

REVIEW ON THE ROLE OF ANXIETY AND ATTITUDE IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING AMONG GEN-X AND GEN-Z STUDENTS

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Second language learning is a tiresome toil for many of its learners. The learning has an affective side along with cognition. English is a second, foreign, and business language for most of the countries in the world. This paper is a review of various studies conducted to analyze the role of Foreign Language Anxiety and Attitude on learning a foreign language and how it is related to other affective variables for impeding learning process. It comprises recent studies among students from different geographical locations. This review shed light on the fact that foreign language anxiety is a trait anxiety which hinders successful learning. The result is students struck somewhere in between the starting and proficient level of using that language. It also focuses some useful suggestions, educational implications along with further areas to conduct research.

Keywords: Foreign Language Anxiety, Attitude, ESL Learning.

INTRODUCTION

A non-native English speaker in college learns English as a second language from their early childhood. That is from 1st standard/grade or 4th standard/grade. Even after completing 10 or 13 years of language learning, most of them are not competent enough to express their views or ideas in their learnt language. What is the major reason for this gap? Why do they fail to be proficient? This paper would like to cite the previous studies done in this area or the role of anxiety and attitude in second language learning. Studies showed that affective blocks in learning are one of the reasons for poor performance in English language learning beyond cognitive capacity. The learning takes place through the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. It is easy to assess the progress of learning through the cognitive domain. The researches of A.C. Gardner and Schumann put light into the affective area of learning. It goes hand in hand with cognition. Affect refers to emotion or feeling. 'The affective domain is the emotional side of human behavior' (Brown, 1994). According to Webster affect, it is defined as "relating to arising from or influencing feeling or emotion". This paper is an attempt to go through the affective factors particularly anxiety and attitude in second language acquisition. Unlike first language acquisition, the second language is a 'learning process' for Indian bilingual children and most of the third world countries. So it is a painstaking venture. Here the foreign language anxiety plays a key role to hinder the acquisition. Researches of Gardner, Schumann and Dornei showed pathway in this area. They

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proved the affective factors like anxiety, motivation, self-esteem, risk-taking, empathy and socio-cultural factors like attitude, acculturation etc has a great influence on the successful learning of SL.

Foreign language anxiety

The studies of R.C Gardner throws light into this area and researches of Horwitz contributed much to reveal the real condition of foreign language anxiety. According to Horwitz, "Anxiety is the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system." (1986). Studies of Kleinmann, Steinberg and Horwitz proved that communication strategies of students can affect by anxiety in a language class. That is, a more anxious student wants to avoid attempting language learning tasks. (1986 pg.126). Horwitz noticed that anxiety of students is revealed through their nervousness, apprehension, worry, lack of concentration, become forgetful, sweat and palpitations etc. They post pond the homework and bunk the classes. He identified the practice of over studying as a result of anxiety. When they fail to secure expected grade they became frustrated and fed up with learning. It shows that foreign language anxiety is a villain for learning a non-native language. According to Stephan Krashen's affective filter hypothesis these affective factors work as a barrier for receiving input (Krashen 1982). This kind of anxiety is clearly visible in spoken skills. Horwitz classified anxiety into 1. Communication apprehension, 2. Test anxiety, 3. Fear of negative evaluation. (Horwitz & cope,1986) Communication apprehension is the unwillingness to speak in the target language as a result of anxiety. Test anxiety involves fear of failure stemming from the thought of failure. Fear of negative evaluation is the fear about others evaluation on their language skills. In order to avoid such remarks, they avoid learning tasks and situations. Thus, the aftereffect of anxiety is inefficient cognitive processing. The study of Scovel among Arabic students proved that anxiety has a facilitating and debilitating role. (1978.). Researches of Tobias (1990) further shows that anxiety interferes the cognitive processing. He identified it as input, processing and output.

Attitude

The successful learning takes place when the learner has a positive attitude towards the learning content and environment. It is socially constructed. In ESL, it is the attitude towards the English people too. Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics defined attitude as

The attitude which speakers of different languages or language varieties have towards each others' languages or to their own language. Expressions of positive or negative feelings towards a language may reflect impressions of linguistic difficulty or simplicity, ease or difficulty of learning, degree of importance, elegance, social status, etc. Attitudes towards a language may also show what people feel about the speakers of that language. (1992:199) 'language attitudes'

Thurston refers the concept attitude as “the sum total of a man’s inclinations and feelings, prejudice or bias, preconceived notions, fears threats and convictions about any specific topic” (1928, p. 267). As Morgan opinionated for having a positive attitude towards learning, students should have awareness about their own attitude towards language and their culture. One’s desire to learn a foreign language is nurtured by their attitude. Thus, it is a cornerstone of motivation. Attitude not only involves opinion towards learning community but also opinion towards learning tasks and situation. As Dornei (2010) points out the way of presenting learning tasks can make a significant difference in learner’s attitude.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Horwitz and cope specifically identified foreign language classroom anxiety in 1986 and developed FLCAS by conducting a pilot study among Spanish learning students at Texas University (Horwitz and Cope 1986). It followed by numerous studies all over the world. Their studies proved that foreign language anxiety is a situation specific anxiety specially related to foreign language learning classroom. In 1983, Bailey conducted a study on anxiety based on the diary. These diary notes showed students anxiety in language learning lessons and withdrawal from learning lessons. R. C. Gardner in 1985 found that anxiety and language proficiency is negatively correlated. In his further study along with Smythe, P. C., Clement, R., & Glikzman, L. in 1976 among French learning Canadian students reported the French classroom anxiety significantly affect their proficiency and progress. He conducted that study among 1000 students by using his attitude and motivation test battery. As per this study, anxiety is highly affected spoken skills. Gardner reasserted this idea by his further study in 1984 along with Smythe and Landolf. Steinberg, F. S., & Horwitz, E. K. conducted an empirical study among Spanish students in 1986 by using TAT card description. They classified the students into anxious and non-anxious state. In this study, they found that anxious students give less interpretation to TAT card pictures than non anxious students.

In 1986, Young. D. conducted a study on the relation between oral proficiency and anxiety. The experiment conducted on teachers by using the oral proficiency test and oral proficiency interview developed by The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Its result showed that there was a significant negative correlation between oral proficiency interview and anxiety. Another significant study is done by R.C. Gardner and P. D. Macintyre. They did 2 studies subsequently in 1989 and 1994. In 1989 study they assessed the anxiety by using the theoretical background of Tobias model, the role of anxiety in meta-cognitive process. Here they assess anxiety during input, processing and output stages as mentioned by Tobias. The subjects are asked to fill a questionnaire firstly then go through various tests. In each stage they assess anxiety. Along with French test, they also conducted mathematics and English. The result showed that students

suffer high anxiety in French than English and Mathematics. In this study, he proved that anxiety has a negative effect on French vocabulary learning especially on input (learning) and output (production) stage. They also found that state anxiety scale on learning language showed an inconsistent correlation. Thus general anxiety hasn't much role in learning a foreign language. The orthogonal factors from analysis of this study proved that foreign language anxiety is separate from general anxiety. The final conclusion of this significant study is foreign language anxiety caused poor performance in a second or foreign language. Gardner's and Macintyre's 1994 study under the title *The Subtle Effects of Language Anxiety on Cognitive Processing in the Second Language* is a continuation of this 1989 study. Here they examine the subtle effects of anxiety during input, processing and output stages. They found that anxiety at one level affects other levels too. An anxious student in a classroom is also anxious in foreign language use. The various test results show that anxious students grasp little than non-anxious students. They possessed short term memory. They proved it through French vocabulary tests. The correlation between various test scores and anxiety level shows that anxious student's French learning pace, ability to retrieve and recall and use are quite slower than non anxious students. On the other hand, their English scores are quite opposite to French results. In description test, anxious students tended to give shorter descriptions than non-anxious students. Study of Noel, Macintyre and clement in 1994 proved the relationship between self-ratings and anxiety. This study over 37 French second language learners shows anxious learners underestimate their ability. It affects their learning.

In 2010 Riffat-un-Nisa Awan, Musarrat Azher, et.al conducted a study among 140 Pakistani undergraduate students about foreign language classroom anxiety and its relationship with foreign language achievement. This study was conducted in English language. The findings were Language Anxiety and achievement was negatively related. Speaking in front of others is the major anxiety-provoking task. Males and rural students are more anxious than females and urban students. In 2009 a qualitative case study conducted among Greek students by Iakovos Tsiplakides under the title *Helping students to overcome foreign language classroom anxiety in English classroom: theoretical issues and practical recommendations*. The paper examines the characteristics of anxious students and the sources of Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety. Here he implement these strategies and evaluate the effectiveness of these measures. The Result of data collection shows that 6 students were facing anxiety as a result of fear of negative evaluation from peers and perception of low ability in relation to the peers. By the end of the year, As a result of implementing various affective learning strategies, they started to participate in speaking activities and started to speak in a natural way. In 2010, Shufen Huang conducted a study among Taiwanese English language learners regarding the relationship between teacher and peer support and English

language learners anxiety. The result of this study shows that there is a significant relationship between teacher and peer support in language learning anxiety. It can increase and decrease learners anxiety level. Amotivation and anxiety are interrelated. The students who are intrinsically motivated seemed less anxious. It is proved by the study of Ebrahim Khodadady and Gholam Hassan Khajavy in 2013 among English learners of a private institution. Kota Ohata (2005) analysed the nature of anxiety through an in-depth interview held on five Japanese students in US college setting. The result of this study is that they have high fear of negative evaluation and their English language proficiency. The cultural setting also played a vital role to boost this anxiety especially when they made a conscious effort to modify their language patterns. The outcome is they are less assertive in front of public and hesitated to attend people. As per their experience, anxiety freezes their English language performance. The study of Jain, Y., & Sidhu, G. K. in 2013 among Malaysian tertiary students proved that there is a significant relationship between anxiety and attitude. The increased level of anxiety negatively affect attitude and decrease the level of motivation irrespective of gender in English language learning.

In the study of Chastain. K. (1975), he found that students' attitude and opinion have a profound influence on second language learning. He found that affective factors can interfere the ability of language learning. The study of clement. R, Gardner .R.C. and Smythe. P. C. in 1977 revealed that favorable attitude towards learning community is essential for cultivating learner's motivation to learn that language. Their further study along with major, I. namely *Attitudes and Motivation in Second Language Acquisition: An investigation of Ontario francophones* in 1977 proves that attitude, anxiety and motivation are related to the second language achievement. *Firdevs Karahan* conducted a study among 198 Turkish students about their attitude towards English language learning. He found that they possess mildly positive attitude towards English language learning. Girls have more positive attitude than boys. Students who started to learn English before 6 years old i.e. from pre-school have more positive attitude than those who started to learn from school. They are against the English medium instruction and propose English as an elective course. As per this study, one of the major reasons for the lack of English language proficiency is their negative attitude. They do not consider English language as an important factor in their daily life situations because the study showed that they can't tolerate their fellow students are speaking English each other. The study of Kingsley, B., and Cheng, M.H. among 224 EFL university students in South Taiwan shows that "Good language learners hold more favorable attitudes, higher motivational intensity, positive belief, and use more strategies, as well as become less anxious when learning English. In particular, females tend to be better language learners, and those high achievers tend to regard English as less difficult, have less anxiety, spend more effort, like to associate with English, and

use more strategies than low achievers.” (Banya, Kingsley; Cheng, Maria H., 1997, pg-9).

ANALYSIS

Unlike other subjects, being a language its place is with the mental realm of the learner. It demands a total involvement of physical, emotional and intellectual domains of the learner. As the definition of Brown “language is the way of life” (Brown 1994). It explains to others what we are and what we want. These studies show one more thing that is, even though they feel nervous and difficult to learn English language, none of them want to skip its learning. They all wanted to be proficient in this foreign tongue. Affects such as anxiety and negative attitude impede the cognitive process of learning. It makes the students disinterested to learn and create poor learning orientation. Even the learning process is cognitively difficult; the students need a positive attitude to put extra effort to win. Better cognitive processing is possible with the support of positive affective factors. The element anxiety can be eliminated only by providing situations which trigger anxiety and enable to handle it. It is proved by the studies mentioned earlier, especially the studies of Young . D. and Iakovos Tsiplakides. The need for reconsider the strategies are relevant here. The significance of Socio-Affective strategies has come in this scenario.

The educational importance and significance of English language have to be taken care of being a compulsory subject in schools. Classrooms are the main area where children are exposed to English language. Under such a situation classrooms should not be a venue of anxiety triggers. The strategies employed by the teachers should be suitable for their comfortable learning. Certain strategies or employing different kinds of strategies will work as an anxiety reducer. The teachers have to focus more on learning process than learning outcome. When they focus more on learning outcome, it will increase the anxiety especially test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. It is the time to change traditional lecture method to teach English. Instead of many book oriented exercise, the curriculum and pedagogy should have space for communication tasks and social learning. It is not for the denial of cognitive strategies but accommodation of affective and social learning strategies to enhance learning process. The study of Ebrahim Ghorban Mohammadi, Reza Biria, Mansour Koosha and Azam Shahsavari’s study support that there is a significant relationship between language learning strategies and English language classroom anxiety.(Mohammadi, E.G., et al, 2003). This study also throws light on two other aspects they are, affective and social language learning strategies create less anxiety and those who use more language learning strategies has less anxiety and more achievement. It is the time to understand that thinking and guessing along with imperfect beginning to speak is more important than learning grammar, vocabulary and correct framing of sentence stemmed from error analysis. Teachers

should implement suitable strategies which decrease the anxiety level and enhance learning smoothly. The failure in using ICT teaching aids mainly language lab is a major reason for lacking the interest to learn this language. The proficiency in a language is acquiring not only by byhearting the language learning task but also by using the gained knowledge of that language. Today's classrooms lack a space to practice the language. They learn it and store it, thus fail to produce sufficiently because they never get such a space. The timidness and unwillingness to speak English language showed their lack of opportunities to use that language. If students lack emotional security in a classroom, they find difficult to cope up with learning styles and approach. Students' success in language class depends on their satisfaction in the language class. We have to identify the purpose of their learning. If they possess unhealthy goals, teachers should nurture a positive and right outlook in them. We have to consider the cultural background of students too. It is also a source of anxiety provocation. For e.g. in Indian concept, teacher is a person who is far high from a student and the most respectable person. It is vice versa in a European context.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Implementation of affective learning strategy can change the learning outcome of anxious students. The teacher should know the affective blocks of their subjects especially the anxiety provoking situations in a classroom. They have a great role in eliminate anxiety-provoking situations and nurture positive attitude towards target language. Teachers shouldn't stuff with learning tasks and contents which impede their freedom to introduce voluntary teaching styles according to the classroom psyche. If they are burdened with content, they will be in a mood of completing the lessons on time which made a negative effect. They won't be able to concentrate on learning goals but compelled to focus on learning outcomes such as grade or marks. As a part of effective remedial teaching, the schools or respective bodies have to implement special learning programs in higher classes to make them proficient. Social learning methods will also reduce anxiety. The teachers should build a good self-esteem among learners and makes them confident. It is very particular in learning English in Indian context because English is a highly different language compare to their vernacular tongues. The peer attitude and strategies to teach English is a significant area to pore over in Indian context.

CONCLUSION

Studies showed that FLA is a unique and particular type of anxiety which differ from other sorts of anxiety. A Positive attitude is essential to successful learning. The role of these factors is most relevant to the third world countries. These countries taught English as a subject in their educational curriculum. Among Indian students, English is an over studying subject but most of them fail to secure expected result.

Being a bilingual colonized country, English is using both official and second language. Indian language is quite different from English language in every sense. Under such a situation, considering the emotional and social surrounding of school learners is a need. Qualitative researches in this area are needed to understand the real reason for the lack of proficiency and to suggest suitable strategies. The presentation of language learning tasks and contents in a way which pleases the heart along with head will remove the mental block of learning it. If we fail there, this will increase the anxiety level. Most of the Indian students are affecting with these blocks in affective domain. This got little attention. A supportive and excellent teacher may alleviate these factors by acknowledging student's feeling but it reduced there as a single case. In the context of our country, the studies on these areas are still in infancy. Being a bilingual country, where English is taught as a compulsory SL, it is necessary to pore over these domains and to implement teaching strategies which are suitable for the culture and psyche of the learner otherwise English will be a dry, fearful, unspoken, learnt subject for all its learners. Studies shed light on the fact that, many students hate English language learning because of the emotional hurt they received from their early schooldays. A good approach and positive attitude will facilitate their language proficiency. As per this review, it's clear that foreign language learning is a matter of mental stress. Under such a condition curriculum and pedagogy should be taken care of learner's mindset. Instead of teaching English as a subject we have to find out a place to practice language. Students got insufficient space to practice listening and speaking. They read and study English without practicing. As per the earlier studies, these two skills create much anxiety. The teachers should be able to analyze the mental block of students in learning. These studies show that good language learners are less anxious. Eradication of these fears happens not only through the counseling but also through the successful implementation of strategies. If we fail to cultivate a love of learning, the students may not achieve the linguistic goals. It may remain as a mutilated language in memory due to fear. We have to make them dare to learn.

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