Anxiety in English Language and Motivation to Learning among EEGAFI Senior High School Students: Case Study

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A B S T R A C T

The objective of the study is to examine the factors affecting English language anxiety among learners at the senior high school level at ECT Excellencia Global Academy Foundation, Inc. Three senior high school students who experienced English language anxiety on campus were chosen through purposive sampling. In-depth interviews, observation, and field notes were utilized in the gathering of data. The data were analyzed using the thematic analysis technique. The study found that several factors influence English language anxiety on communication skills among students who speak English. These factors include a lack of confidence, a fear of failure, and an anxious personality. Effective teaching strategies for teaching language can play an important role in reducing anxiety among students. In this regard, professionally well-trained teachers can play a vital role. The study recommended that English language teaching be based on an interactive approach and that students should get more opportunities to use the English language in the classroom and outside of the classroom. The study ensured that ethical considerations were observed during its conduct.

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INTRODUCTION

In terms of English-speaking skills, Filipino is well-known worldwide. In fact, the Philippines is regarded as one of the top call center nations in the world, not only because of Filipinos' strong work ethics but also because of their English-speaking skills (Hechanova, 2013). However, over the past few years, Filipinos' EF English Proficiency Index has been falling (Sasan & Rabillas, 2022).

For the past few decades, one of the most hotly debated topics among academics in the fields of linguistics and language acquisition has been the study of the factors that contribute to and hinder effective language acquisition (L2). In this manner, it is critical to address and enhance the quality of the teaching-learning process between the teacher and the students by knowing how each learner learns and how they feel about learning a second language (L2) in the classroom setting.

The interaction between students and what happens in the classroom, according to experts who have highlighted this for decades, is a significant step toward the successful acquisition of a second language. As a matter of fact, according to Puchta (2010), what happens inside and among the students in the classroom has a greater impact on learning a foreign language than do the resources, methodologies, and linguistic analyses. Thus, a greater overview of the student's dependence on the foreign language is provided by their language competency and skill in constant language practice inside the classroom. On the other hand, Nuranifar (2014) said that anxiety is one of the major barriers to students' acquisition of a second language. Anxiety among students has a great impact on the quality of input when learning a second language. Anxiety causes learning errors and communication problems for learners.

The widespread cross and multi-disciplinary research in the field of social sciences have found that anxiety not only impairs the learning of a second language but also it affects the students' motivation to learn (Rahimi & Karkami, 2015). Thus in this regards the higher the anxiety level of the learners the lower their motivation level to learn. These two are interrelated, which creates a significant problem in the classroom, particularly in terms of the learning outcomes of the students.

Furthermore, Guimba and Alico (2013) supported the prevalence of significant levels of learning anxiety among Filipino students taking English language classes, particularly in reading. Speaking

concern among cadets was dominated by apprehension about communicating. In this manner, it is essential for both teachers and students to be conscious of the worst impact of English-speaking anxiety because it can be a leap towards addressing the hindrance that impedes the learning of the second language. Additionally, according to Bernat and Gvozdenko (2005), emotion and motivation always go hand in hand in any field that studies human behavior and learning. As a result, the ability to learn a second language is hindered when anxiety levels are too high because it restrains motivation, which has a detrimental impact on the students' learning. Therefore, the goal of the study was to explore the extent of English language anxiety there was among EEGAFI Senior High School students and how that concern related to their motivation to learn.

Methodology

To investigate the English language anxiety and motivation among senior high school students from EEGAFI, the researchers used a single-case study design. The fundamental reason behind using a case study in this investigation is to gain a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon by observing how the students interact with one another, with the teachers, and with learning a second language. To further increase the reliability of the findings the researchers included written, interviewed, and observational data about how the learners strive to learn the second language. The researchers employed purposive sampling in selecting the participants who (a) struggled with learning English, (b) had grades of 75 to 80 in their junior high school English classes, (c) had received failing grades at least once in their elementary school grade, and (d) struggled to participate in class, particularly in oral English performance tasks. Furthermore, in order to appropriately select the participants for this study, the researcher also asked their senior high school subject teachers for recommendations. Additionally, the researchers specifically chose three (3) participants and asked them to come to the faculty lounge every afternoon, after class, for at least 30 minutes to an hour, to talk about their progress in their English studies.

The students participated in semi-structured interviews with the researchers over a period of 70 days, with interviews taking place at least once per week. For the researchers to properly transcribe the interviews performed with the participants, the interviews were videotaped, audiotaped, and noted. To get a new perspective on the information gathered, the interviews were transcriptions as soon as possible after they were conducted.

The researchers also utilized inductive data analysis, which progresses from the particular to the general, to collect data and organize it into bigger themes. Following a review of the meanings of the words used in the interviews, the researchers correlated the words to produce categories, which were then coded and combined to produce themes.

Objectives	Codes	Categories	Theme
To examine the factors and experiences of EEGAFI Senior High School students who suffer from English Language Anxiety (ELA) during interaction	• *No desire to speak* • *Shyness* • *Poor Motivation*	*Lack of Confidence*	**The experiences of students who suffer from English Language Anxiety (ELA) during interaction**
	• *Raising Questions or making inquiries* • *Quizzes/Oral Presentation*	*Fear of Failure*	
	• *Class Fellows* • *Introvert Personality* • *Anxious Character*	*Anxious Personality*	

Results and Findings

Interviews in this study provided an outlet for learners to express their concerns, views, and feelings about their anxiety while speaking English. The findings showed that English-speaking anxiety was

caused by the following factors associated with Poor Language Skills.

Lack of confidence

Participants in this study stated that they frequently feel as though their confidence is uncertain and that they are unable to communicate and deliver their message when their self-confidence is low. According to one of the participants:

"Lack of confidence and social exposure is what really disturbs me. It makes me feel incapable of the correct grammar in my English and sometimes how the new words pronounce…" [S2]

This particular participant showed no desire to speak because he thought: *"I will never be true. I realize I can't speak similarly to other learners. I know I will commit grammatical errors."* Hence, a lack of confidence seems to seriously hinder learners' learning. Some students are aware that their lack of confidence impacts their progress. Perhaps they need positive reinforcement and some guidance from the instructor. For example, student 3 stated in his response: *"I should push myself to participate. If I keep thinking if I am wrong or right and I don't attempt, I won't improve or learn."* [S3]

The participants believed that self-confidence is essential for effective speaking and communication. This finding is supported by the study of Tanveer (2017), in which he asserted that such negative cognitions put serious impediments in the learners' language development, which led to heightened awareness of their deficiencies and consequently to reticence when are called upon to exhibit their competence in the target language.

Fear of failure

Participants in this study said that they feel stress and anxiety while speaking before their classmates and teachers during presentations, class tests, and quizzes, especially when the teacher starts to ask questions and stresses speaking properly in English. The fear of making mistakes is one of the most essential challenges to address here. We are often afraid of committing mistakes when it comes to decision-making circumstances in our daily lives. Some of these decisions are in line with the intended goals and result in success, but others may depart from the expected path, resulting in failure, even if it is not on purpose. Some essential terms related to mistakes include being judged, rejected, and humiliated (Kayaoglu & Saglamel, 2013). One participant shared her point of view as she said: *"I always worry about what people will think of me when I am speaking English. Because in my previous years, when I make mistakes in speaking English, my classmates would immediately laugh at me, and it made me uncomfortable and sad at the same time."* [S1]

A certain participant, on the other hand, believed that making mistakes was worthwhile because it provided learning opportunities. He declares, *"…I am not afraid of making errors while speaking English. I learn from making mistakes as it gave me more room to grow. People will be shocked if I make mistakes and worst, they will mock me. However, I let them do what they want. After all, I am the one learning and not them."* [S2]

Despite their anxiety over error correction, participants exhibited a desire to be corrected to overcome their language inadequacies, as seen by the statements above. This finding is also supported by previous investigations (Kayaoglu & Saglamel, 2013; Tanveer, 2017), in which students believe that speech correction is necessary to learn how to speak the language well.

Anxious personality

The interviews in this study revealed that some learners may have an apprehensive personality and experience anxiety in different situations. Similarly, some studies state that some learners tend to experience SA (e.g, Alsowat, 2016; Zhang, 2010; Tóth, 2010).

The interviews revealed that some students were introverted and shy; consequently, it was a hard mission for them to speak and use English in front of too many learners in the classroom. Furthermore, they sometimes were not comfortable even talking in their native language in front of a large audience. The following remark was presented by student 2 in his interview: *"I sometimes feel anxious speaking Visayan dialect in front of the public. Nevertheless, speaking English is a very hard job. You can't see how difficult it is for me to talk in English in the classroom. I know this refers to my personality."*

Table 2

The Motivational practices of English language learning skills to reduce the level of English Language Anxiety (ELA)

Positive Reinforcement

Essential Themes	**Thematic Statements**
Positive Reinforcement	I think if teacher is teaching with polite manners and know about the students who are backbencher and they keep talking too much, they have the problem of anxiety.
	I feel in such a way that my English teacher at the moment is very approachable and very kind that is why I don't mind if she corrects my mistakes. I don't feel anxiety at all because she's very appreciative when we did right and corrects us in a very nice way when we made mistakes.
	I believe that teachers should tell them [students] that it is okay to make errors. They are human and we can't find any person who is perfect.
Informal Classroom	I suggest them (students) like me to watch movies, shows, videos or anything that has subtitles on it. That is what I have been doing for many years. I don't love to read books but I love watching anything in English with subtitles because it teaches me new words and at the same time teaches me how to pronounce them well.
	Teacher should give extra time to them and use new teaching methodologies in their English teaching.
Interactive Teaching Strategies	For me, teachers should make the classroom engaging and cooperative yet friendly environment. So that learners won't feel that pressured and avoid getting anxious.
	I believe that every teacher has a huge role in reducing the feeling of anxiety in the classroom by attentively listening and cheering the learners up.

A common sentiment among the participants was that the students' confidence should be developed to make mistakes while using the language. It was also suggested that teachers use a positive approach to provide corrective and constructive feedback on errors rather than offensively correcting learners to reduce language anxiety. Sadighi and Dastpak (2017) argued that students can be encouraged with nonverbal praise, positive gestures, and different types of immediacy to overcome anxiety among themselves. Further, The findings of this

research supported the

motivation and inspiration

in language learning in the English classroom environment (Clement, Dornyei, and Noel, 1994).

Informal Classroom

Some behavioral symptoms of anxious students, an informal classroom environment, trained teachers, and a new variety of teaching strategies have been offered to successfully cope with language anxiety.

According to the participants' statements, students can use authentic resources, such as English-language movies and videos, to raise their confidence and improve their communication skills. Rathnayke (n.d.) points out that "according to the English language lectures of my institute, watching English

language movies helps the students learn English phrases that can be used in real life situations, improve vocabulary, catch authentic language, learn sentence patterns, become familiar with the different accents of native speakers, and have opportunities to listen to correct pronunciation and intonation patterns. (p. 4)."

In line with the finding, the use of English language movies inside the classrooms is a refreshing learning experience for students when compared to techniques such as rote learning of English vocabulary and drill practices, as the films are valuable resources with colloquial English in a real-life context, and teachers can use movies to develop learners' speaking and listening skills, allowing them to become more autonomous learners; and thus, lowering their language anxiety.

Interactive Teaching Strategies

Sakti, (2018) and Leong and Ahmadi, (2017) acknowledged some anxiety factors pertaining to students' self-confidence; instructors' role in the classroom; pupils' beliefs about resources, and instructors' superiority in the teaching-learning process, wherein the teacher presents the material rapidly without considering students' slow learning. Hashemi and Abbasi (2013) argue that friendly and accommodating classroom environments will alleviate language anxiety. The teacher should use new methods to teach the English language instead of grammar or translation methods. This is the era of CLT (communicative language teaching), and with the passage of time, new advancements are there. For reading learning, use (SQR) three methods, and (SQRRR, SQ3R) survey, question, read, retrieve, and review. The teachers should change their approach (Oteir & Al-Otaibi, 2019).

Conclusion

Anxiety in English speaking, stress, pressure and fear towards learning must not be downplayed but must be given enough attention to ensure the well-being of learners. Language teachers should sometimes address feelings of anxiety in the classroom and take steps to minimize the sense of rivalry between them (Tanveer, 2017). applying systems and mechanisms for teacher training to equip and train them with the essential skills to deal with and discourse affective issues such as anxiety which may impact the learning of the English language. More importantly, holding conferences and workshops about language teaching and learning will inform instructors about the language and speaking anxiety phenomena, and the helpful ways to decrease language and speaking anxiety.

Recommendations

The presence of English language anxiety must be acknowledged and appropriately treated in order for language instruction to be effective. Recognize nervous language learners and assist them in English classes to reduce their speaking anxiety. Language instructors must be aware of the existence of English language anxiety in order to support students in language learning and increase their confidence in using the language.

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