anxiety towards English and English medium students showed 51% of

anxiety. Hence, it is inferred from the above result that for this statement English medium students expressed more anxiety towards English than their counterparts.

10.4   I fear I am not able to remember the particular word in English while speaking

Fifty three percent of the whole sample of engineering students showed anxiety towards English language. Males showed 56% and females showed 49% of anxiety towards English. Here males showed higher level of anxiety towards English than female engineering students. Telugu medium students' expressed 57% and English medium students showed 51% of anxiety towards English language. From the above result Telugu medium students exhibit higher level of anxiety towards English with their counterparts.

10.5   I have fear of not speaking English fluently

On the whole 55% of the sample engineering students' showed anxiety towards English language for this statement. Fifty five percent of the males and 56% of female students expressed anxiety towards English. Almost the same percent of anxiety towards English was exhibited by both male and female engineering students. Fifty seven percent of Telugu medium students and 54% of English medium students showed anxiety towards English language. Here, Telugu medium students showed a slight higher level anxiety than their counterparts.

10.6   I feel need to translate every word of English to my language to understand clearly

The overall percentage of sample engineering students expressed 58% of anxiety towards English language. Coming to the variable description, males expressed 60% of anxiety and female engineering students exhibited 56% of anxiety towards English language. For this statement, males have shown more anxiety towards English than female students. Telugu medium students expressed 54% of anxiety and English medium students showed 59% of anxiety towards English language. From the above result, it is inferred that English medium students expressed a slightly higher level of anxiety with their counterparts.

10.7   I fear I can't understand my teacher's explanation.

The whole sample of engineering students showed 54% of anxiety towards English language. Coming to the variables, males showed 53% and females expressed 56% of anxiety towards English language. Here, male students have shown low percentage of

anxiety towards English than female students of engineering. Telugu medium students expressed 69% and English medium students exhibited 50% of anxiety towards English language. In comparison, Telugu medium students express more anxiety towards English than their counterparts.

10.8   I am anxious about my English marks

Fifty six percent of the whole sample of engineering students showed anxiety towards English language. Males showed 66% and females showed 44% of anxiety towards English. Here males showed higher level of anxiety towards English than female engineering students. Telugu medium students' expressed 61% and English medium students showed 54% of anxiety towards English language. From the above result Telugu medium students' exhibit higher level of anxiety towards English with their counterparts.

10.9   When a question is posed to me in English class, I will be upset

On the whole 47% of the sample engineering students' showed anxiety towards English language for this statement. Thirty five percent of the males and 62% of female students expressed anxiety towards English. Female engineering students expressed higher level of anxiety towards English language than male students. Thirty two percent of Telugu medium students and 52% of English medium students showed anxiety towards English language. Here, Telugu medium students showed a low level of anxiety with their counterparts.

10.10   I feel I am not learning English quickly as others do

The overall percentage of sample engineering students expressed 51% of anxiety towards English language. Coming to the variable description, males expressed 53% of anxiety and female engineering students exhibited 51% of anxiety towards English language. For this statement, males have shown more anxiety towards English than female students. Telugu medium students expressed 64% of anxiety and English medium students showed 46% of anxiety towards English language. From the above result, it is inferred that English medium students expressed a lower level of anxiety with their counterparts.

10.11   I feel nervous when I have to speak in English with my classmates

On the whole 52% of the sample engineering students' showed anxiety towards English language for this statement. Fifty one percent of the males and 53% of female students expressed anxiety towards English. Almost the same percent of anxiety towards English

was exhibited by both male and female engineering students. Fifty percent of Telugu medium students and 52% of English medium students showed anxiety towards English language. Here, Telugu medium students and English medium students have almost the same percent of anxiety towards English language.

10.12 When my English teacher asks me to write something on blackboard? I feel nervous that I may not write properly

On the whole 50% of the sample engineering students' showed anxiety towards English language for this statement. Fifty one percent of the males and 49% of female students expressed anxiety towards English. Male engineering students expressed higher level of anxiety towards English language than female students. Forty one percent of Telugu medium students and 44% of English medium students showed anxiety towards English language. Here, Telugu medium students showed a low level of anxiety with their counterparts.

10.13 I feel nervous to go to school when I think of English class

Fifty two percent of the whole sample of engineering students showed anxiety towards English language. Males showed 73% and females showed 53% of anxiety towards English. Here males showed higher level of anxiety towards English than female engineering students. Telugu medium students' expressed 50% and English medium students showed 54% of anxiety towards English language. From the above result Telugu medium students' exhibit lower level of anxiety towards English with their counterparts.

10.14 I am always worried that I may not know correct spelling while writing English words

The whole sample of engineering students showed 61% of anxiety towards English language. Coming to the variables, males showed 37% and females expressed 47% of anxiety towards English language. Here, male students have shown low percentage of anxiety towards English than female students of engineering. Telugu medium students expressed 61% and English medium students exhibited 61% of anxiety towards English language. From the above result, it is inferred that both the Telugu medium and English medium engineering students expressed equal level of anxiety towards English language for this statement.

10.15 I feel nervous while reading English lesson in the classroom.

For this statement, the overall percentage is 54. On the whole 54%of the sample of engineering students' has anxiety towards English language. Coming to the variable wise description, 51% of the males and 58% of the female sample expressed their anxiety. In comparison males exhibited lower level of anxiety than their counterparts. Thirty nine percent of the Telugu medium students have less anxiety towards English when compared with their counterparts with 59%.

10.16 I always have the fear of making mistakes in English classroom

On the whole 67% of the sample engineering students' showed anxiety towards English language for this statement. Seventy one percent of the males and 62% of female students expressed anxiety towards English. Male engineering students expressed higher level of anxiety towards English language than female students. Sixty one percent of Telugu medium students and 69% of English medium students showed anxiety towards English language. Here, Telugu medium students showed a low level of anxiety with their counterparts.

10.17 I am worried that my handwriting is not good

The whole sample of engineering students showed 50% of anxiety towards English language. Coming to the variables, males showed 46% and females expressed 56% of anxiety towards English language. Here, male students have shown low percentage of anxiety towards English than female students of engineering. Telugu medium students expressed 39% and English medium students exhibited 54% of anxiety towards English language. From the above result, it is inferred that the Telugu medium engineering students expressed very low level of anxiety towards English language with their counterparts who exhibit very high level of anxiety.

10.18 My hands shiver while writing English test

On the whole 55% of the sample engineering students' showed anxiety towards English language for this statement. Sixty four percent of the males and 44% of female students expressed anxiety towards English. Male engineering students expressed higher level of anxiety towards English language than female students. Forty one percent of Telugu medium students and 51% of English medium students showed anxiety towards English language. Here, Telugu medium students showed a low level of anxiety with their counterparts.

11.   Recommendations

1. Teachers can make a valuable contribution in developing a friendly relationship with their students, in order to develop a positive attitude towards learning English language,
2. Positive psychological classroom atmosphere needed for learning language, and the errors are considered as a natural part of the process of learning English language.
3. Teachers should motivate the students to learn better English, by highlighting its importance as they need English for getting employment purpose in future.
4. Educators and parents should always encourage learners to read materials written in English like newspapers and magazines.
5. Educators who qualify to teach English must have received a relevant training and qualification in English. If the above condition is taken care of learners would receive proper knowledge which would help them to develop confidence and they will be competent in the world.

12.   Conclusion

The present study was an attempt to obtain a picture of language learners' experience of language learning anxiety and to identify factors that cause such anxiety. It is hoped that the findings of the study can shed light into the complex issue of anxiety in learning, make educators aware of the existence of the anxiety in learners, and hence take steps to identify and obliterate the sources of anxiety. It goes without saying that only in a relaxed, stress-free environment, can learners show their full capabilities and learn the material effectively and successfully.

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