

# THE FACTORS, CONSEQUENCES AND SOLUTIONS OF SPEAKING ANXIETY IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

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## Abstract

It is extensively understood that four skills which are listening, reading, writing, speaking are involved in English learning. All of these skills are related to each other. Among four skills, speaking appears the most vital on a daily life. This belief is backed by Parmawati (2018 p.21) speaking is the most essential skill of English language since speaking mediates as communication tool of every -day life.

**Keywords:** anxiety, trait anxiety, state anxiety, debilitating and facilitative anxiety.

## Introduction

In order to advance speaking skills, not only a wide range of vocabulary, pronunciation, enhanced grammar are involved from learners but also self -confidence, speaking in front of public and fluency are the most important factors in speaking. Speaking in English is not straightforward for students in classroom because students are expected to speak with high self-confidence. Speaking fluently can indicate students have good knowledge in acquiring foreign language. But, students feel apprehensive, not confident frequently in foreign language classrooms. This situation is called foreign language anxiety. This paper tries to show the definitions and the types of language anxiety which is created different researchers in the first paragraph. The next paragraph indicates factors about where and why foreign language anxiety arises from in classroom. After that, scrutiny was casted to the detrimental results of anxiety. This review ends with reviewing suggestions which are helpful both students and teachers.

## Defining language anxiety

Anxiety within several affective factors which impact on foreign language learning is considered a significant factor that influences students' verbal performance negatively when they are expected to use. This phenomenon appears in different forms, for example students' reluctance to attend in speaking lessons, being upset their low performance and attainment. When foreign language students who have high speaking anxiety are asked to perform English language, they do not perform easily. As a result they opt for being silent instead of considering it is great opportunity to enhance their communication skills. According to Spielberger (1983) "anxiety is subjective emotion of stress , fear nervousness and worry that are related to an incentive of the automatic nervous system". Similarly, MacIntyre (1988) described language anxiety as "the worry and bad sensitive feeling evoking when utilizing or learning second language". Until this theory, Horwitz and Cope (1991) developed the same theory which described language anxiety as clear complicated self-concepts, beliefs, behavior correlated with



classroom language learning. It is clear from Horwitz and MacIntyre's notions there are more possibility of anxiety in classroom settings. Furthermore, it is alerted students' one of the most significant obstacles need to overcome in language learning process is English foreign language classroom anxiety.

### **Types of anxiety**

Horwitz (1986) who was pioneer in learning anxiety identified three interrelated components of anxiety that were communication fear, apprehension of negative evaluation and test anxiety. Horwitz et.al (1986) defined communication fear as "a kind of shyness represented by fear of conversing with people" (p. 127). Apprehension of negative evaluation signifies "anxiety about others' judgment about their speaking, avoiding situations which are required evaluation and assumption of others would assess their oral production negatively" (p.128). Test anxiety means a fear of failure from academic evaluation. It is evident from all three types of anxiety, if one of them arises in classrooms, it causes the delaying of good performance of their English language learning. In addition, other two types of anxiety have been differentiated in many literatures:

1. Trait anxiety
2. State anxiety

According to A.Melouah (2013 p.68) trait anxiety is permanent personality character, students who have trait anxiety feel nervous, worry in various contexts regularly. This type of anxiety has detrimental impacts on language learning and often hinders students' success. State anxiety is not everlasting, it emerges in a particular moment such as when a learner is required to speak in target language. Recent studies show that not all anxiety is harmful and there can be found such anxiety which can facilitate learning. Two types of anxiety are differentiated in terms of usefulness: Debilitative and facilitative anxiety. Facilitative anxiety urges students to accomplish the tasks quicker. Bailey (1983) learnt advantages of facilitative anxiety. It was discovered that competitiveness affected her improvement in some cases, it prompted her to study harder at other times. Bailey's researches of competitiveness and anxiety were found the keys of success. When it comes to debilitative anxiety, it has negative effects on language performance.

### **Factors that cause to anxiety**

Many researches have been conducted to identify what factors trigger anxiety. For instance, MacIntyre&Charos (1996) claimed that personality traits such as introversion and extroversion are the main factor to form anxiety. Relying on this hypothesis Brown, Robinson&Rosenkjar (2001) wrote that introverts are prone to be more anxious since they would prefer to work on their own instead of working as a group. For this reason, introverts tend to become anxious easily if they are asked to participate in communication directed classrooms. Gregerson and Horwitz revealed that students' beliefs about perfection can cause language anxiety. These types of learners do not satisfy their performance and undergo higher level of worry over their mistakes they made, while non-anxious students embrace their small achievement happily. Price (1991) added following reasons that may evoke anxiety. They are complication of foreign language classes, personal outlook of language innate ability, definite personality differences



which are perfectionism and apprehension of public speaking. In addition, Young (1991) noted that language anxiety stemmed from learner beliefs about language learning, teachers thinking about language teaching, instructor-learner attitudes, classroom policy. From this review it is clear that learners' beliefs should be positive about a new language and classroom setting and they stop thinking that learning languages is grueling or we have to speak perfectly with excellent accent. Likewise, teachers' beliefs and behavior are the most significant factor that can lead to anxiety. A. Melouah (2013) informed that majority teachers think that students' fear to speak is their low oral performance but the studies conducted in anxiety in university of SaadDahlab showed that language proficiency took fourth place. Fear of interaction and fear of audience were identified as main reason of anxiety. On the other hand, Crating (2001) noted that anxiety usually appears when speakers have to communicate with native people since they feel being embarrassed. However, people know their tension can disrupt the quality of their speaking, they can't stop themselves being anxiety. Similarly to this hypothesis a study was undertaken in Turkey by S.Cagatay (2015) revealed that speaking with native speaker caused anxiety on 383 participants. They regarded native speakers as ideal and critical speakers. But, language proficiency did not influence on students' anxiety in this study as Tianjian(2010) claimed "lower level of learners are prone to be more anxious". Another research in Indonesia shows completely different causes of anxiety. Firstly, less preparedness of students was the main of reason of their anxiety, because they were afraid whether teacher asked them to speak. Secondly, not grasping material taught by teacher, mispronouncing, making incorrect sentences were indicated major factors of their anxiety. The research of Z.Suleimenova (2012) in Kazakhstan revealed that being asked to go to the board evoked anxiety in majority students. Besides that using random selection, approaching their turn to reply have increased anxiety in classroom atmosphere. Having looked through different factors to anxiety in the example of Turkey, Kazkhstan, Indonesia, it is evident that language proficiency is not necessarily main reason of anxiety. There are a great deal of factors can cause of students' worry in foreign language classroom.

### **The consequences of anxiety**

According to Y.Zheng (2008) high level of anxiety caused poor level of attainment second language learning. Moreover, anxiety impacts on speed, accuracy, quality of speech. Z.Suleimenova (2013) also noted negative effects of anxiety to classroom teaching. She found out that students who had consistent anxiety are unwillingness to participate in foreign language classes. Most of them feigned to be ill or miss class, prefer to sit at the back row of the desk.

### **The solutions of lowering anxiety**

Krashen (1985) devised Affective filter hypothesis that played a crucial role in Second language acquisition. He showed high anxiety as "mental block" that associates with negatively and prohibits information from entering the language acquisition part of the mind. For this reason, Krashen suggested teachers to be sure whether students' mental block is low regularly. In order to lower students' anxiety Krashen and Terell (1983) focused on reducing affective obstacles by offering the use of short and interesting dialogues, interviews about personal information. Likewise the utilizing the charts, opinion questionnaire are posed by Krashen to practice and



enhance students' speaking by working cooperatively in classroom. In addition to creating relaxed atmosphere for learners in classroom, avoiding to correct students' oral or grammar errors were posed by Krashen. Z.Suleimenova also mentioned valuable suggestions at the end of her research. She claimed that teachers make the language classes less stressful, be kind to student's fear; assist them to feel free in speaking English; applying unthreatening methods of mistake correction; supply them written directions of homework tasks, speak slowly to deliver the material precisely to the learners, listen and take into consideration the voices and suggestions of students. This paper found A.Melouah's implications are very beneficial for teachers too. She proposed that letting students move inside the classroom, sitting them in the circle, correcting students' mistakes with intonation or repeating, using interactive games to increase their interest, emboldening them by explaining that making mistakes is a part of learning and acquiring language takes time, increasing their self-confidence with rewards or giving positive statements, finding activities that all students can attend and speak without difficulty can be the most applicable ways of lowering anxiety. My solutions in addressing this issue would be:

1. **Create a Positive Learning Environment:** Foster a supportive and non-judgmental classroom atmosphere where students feel safe to express themselves.
2. **Encourage Incremental Speaking Tasks:** Start with simple, low-pressure speaking tasks and gradually increase the complexity as students build confidence.
3. **Use Pair and Group Work:** Collaborative activities can reduce the focus on individual performance and encourage peer support.
4. **Incorporate Fun and Engaging Activities:** Use games, role-plays, and interactive tasks to make speaking practice enjoyable and less intimidating.
5. **Offer Positive Feedback:** Focus on students' progress and efforts rather than just correcting mistakes by highlighting their strengths and improvements.
6. **Teach Anxiety Management Techniques:** Provide students with strategies such as deep breathing, visualization, and positive self-talk to manage their anxiety.
7. **Provide Clear Instructions and Expectations:** Ensure students understand what is expected of them and how to complete tasks to reduce uncertainty and anxiety.
8. **Use Technology:** Integrate language learning apps, video recordings, and other digital tools to create a less intimidating speaking practice environment.
9. **Encourage Self-Assessment and Reflection:** Help students to self-assess and reflect on their speaking experiences to identify areas for improvement and celebrate successes.
10. **Seek Professional Development for Teachers:** Equip teachers with the skills to recognize and address speaking anxiety through specialized training and resources.

After investigating solutions, this review came to realize that teachers' methods and attitude to students play a significant role whether increase or decrease anxiety.

## Conclusion

This paper investigated the nature of speaking anxiety in foreign language classrooms as well as its factors and solutions given by many researchers. Having looked through articles about this topic, it is apparent that six types of anxiety which are being afraid of interaction, fear of notion of others, poor self-esteem and deficiency of confidence, language proficiency, fear of



getting low score, fear of communicating with native speakers are prominent factors for evoking anxiety in EFL classrooms throughout the world. Based on the summaries stemmed from articles teachers are in the center in mitigating problem. It is vital that for teachers not only identifying the type of anxiety which hinder them to be competent in speaking English but also help them to eliminate the aftermath of anxiety.

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