

LANGUAGE ANXIETY AMONG ESL COLLEGE STUDENTS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

This study on anxiety was undertaken among 203 students who were largely from a rural Tamil speaking setting in South India. Most of them were first generation college goers. The purpose was to investigate the anxiety experienced among the students learning all subjects in English for the first time in their lives. Horwitz's FLCA (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety) Scale was adapted to assess the levels of four types of anxiety, namely, communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, anxiety of the classroom and test anxiety. The findings revealed that the participants had a high level of all the four types of anxiety, with a combined mean of 3.31. The research has significant implications for the teaching and learning of ESL in this part of the world.

Keywords: language anxiety, ESL, rural India, college students

Introduction

Anxiety is a complex and multi-faceted construct often associated with language learning. Studies have been done on the effects of anxiety on second language learning as early as the 1970s. Language anxiety has been conceptualized 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” Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986, p. 128). While anxiety has often been researched in the west (e.g., Bailey et al., 2000; Horwitz et al., 1986; McIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Phillips, 1992), not much has been conducted among the students in rural South India. It is often assumed that since English is one of the national languages in India along with Hindi, learning it as a subject in schools and colleges would not be problematic. However, Indian learners do have anxiety when learning and using the English Language. Many learners express their lack of ability and sometimes even acknowledge their failure in learning to speak another language. These learners may be excellent at learning other skills but they claim to have a “mental block” against learning a foreign language (Horwitz et al., 1986, p.125).

This research was conducted among college students in rural South India who were observed to experience anxiety learning all subjects in English. The prevailing states of anxiety during the first year of study of the respondents were examined by asking the question: What are the levels of language anxiety in the areas of communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety and anxiety in the classroom for ESL learners in speaking and learning English?

Background of the study

During the colonial era in India, English was a language of prestige for the upper class while the middle class reserved it for official purposes or for those social occasions where they wished to leave an impression. The lower class thought the use of English was beyond their reach as spoken English was never emphasized in government schools. While the general impression is that India has many fluent English speakers, "only 5 percent of her population merits that description" (Lakshmi, 2008, para 5). The emergence of English as a global language has transformed and elevated the status of English in the Indian classroom environment (Gupta, 2005).

The present liberalization of the Indian economy has ushered in all kinds of reasons to learn the language. In the past, students who specialized in English either joined the teaching or civil service, but now a whole new spectrum of job opportunities has opened up. A boost in the development of call centres in various parts of India has given rise to a definite need to equip the workforce with communication skills. The continued rise in multinational companies has increased the recruitment of marketing staff with proficiency in spoken English. Moreover, migration to the west to seek higher education has become a trend, which definitely calls for fluency in English.

In her article for the Washington Post, Lakshmi (2008) quoted Uma Shanker, the Director for Uma's English Academy in Bhopal who said, "You are often judged differently as soon as you speak English in India. My students' inability to speak in English dwarfs their self-confidence... Everyone has a dream now in India, and English is central to that dream" (para 11). Uma's English Academy is a popular English language centre which prepares students going abroad for studies in English speaking countries. Local hopefuls seeking employment in high-tech or multinational firms in India also enrol here to improve their English proficiency. Now with globalization and development in Science and Technology, every parent wants his/her child to learn English. This pressure from parents and school teachers often results in students' anxiety. As observed by linguist Rukmini Nair, "English is increasingly becoming a source of anxiety, even despair, for those attempting to cross the boundaries..." (cited in Puri, 2008, para 4).

Further, the teaching situation of English in India is challenging given the teaching proficiency (TP) and the exposure of the students to English in and outside of school, greatly linked to the availability of English in the environment of language acquisition (EE). Kurrien (2005) identifies four types of schools as given below:

Table 1: Four types of schools in India

TP	EE	Example of Schools
↑↑	↑↑	English medium private/government aided elite schools
↑	↑	New English-medium private schools
↓	↓	Government-aided regional-medium schools
↓↓	↓↓	Government regional-medium schools run by district and municipal educational authorities

- ↑↑ - teachers are proficient, varying degrees of English in the environment.
- ↑ - teachers with limited proficiency, children with little or no background in English, parents aspire upward mobility through English.
- ↓ - schools with a tradition of English education along with regional languages, established by educational societies with children from varied backgrounds.
- ↓↓ - enrol largest number of elementary school children in rural India, choice of urban poor. Teacher's least proficient in English.

The participants in the present research came from the fourth category of schools in which the enrolments were high, and the location rural and teachers were least proficient in English. Given this type of English education background, the participants could be overwhelmed by the expectations on their English language skills at college level. Details of participants are found in a later section.

Theoretical perspectives

Language anxiety can be discussed from the cognitive and psychological perspectives. These two perspectives are interrelated. They have an effect on the teaching and learning of a language and concern what happens in the minds of the learners. As the literature shows, when anxiety affects cognition, performance suffers resulting in negative outcomes which in turn affect the psychological state of the learners.

Cognitive perspective

Language anxiety may occur in the cognitive processes of the students as they learn and use a second language. Eysenck (1979) states that anxiety may cause cognitive interference when an anxious student's attention is split between task-related cognition and self-related cognition, making performance less efficient. The reason for this is that task-irrelevant information involved in worry and cognitive self-concern competes with task-relevant information for space in the processing system. Eysenck (1979) postulates that if anxious students are aware of it, they can attempt to compensate this interference by increased effort. MacIntyre (1995) says "those who do not experience anxiety will be able to process the information more quickly, more effectively, or both compared to those who are distracted by task-irrelevant cognition" (p. 92).

Following this line of reasoning MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) investigated the interaction between anxiety and cognitive processes. They conceptualized that interaction occurs at all the three stages of cognition, namely, *input*, *processing* and *output*. At the input stage, concentration, attention and encoding are essential. However anxiety can inhibit these processes by acting as a filter thus preventing the information from entering the next stage which is responsible for processing input. During the next stage of processing, the cognitive operations such as the organizing, storage and assimilation of information are important. Anxiety at this stage could distract the learner from adequately processing the information which in turn could influence the accuracy and speed of language learning. During the final stage of output the learners demonstrate what they have learnt. However anxiety at this stage would affect the retrieval of information learnt, influencing the quality of output.

Psychological perspective

Horwitz et al. (1986) conceptualized language anxiety as a psychological construct particular to language learning. Spielberger and Sydeman (1994) characterized it as an emotional state which "consists of unpleasant, consciously perceived feelings of tension, apprehension, nervousness and with worry associated activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (p. 294). Learning English language especially in classroom situations is "particularly stressful" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 125). Psychological stress should be considered as part of the emotions, for example, anger, fright, anxiety, shame, envy and jealousy (Lazarus, 1991; as cited in Lazarus, 1993). When anxiety is viewed from the psychological perspective, it can be reduced by affective strategies. Ehrman and Oxford (1989) say that the use of affective strategies in language learning which relate with the learner's own feelings and attitudes helps in overcoming fear, frustration and anxiety. Affective strategies like deep-breathing, relaxation, positive self-talk, use of humour, risk-taking and self-

rewards have been found to reduce anxiety levels (e.g. Mohd Sahandri Gani, Katrin Shamshiri & Noreen Nordin, 2009; Rossiter, 2003).

Review of related literature

Language anxiety has been a frequent topic of research. EFL and ESL learners' anxiety grows with the awareness that they are unable to resort to normal means of communication in L1 (first language) within and outside the classroom situation. The linguistic disparity between the true-self and limited-self experienced by the learners differentiates their language anxiety from other academic anxieties (Horwitz et al., 1986). Anxiety is often associated with negative outcomes which could be physical, psychological or social. According to Andrade and Williams (2009) physical symptoms include rapid heartbeat, muscle tension, dry mouth and excessive perspiration. Psychological symptoms include embarrassment, fear, going blank, poor memory recall and feelings of helplessness, while negative social behaviours may include withdrawal from course, inappropriate silence, absenteeism and unwillingness to participate. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) suggest that the effects of language anxiety may be both pervasive and subtle. Studies done by other researchers illustrate this.

Second language researchers have revealed that anxiety was often associated with language learning (Horwitz et al., 1986). Significant negative correlations were found between language anxiety and course grades in languages like Spanish (Horwitz, 1986), French (Phillips, 1992), Japanese (Aida, 1994), Hebrew and English (Salim, 2004) and Arabic (Elkhafaifi, 2005). According to Woodrow (2006) there were indications that English language learners from a Confucian Heritage Culture (China, Japan, and Korea) were more anxious learners than other ethnic groups. Zhang (2001) and Elkhafaifi (2005) reported a considerable link between language anxiety and proficiency, in that, as proficiency increased, anxiety declined and learners had more confidence in using the language. Repeated negative experiences lead students to associate anxiety with language learning (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Arnold, 2000).

In another study Bailey et al. (2000) reported that anxiety occurred at all stages of the learning process (i.e., input, processing and output). They found that those with high anxiety seemed to be older and have low perceived self-worth, low expectation, low scholastic-ability and low intellectual-ability. A further finding by Bailey et al. (2003) was students with statistically significant levels of anxiety at the three stages were inclined to drop out of language courses. Khan and Zafar (2010) examined the arousal of anxiety among Indian learners caused by the introduction of a video camera at various stages of a vocabulary learning

task. Results showed a significant increase in anxiety level and concomitant deficit in vocabulary acquisition.

According to Horwitz et al. (1986) performance evaluation is related to communication apprehension (CA), fear of negative evaluation (FNE) and test anxiety (TA). McCroskey (1977) defined CA as “anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons” (p. 78). McCroskey, Daly, Richmond and Falcione (1977) were of the view that lowered self-esteem could help explain CA. In a study on CA among Indian students, P'Rayan and Shetty (2008) found that a majority of the students had CA and 60% lacked communication skills. Some of the woes and concerns expressed by the students were, “I’m not comfortable facing the audience”, “I’m scared of taking part in group discussions” and “I don’t feel at home when I meet strangers” (p. 5). In his study among Turkish EFL learners, Aydin (2008) found that FNE was an adverse factor in the language learning process, with females more worried than males in taking tests, resulting in fear of speaking during class, making mistakes, and negative attitudes towards the class. Other studies showing poor performance in evaluative circumstances were Sarason (1984) and Phillips (1992). According to Na (2007), in the Chinese culture the fear of losing face in front of others and criticism played a debilitating role in learning. Piniel (2006) reported that classroom anxiety made the students nervous, and the fast pace of the lessons and being questioned by the teacher worried them. In sum, these studies show the strong link between anxiety, cognition and the psychological state of the learners, invariably affecting language performance.

Methodology

The present study examined the four constructs of CA, FNE, TA and AC (anxiety in the classroom) as perceived by rural Indian learners. A questionnaire (as discussed later under the section on Research instrument) was used to solicit quantitative data. The questionnaire was administered to more than 200 students from four colleges.

Research participants

Three private colleges in Villupuram and one Government college in Pondicherry were purposively sampled. They met the requirement of the study in that they were located in rural India (Colleges B & C) or their enrolment was made up of students from the surrounding rural areas (Colleges A & D). The students in Colleges A and D came to their college daily using the college shuttle buses.

The students of these four colleges generally aspired to master, but struggled with using the English language. A total of 203 students comprising 102 males

and 101 females formed the sample. They were mainly from a Tamil speaking background, characteristic of the people in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry State. The chosen participants were mainly first year college students (as this study focused on participants who were learning all the subjects in English for the first time) with a small number of second year students. The average age of the participants was 18 and they had been exposed to about ten years of formal learning of English in school prior to attending college.

Table 2: Demographic description of the students

Name of College	Type of College	Location	Sample & Sample Size	Gender
A	Private	Town	51 1 st Yr Students	Female
B	Private	Village	52 1 st Yr Students	Male
C	Private	Outskirts	50 1 st Yr Students	Male & Female
D	Government	Town	50 1 st & 2 nd Yr Students	Male & Female
No. of Students	-	-	203	102M & 101F

Research instrument

A questionnaire developed by Horwitz, et al. (1986) was adapted for the present study. This involved replacing a term in the original with a more appropriate term and providing a Tamil translation of the items, as will be explained here.

Content validation was done by the head of the English department in one of the colleges in this study. This person checked the items in terms of language clarity, appropriateness of terms used and whether the items were relevant to the construct of anxiety and applicable to the teaching and learning context of the research site. This questionnaire consisted of 33 items, of which eight items were on communication anxiety (1, 9, 14, 18, 24, 27, 29, 32), nine items on fear of negative evaluation (3, 7, 13, 15, 20, 23, 25, 31, 33) and five items on test anxiety (2, 8, 10, 19, 21). The remaining 11 items measured anxiety in the classroom. The respondents were asked to rate each item on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strong disagreement) to 5 (strong agreement).

A pilot study was conducted among 54 participants from College A. An initial cleaning up of the data removed 24 participants as outliers as the researchers felt

that their responses showed they had not fully understood the questions or answered them consistently. The responses of the remaining 30 participants were analysed and the result showed that the questionnaire had a high reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha value of .889. Translation into Tamil was found necessary and two qualified translators were given the task. The translated questions were rechecked by two other qualified translators. In addition the term 'foreign language' in the questionnaire was changed to 'English language', to avoid confusion. Bilingual questionnaires (in Tamil and English) were distributed in the actual study.

Data collection and analysis

To administer the questionnaires for the main study RR (the first author) went to the colleges personally. At College A, permission was granted after three visits. The questionnaires were distributed at the college hostel after college hours under the supervision of the warden cum lecturer. RR set another day to travel to Pondicherry to collect data from the Government College (College D). The questionnaires were given to the principal who collected the data for RR. On a separate day, RR reached College B, located in the interior. The questionnaires were administered in person in this college. At College C which was more strict with visitors, RR was not permitted to administer the questionnaires in person. Instead one of the lecturers helped with the process. SPSS version 15 was used to calculate the percentage, mean and standard deviation of the anxiety levels of the participants and correlations between the different types of anxiety. In the analysis of the items stated in the negative in the questionnaire their scores have been reversed accordingly to be consistent with the positive statements.

Results

The levels of language anxiety in four areas are as given in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Anxiety Levels

Language Anxiety Variables	Mean
Communication Apprehension	3.33
Test Anxiety	3.16
Fear of Negative Evaluation	3.47
Anxiety in the Classroom	3.28
Overall Mean	3.31

As shown in the table, fear of negative evaluation ranked the highest ($m=3.47$). Basically according to the items, the students faced problems like nervousness when questioned, they were embarrassed to volunteer answers, and felt that other students spoke better English. They were upset when they could not understand what the teacher corrected and often feared being laughed at by their peers.

Generally they felt they were being judged and cast in poor light by teacher and peers.

Communication apprehension ranked second ($m=3.33$). As indicated in the items, the participants panicked when they had to speak without rehearsing, and were self-conscious to speak in front of others. They were not sure of themselves when speaking in the language class and felt the need to understand every word that the teacher spoke. Anxiety in the classroom ranked third ($m=3.28$). Anxiety in class made them forget the things they knew. They were frightened when they did not know what the teacher said and were anxious in class even if they went prepared. In comparison to the other three types of anxiety, test anxiety scored the lowest ($m=3.16$). While tests normally generate some anxious moments associated with the likelihood of not doing well, the absence of an audience helps to ease the tension.

As stated in Table 4, fear of negative evaluation scored the highest ($m=3.47$) among the anxiety levels. For fear of negative evaluation, higher percentages have been indicated for statements of agreement (SA+A) than statements of disagreement (SD+D). Anxious participants felt less competent or feared being evaluated negatively by their peers and teachers. They reported: “I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven’t prepared in advance” (70.9%, $m=3.79$); “It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class” (67.5%, $m=3.77$).

Table 4: Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE)

Q#	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	S.D.
	I tremble when I know that I’m going to be called on in language class.						
3	14.8	21.7	12.3	22.7	28.6	2.71	1.44
	I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.						
7	25.1	29.1	22.7	16.3	6.9	3.49	1.22
	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.						
13	32.5	35.0	14.8	12.8	4.9	3.77	1.18
	I get upset when I don’t understand what the teacher is correcting.						
15	26.6	36.9	18.7	12.3	5.4	3.67	1.15
	I can feel my heart pounding when I’m going to be called on in language class.						
20	28.6	35.5	12.3	12.3	11.3	3.58	1.32

	I always feel that the other students speak the language better than I do.						
23	31.5	32.5	16.7	12.3	6.9	3.69	1.23
	Language class move so quickly I worry about getting left behind.						
25	21.7	25.6	15.3	18.2	19.2	3.12	1.44
	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the English language.						
31	30.5	27.6	12.3	14.3	15.3	3.44	1.44
	I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.						
33	31.5	39.4	10.8	11.8	6.4	3.79	1.19
Overall Mean						3.47	7.38

SA=Strongly-agree; A=Agree; N=Neutral; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly-disagree. (*FLCA items with the percentages of the students selecting each alternative. Statements of agreement=SA+A; Statements of disagreement=SD+D).

Table 5: Communication Apprehension (CA)

Q#	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	S.D.
	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English language class.						
1	20.2	25.6	19.7	18.2	16.3	3.15	1.37
	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.						
9	35.0	34.5	14.3	10.8	5.4	3.83	1.17
	It would be nervous speaking in the English language with native speakers.						
14	26.0	35.0	17.7	12.3	8.4	3.59	1.23
	I feel confident when I speak in the English language class.						
18	11.8	22.2	22.2	27.1	16.7	2.95	1.28
	I feel very self-conscious about speaking the English language in front of other students.						
24	25.6	35.5	18.7	14.3	5.9	3.63	1.17
	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.						
27	16.3	33.5	22.2	14.8	13.3	3.25	1.27
	I get nervous when I don't understand every						

	word the language teacher says.						
29	24.6	33.5	15.8	17.2	8.9	3.48	1.28
	I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the English language.						
32	17.7	19.7	18.7	31.5	12.3	2.77	1.29
Overall Mean						3.33	5.05

The FLCA items indicative of high speech anxiety are, “I start to panic when I speak without preparation in language class” (64.5%, m=3.83) and “I would be nervous speaking in the English language with native speakers” (61%, m= 3.39). It follows that there was less agreement with statements like "I feel confident when I speak in the English language class" (34.0%, m=2.95) and “I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the English language” (37.4%, m=2.77). Overall a high percentage of them had communication apprehension when they were required to speak in English.

Table 6: Anxiety in the classroom (AC)

Q#	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	S.D.
	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the English language.						
4	27.1	34.5	15.8	15.3	7.4	3.59	1.24
	It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English language classes.						
5	39.4	29.6	12.8	9.9	8.4	3.82	1.28
	During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.						
6	23.6	28.1	18.1	17.2	12.8	3.33	1.38
	I don't understand why some people get so upset over English language classes.						
11	22.7	31.5	23.6	13.3	8.9	3.46	1.23
	In language class, I can get so nervous when I forget things I know.						
12	35.0	28.1	12.3	16.3	8.4	3.65	1.26
	Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.						
16	23.6	34.5	16.7	13.3	11.8	3.45	1.30
	I often feel like not going to my language class.						
17	14.3	14.3	10.3	27.1	34.0	2.47	1.46

	I don't feel the pressure to prepare very well for language class.						
22	14.8	20.7	25.1	23.6	15.8	2.95	1.29
	I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.						
26	21.2	23.2	21.7	18.7	15.3	3.16	1.36
	When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.						
28	13.3	24.6	25.1	20.1	16.7	2.98	1.29
	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak the English language.						
30	18.7	28.6	22.2	17.2	13.3	3.22	1.30
Overall Mean						3.28	5.63

With regard to the AC construct, the participants expressed their anxiety in a variety of situations. For example, "In language class, I can get so nervous when I forget things I know" (63.1%, $m=3.65$). The statement "It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English language class" (69%, $m=3.82$) seemingly shows low anxiety and contradicts other responses that indicate high anxiety. However taking into account the sociocultural background of the participants, here they were probably referring to the wishes of their parents to "take more English language classes" rather than the anxiety generated by this activity. Similarly, "I often feel like not going to my English class" (57%, $m=2.47$) had quite a neutral response likely indicating the students' commitment to attend the classes their parents had paid for.

Table 7: Test Anxiety (TA)

Q #	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	S.D.
	I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.						
2	17.7	14.8	8.4	27.1	32.0	2.59	1.50
	I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.						
8	13.3	22.7	20.7	26.6	16.7	2.89	1.30
	I worry about the consequences of failing my language class.						
10	30.0	33.0	12.3	25.1	17.1	3.57	1.35
	I am afraid that my language teacher is ready						

	to correct every mistake I make.							
19	22.2	21.2	13.8	25.1	17.7	3.05	1.44	
	The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.							
21	31.0	36.9	12.8	11.8	7.4	3.72	1.23	
Overall Mean						3.16	3.80	

While test anxiety scored lower than the other three constructs ($m=3.16$), the trend is maintained in which the percentages of respondents who expressed anxiety were higher than those that did not. Statements indicative of test anxiety were, “I worry about the consequences of failing my language class” (63%, $m=3.57$); “The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get” (67.9%, $m=3.72$). They rejected statements like, “I don’t worry about making mistakes in my language class” (59.1%, $m=2.59$) and “I am usually at ease during tests in my language class” (43.3%, $m=2.89$). In sum the students were generally worried, frightened and confused in a test situation.

Discussion

From the findings, the overall mean of 3.31 indicated that the students generally had high levels of all the four anxieties. Further when each type of anxiety was examined in greater detail, the findings were consistent in that higher percentages of respondents were found agreeing with all the items expressing anxiety across a range of situations. These resonated with findings on fear of negative evaluation in Ohata (2005), Sheorey (2006) and Na (2007); communication apprehension in Aydin (2008) and P’Rayan and Shetty (2008) and test anxiety in Narayanan et al. (2008).

In discussing the phenomenon of shyness among Malaysian students, Bahiyah (1992) linked shyness to fear of negative evaluation. Like shyness, fear of negative evaluation has social and cultural roots. This form of anxiety can be learned behaviour as a result of cultural values and societal forces (e.g. collective voice, submissiveness, individual achievement, success). Fear of negative evaluation normally gives rise to poor performance, a clear output in language learning (Aydin, 2008; Phillips, 1992; Sarason, 1984).

On a positive note, from the psychological perspective, anxiety can be reduced. Direct intervention with the use of affective strategies has been discussed in an earlier section. In the present study the students reported they experienced heart pounding and nervousness, worry and fear of being laughed at across all the types of anxiety. Teachers can suggest deep-breathing, relaxation and positive

self-talk to help reduce students' anxiety levels (e.g. Mohd Sahandri Gani, Katrin Shamshiri & Noreen Nordin, 2009; Rossiter, 2003). The use of humour can also help to dispel some tension in the classroom. Alternatively teachers dealing with anxious students can begin by being more sensitive to them.

Conclusion

This study has made a small contribution to the understanding of language anxiety as faced by a group of rural Indian learners from two different states in South India. Based on the major findings in this study, the following recommendations would be beneficial for pedagogical practices and research, especially in the Indian ESL context.

It is essential that teachers should create a stress-free and conducive environment for teaching and learning because such an environment would reduce apprehension to communicate among the learners. Group work and collaborative tasks could be employed to give students more opportunity to speak the language. Using or practising the language among fellow learners on a smaller scale is less daunting than being called upon to speak in class (spontaneously most of the time). Such an approach can make use of peer support to reduce language anxiety.

Teachers should treat students' errors with great sensitivity since fear of negative evaluation was a major concern among the students. When and how to react to students' errors are constant challenges. A general guideline would be to accept errors as an inevitable part of students' learning and react to or correct them in a positive way. Teachers should be mindful not to allow a humiliating situation to arise when an error is committed. It follows that for some learners, individual meetings to talk about errors might be more constructive than whole class discussion.

This research is basically a quantitative study that has yielded findings on students' levels of four types of anxiety. It should serve to encourage further research in investigating the causal factors of the phenomena observed in this study. A sociocultural perspective might be useful in shedding light on how societal forces and dominant discourses surrounding the use of English inform language anxiety in India and provide more culture-specific solutions.

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