



An analysis of relationship between English Language Anxiety, English language interest and English language achievement

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ABSTRACT

English language anxiety and interest are considered as two important affective variables which are highly correlated to foreign language learning. The aim of this study was to explore the relationship between the English language anxiety, English language interest and English language achievement. The sample size comprised of 97 undergraduate students of BS Computer Sciences, Telecom engineering and Computer engineering program. The Pearson correlation analysis and multiple regressions are used to analyze the data. The results revealed that English language anxiety has significant negative correlation with English language interest and English language achievement. It is also found that English language interest and English language achievement has significant positive correlation. It has been observed that mostly males have less English language anxiety and more English language interest as compared to females. The rate of anxiety in females has significant negative relationship with achievement. The study reveals that the performance of the students of in English language is influenced by the English language anxiety.

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Introduction

It is irrefutable that English plays a very important role as a global language. It is considered in majority of the countries including Pakistan that English proficiency is like an Aladdin's lamp as it can be a source of material prosperity by confirming access to education, international business, science and technology (Kachru, 1990; Hamid, 2009). English language learning has always been a problematic area for Pakistani students as they get exposure to this language only in class room. English is taught as a compulsory subject until bachelor level; however, it appears a monster to majority of the students who try their best either to avoid classes or find some short cut to success. Language anxiety negatively affects students' achievement which indicates that language anxiety has "debilitating effect" on learners' achievements /scores. (Awan, Azhar, Anwar and Naz ,2010, Woodrow:2006). Anxiety has been recognized as an important factor that influences the process of learning English language (Mirjam & Stella, 2005). The above mentioned scenario is distressing; however, it has not received due attention from the researchers. Foreign language class room anxiety is still considered to be relatively new and developing area within foreign language research (Piniel, 2006). In Pakistan, there are a limited number of researches investigating the relationship between English language anxiety and achievement at undergraduate level. Consequently, this very reason provides solid ground to the researchers to investigate this aspect of English language classes.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the relationship between levels of English language anxiety, English language interest and English language achievements among the students of Bachelor of Computer Sciences, Telecom engineering and Computer engineering at COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, Wah Cantt. Campus.

2. To examine the effects of gender on students levels of English language anxiety, English language interest and English language achievements.

Literature Review

English language anxiety is the result of low self-respect and the fear of failure, which is the root cause behind the problems of conveying the incoming knowledge along with the formerly learned information. Such students avoid English language whenever and wherever possible.

Anxiety has been defined by Abu-Rabia as feelings of "fear, panic and worry" (2004:711). Research studies on anxiety are conducted through three perspectives.

1. Trait anxiety, which is characteristic of personality (Woodrow: 2006). In this type of anxiety, a person feels apprehensions and gets threatened even in non-threatening environment. It is like a permanent part of personality.
2. State anxiety which is the fear felt at a specific moment in some specific situation (Awan et al., 2010). This type of anxiety is provoked in the confrontation of supposed threat. It is temporary and gets changed with time.
3. Situational anxiety which is anxiety felt in a definite situation. MacIntyre (1999). The respondents attach this type of anxiety with a specific source.

Zheng (2008) mentions in this regard that there is no clear difference between these three categories; however, "the differences can roughly be identified on a continuum from stability to transience" (p.2)

According to Abu-Rabia (2004), the main symbol of anxiety which the foreign language learners face are that they appear bothered, bodily uncertain, and fail to occupy in situational learning (p.712). Language anxiety is one of the most important factors which influence language learning process; it is also a central factor which is observed as contributing towards learning process and learner achievement (Hurd, 2007, p.488)

Williams and Andrade (2008) describes the language learning process of class room environment in three stages as input, processing (mental planning) and output. Input and processing stages are related to confusions and thinking process of the learners during the response when they are called for participation in the class room situation while output stage is related to the actual response of the learners. The researchers have pointed out effects of language anxiety on each of these stages as well. Bailey, Onwuegbuzie and Daley (2000, 1999) have also investigated the effect of induced anxiety during these stages.

Horwitz (2001) opines that issues of cultural differences should be kept in mind while considering the issue of language anxiety and class room practice. Some practices which might be perceived comfortable by one group can be source of discomfort and stress for the others. Horwitz also claims that classroom environment, teacher support, task positioning and focus of teaching are the important factors which influence students' level of anxiety. Cultural impacts such as stereotyping of teachers, students and class room interaction can vary from culture to culture.

Aydin (2008) also asserts that language anxiety is a significant factor which adversely affects the language learning process. Fear of evaluation has been found the major source of anxiety. Based upon his research, the researcher recommends providing less stressful environment to the learners. He is of the view that effective communication can be a solution to relieve language anxiety.

Many of the researchers agree that foreign language anxiety negatively affects students' attitudes and their achievement in language learning process (Awan et al.:2010). Zheng (2008) asserts that language learning experience could be traumatic experience and can adversely affect learners' self-esteem or self-confidence

Piappamihiel (2002) observes English language anxiety in ESL and mainstream classrooms. He observed the relationship of anxiety with academic achievement. His results showed several related but different types of English language anxiety and a significant gender difference. The relationship between English language anxiety and achievement has been found significantly negative. The different types of anxiety seem to be dependent upon the situation of interaction, for example, horror of negative assessment, exam anxiety, communication apprehension and identity issues affect the self- efficacy. Girls in mainstream class were found to be suffering from anxiety more than boys. However, it has also been observed that students adopt a number of strategies to reduce anxiety. To elaborate themselves, they enlist friends to act as intermediaries, responding in Spanish and use writing to convey their thoughts. This research is like a food of thought for teachers to work upon various strategies to reduce anxiety of students so that their achievements might be improved.

Chan and Wu (2004) emphasize that along with task difficulty, factors such as teachers' attitude, assessment, students-teacher collaborations in class, parents' expectations, classfellows' attitudes and students' personal achievements are crucial causes of students' foreign language anxiety (p.290). Woodrow (2006) also found classmates' attitude and teachers' role as important in language learning environment. Apart from these factors, anxiety is also related to stress in class (Liu, 2006) motivation (Li and Pan, 2009), emotional intelligence (Awan, Sabir & Iqbal, 2009) ,learning difficulties (Reed & Stansfield, 2004) fear of negative evaluation (Piappamihiel, 2002;Aydin,2008) and skill deficit (Woodrow,2006). However,

anxiety reducing strategies like 'relaxation technique' 'de-sensitization' (Woodrow, 2006) and effective communication (Aydin,2008) can be helpful in overcoming the problems of language learning process.

Research Methodology

Following research design would be followed in this study:

Hypothesis Development

The hypotheses of this study are as follows:

1. There is a significant relationship between English language anxiety, English language interest and English language achievement.
2. There is a significant difference between male and female students in English language anxiety, English language interest and English language achievement.
3. There is a significant negative relationship between English language anxiety and English language achievement.
4. There is a significant positive relationship between English language interest and English language interest.

Econometric Model

English anxiety and English interest determine student class achievement.

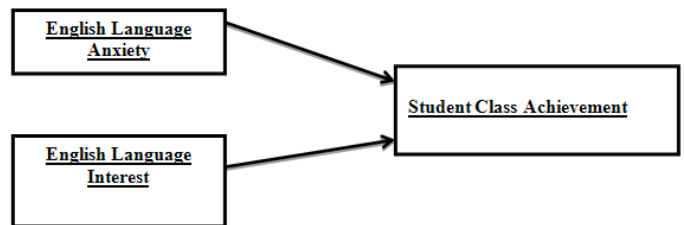
$$SCA = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 (EA) + \alpha_2 (EI) + \alpha_3 (D_1) + \alpha_4 \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

The Independent variables English language anxiety and English language interest will determine student's class achievement.

Abbreviations

- EA = English Anxiety
- EI = English Interest
- D₁ = Dummy Variable Gender
- SA= Student Achievement

Research Model



Instrument Development

The instruments used in this study are as follows:

English language Anxiety: This questionnaire was developed by Tapia and Marsh 2004. This questionnaire was used with modification for this study. It contained 10 items by using a Likert scale with a range of strongly disagrees to strongly agree. A total score is calculated by assigning a value of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to each item and then adding the values. The possible range of score is 10 to 50. It is important to know that a high score on English language anxiety indicates a high level of English language anxiety and vice versa.

English Language Interest: This questionnaire was developed by Tapia and Marsh 2004. This questionnaire was used with modification for this study. It contained 10 items by using a Likert scale with a range of strongly disagrees to strongly agree. A total score is calculated by assigning a value of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to each item and then adding the values. The possible range of score is 10 to 50. It is important to know that a high score on English language interest indicates a high level of English language interest and vice versa.

English Language Achievement: This questionnaire was for teacher as it checked the observation of teacher. It contained three items that is participation of students in class, teacher's

opinion about students and marks of students from terminal examination in the university. All the data was analyzed through SPSS software.

Population

Students of second and third semester of COMSATS Institute of Information Technology Wah Cantt. a reincluded in the population. These students belong to various cities of Pakistan.

Sample Size

One of the forms of non-probability sampling technique "simple random Sampling" is used. The estimated population of study is 500 students of Bachelor of Computer Sciences, Telecom engineering and Computer engineering ranging from second and third semester at Wah Cantt., Pakistan. Sample that has been selected from the population is 97students. We can say that sample size is representative as sample size is almost 20% of the whole population. The sample includes both male and female students. These students belong to various cities of Pakistan.

Results And Discussion

According to the hypothesis of the study, the analysis of the data was divided into two parts. At first the relationship between three variables, English language anxiety, and English language interest and English language achievements was evaluated and in the second, the gender difference between these three variables was analyzed.

Reliability coefficient which is in the range of 0.70 is considered acceptable. Reliability coefficients that are over 0.80 and 0.90 are good and very good; all of the study variables English anxiety, English interest and student achievement lay in these regions. The reliability tests of our constructs happened to be in the acceptable to good and very good ranges.

Variables	Cronbach Alpha (α)
English Anxiety	0.894
English Interest	0.869
Student Achievement	0.869
Total Scale Reliability	0.814

Value of mean reveals that most of the respondents of the data were male. Values of mean and standard deviation reveals that most of the students have English interest and student's achievements are good.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	S.D
G	97	0	1	1.54	0.34
English Anxiety	97	1.52	4.75	3.23	0.42
English Interest	97	1.97	4.87	3.86	0.44
Student Achievement	97	1.37	4.79	3.51	0.36

The correlation coefficient between English language anxiety and English language interest is (- 0.349, $p = 0.000$), the correlation coefficient between English language anxiety and English language achievement is (- 0.250, $p = 0.013$) and the correlation coefficient between English language interest and English language achievement is (0.137, $p = 0.018$).

Values of Pearson correlation show that all the variables have significant relationship with each other. English anxiety and student achievements have a significantly negative relationship with each other. Horwits (2001) is also of the view that anxiety is not only instinctive to many people but it also affects negatively the language learning process. Relationship of English interest and English anxiety is significantly negative

with each other while relationship of English interest and student achievement is significantly positive.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Matrix

	EA	EI	S.A
EA	1.00	-0.349**	-0.250**
EI		1.00	0.137**
S.A			1.00

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Results of table # 4 show that English language anxiety has a negative impact on student's achievement and is significantly influenced by it; while English language interest has a significantly positive impact on student's achievement. Durbin Watson statistics shows that there is no autocorrelation in the data. Result shows that both English language interest and English language anxiety have 45.4% impact on student's achievement. F-statistics shows that overall model is statistically significant.

According to second hypothesis of the study, the results revealed that there is significant gender difference on the scores of English language anxiety along with a significant gender difference on the scores of English language interest and English language achievement. The results are in accordance with Piappamihiel (2002). Results of table # 4 show that mostly males have less English language anxiety and more English language interest as compared to females who appear to have more English language anxiety and less English language interest.

Intercept	3.327
p- value	0.000
R	0.475
R ²	0.461
R ² _{adj}	0.454
F	137.874
Sig	0.000
EA	-0.245
p- value	0.023
EI	0.472
p- value	0.001
D ₁	0.247
p- value	0.000
DW	2.147
Dependent Variable: S.A	
Predictors: EA, EI, D ₁	

Conclusion And Recommendations

The objective of the study was to evaluate the relationship between the English language anxiety, English language interest and English language achievement. The results showed that there is a statistically significant negative correlation between English language anxiety and English language achievement as has also been ascertained by Vahid and Kashani (2011) and Awan et al. (2010). There is also a statistically significant negative correlation between English language anxiety and English language interest. A statistically significant positive correlation between English language interest and English language achievement has also been observed. Students with higher level of interest tend to be more successful in learning process as interest fuels the desire of learning by affecting conscious and subconscious decision of doing effort for better

results. The results indicate that chances of success can increase with the increased interest. Students with high level of interest take learning as enjoyment not as burden; however, the case is different with the students who do not show interest as they get more and more anxious and frustrated in English language classes. This implies that the students who have a high level of English language anxiety performed poorly in English language achievement and vice versa as has been authenticated by Shabani (2012). One major reason behind higher rate of anxiety in English language classes is that it is not the native language of students.

It is also observed that there is significant gender difference on the scores of English language anxiety as females have been observed more anxious than males. A significant gender difference on the scores of English language interest and English language achievement indicates that females have higher rate of anxiety which leads towards lesser rate of English language interest and English language achievement. One prominent reason behind higher anxiety level among girls can be sociocultural background where females get less exposure in society as compared to male. Khurshid, Gillani and Hashmi (2010) also mention in this regard that in developing countries like Pakistan, women are treated as inferior being as compared to men. This can be one reason behind lack of confidence among females. Their potentials are discouraged due to limited scope which they receive in educational and professional world. In the light of the above mentioned results, it is concluded that English language anxiety serves as a negative determiner which influences the performance of the students in English language.

Limitations and Recommendations for the Future Research

Some limitations which have been faced during the process of this research are highlighted in this segment as these could be the facts that should be considered in future research in the same area of interest. The first limitation is related to selection of the universities as we included only one university. Many universities can also be included in this study which can enhance the reliability level. The second limitation is about the selection of the sample we used simple random sampling; so, other sampling methods could also be utilized. The next limitation related to the data gathering technique as other triangular methods of data collection could also be used including personal interview and group administered interviews for more in depth study. The busy schedule and a bit non serious attitude of the students also limited their participation in this study to some extent despite all the follow up efforts that were done to enhance response rate and non- response bias. Another limitation is that major causes of anxiety have not been investigated which is a solid ground of researchers for future research.

Based upon the present research, we recommend that to reduce English language anxiety and develop English language interest, teachers should use special kinds of techniques and strategies in their teaching learning process to develop a friendly classroom environment so that students must participate efficiently and effectively. A competent teacher at university level can put some extra effort by developing a course outline with interesting activities which may enhance the interest of students and lessen the fear of English language. As far as higher rate of anxiety among females is concerned, it is suggested that they should be encouraged and provided counseling regarding developing a confident personality which is ultimate requirement of both male and female. The results indicate they are more anxious in class room which is indicative of their uncomfortable situation in class. The present study can

serve as a guide for students and language teachers in terms of helping them understand the negative role of anxiety in language learning process.

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