

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ANXIETY AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

English language is the most important language in the present era. From education to business, in all the spheres it is the utmost need to be efficient in English language. But in India it is a foreign language and in most of the schools with regional language for instruction, it is treated as the second language. Learners usually encounter difficulties in the mastery of listening speaking, reading and writing in English language which resulted English language anxiety among them. Various researchers explored that English language anxiety hampers the academic achievement of students. Hence, the present study was conducted to explore the relation between English language anxiety and academic achievement of the students of class XI in Malda District. English Language Anxiety Scale (Bengali) developed by the researcher was applied on 266 male and female students of rural and urban schools. The study found significant negative correlations between English language anxiety and academic achievement.

Keywords: *English Language Anxiety, Academic Achievement, Correlation, Class XI Students.*

INTRODUCTION

English language is the most important language in the present era. From education to business, in all the spheres it is the utmost need to be efficient in English language. It was the Imperial British authorities who introduced English language as a medium of instruction in Indian education with the intention of serving its very own administrative motive for their own comfort. On the grounds that then the native human beings cannot but willing to learn the language and now it becomes a demand. The significance of the English language is not simplest continuing but increasing at a rapid tempo in every component of modern lifestyles. Nowadays, the usage of English is widespread in India and she becomes the third biggest country having English spoken populace after the United States of America and United Kingdom. India is placed in the third position also in

producing books written in English. Although the usage of English language began from the colonial period, the functional domains of its usage have now encompassed not most effective in administration, but also in education, employment and of course in formal as well as informal communication. English is the most used international language. Besides, it is a language of wider communication in India, as the country is multilingual and the regional languages are not similar. In India, as is well known, there is a persisted agonizing and schizophrenic debate about the status of English and its role in the region (Kachru, 1998). English is now taught as the second language in India; however acquisition of an adequate level of proficiency in English is one of the foremost challenges of India these days. The actual scenario is that a number of the Indian students who learn English as a second language and are in regional medium schools fail to achieve a satisfactory level of proficiency in English. Learners usually encounter difficulties in the mastery of listening speaking, reading and writing in English language which resulted an apprehensive feeling amongst them. This negative perception affected their understanding of the language which is turn affected their academic performance. This nervous feeling develops second language anxiety, specifically, English language anxiety.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ANXIETY AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

English language anxiety, was coined by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), is a specific anxiety affecting the gaining knowledge of English language. English language anxiety is basically a type of situation-specific anxiety that is specially associated with English language contexts in speaking, listening, and learning (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1994). Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) explain English language anxiety as a distinct complex phenomenon of “self-perceptions, beliefs feeling, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process”. According to Kim (2001), it is a complex of self-perceptions, subjective beliefs, and uneasy feelings that accompanies adverse emotional reactions and cognitive interference characteristic of maladjustment at intrapersonal and interpersonal levels, which arises from the sense that one cannot meet one’s expectations and perceived environmental demands. Macintyre and Gardner (1991) describe English language anxiety stemming from the negative expectations in English language learning. English language anxiety is a phenomenal issue and mainly a negative factor in language learning which directly affect the academic achievement of the learners.

Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, & Daley, (1999) investigated the relationship between achievement and foreign language anxiety and found a small but significant negative associations between the variables. Zhao (2007), in her study, found that highly-anxious learners do not obtain much achievement; and their low achievement causes them to be more anxious in the process of language learning. Marcos-Llinás, M., & Garau, M. J. (2009)

investigate the effects of language anxiety on course achievement and found an interrelation between language anxiety and course achievement. Awan et al. (2010) investigated the relationship between foreign language classroom anxiety and the students' achievement and reported a negative relationship between language anxiety and achievement. Demirdas & Bozdogan (2013), in their study, found a statistically significant negative relationship between foreign language anxiety and language performance. Similarly, Kamarulzaman et al. (2013) revealed negative correlation between anxiety and the performance among gifted learners. Abuelfadl (2015) revealed a positive correlation between anxiety and academic achievement of the students with learning difficulties. Amiri & Ghonsooly (2015) showed that high anxiety affected the students' achievement. The study conducted by Tuncer & Dogan (2015) revealed that the foreign language anxiety at the beginning of the pre-class education was not effective as the predictor of the academic achievement, but at the end of the education it is accounted for the academic failure and significantly predicted academic achievement. Cakici, D. (2016) demonstrated that there was a significant reverse correlation between students' FLA and their language achievement. Sani, M.A. (2016) revealed that there is relationship between English language anxiety and academic performance in English of the B.Ed. students. Razak, Yassin & Maasum (2017) showed in their study that the females experienced higher level of language anxiety than male students. They did not find any significant correlation between the level of language anxiety and the academic achievement of the students. Ali & Fei (2017) shown that there is a negative correlation between language anxiety and academic achievement.

Since English language anxiety not only affects students' language learning but also is considered to have debilitating effects on academic achievement, an investigation and detailed analysis of the relation between English language anxiety and academic achievement is necessary and significant.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives of the present study were –

- i)** To explore the pattern of English language anxiety students of class XI between the total sample and sub samples in relation to their academic achievement.
- ii)** To explore the relationship between English language anxiety of students of class XI and their academic achievement.

HYPOTHESES (NULL) OF THE STUDY

To fulfill the selected objectives, the researcher constructed the following Null Hypotheses according to the assumptions of the study –

- H_{0.1}** : There would be no significant correlation between students' English language anxiety and their academic achievement.
- H_{0.2}** : There would be no significant correlation between English language anxiety and academic achievement of male and female students.
- H_{0.3}** : There would be no significant correlation between English language anxiety and academic achievement of rural and urban students.

METHOD OF THE STUDY

In conducting the present study normative survey method of descriptive research was used to collect the data from the students of class XI, to find out the relation between English language anxiety and academic achievement.

POPULATION AND SAMPLES

The students of class XI of all higher secondary schools in Malda district under the West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education were treated as the population of this study. Only six higher secondary co-educational schools were chosen for collecting the samples. Three schools were randomly selected from the urban area from where 94 male and 62 female students were selected. Likely, three schools were randomly selected from the rural area from where 45 male and 65 female students were selected. Hence, the total male sample of the study was 139 and female was 127 and from urban area a total of 156 and from rural area 110 students were selected as the sample of the study. the total sample of the study were consisted of 266 students of class XI.

VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

In this study, the English language anxiety and academic achievement of the students were considered as the research variables and the gender of the students and locality of the schools were treated as the background variables.

TOOL OF THE STUDY

The researcher developed an English Language Anxiety Scale (in Bengali) for collecting the required data related to the English (Second) language anxiety from the students. The uni-dimensional scale was consisted of 40 numbers of items among which only 12 items were negative and 28 items were positive. It was a 5 point Likert type scale. The reliability index was measured through test retest method and reliability index was found 0.918. No specific test was used for measuring the academic achievement of the students, as it was collected from the scores obtained (out of 500) by the student samples in their Madhyamik Pariksha (Board Examination) conducted by the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education, West Bengal.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

Presentation of descriptive statistics

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of English language anxiety and academic achievement scores of total sample and sub samples.

<i>Descriptives</i>											
	Categories	N	Statistic					Std. Error			
			M	Mdn	SD	Sk	Ku	M	Sk	Ku	
English Language Anxiety	Sex	Male	139	108.54	108.00	21.77	.07	.14	1.85	.21	.41
		Female	127	116.11	120.00	22.50	-.41	-.16	2.00	.22	.43
	Locality	Urban	156	110.42	112.00	23.13	-.27	-.31	1.85	.19	.39
		Rural	110	114.62	113.50	21.19	.16	-.20	2.02	.23	.46
	Total	266	112.15	112.00	22.40	-.15	-.19	1.37	.15	.3	
Academic Achievement	Sex	Male	139	330.40	324.00	90.08	.39	-.49	7.64	.21	.41
		Female	127	277.58	240.00	88.85	1.15	.40	7.90	.22	.43
	Locality	Urban	156	325.11	315.50	93.70	.44	-.55	7.50	.19	.39
		Rural	110	276.93	239.00	85.08	1.10	.27	8.11	.23	.46
	Total	266	305.18	283.50	93.15	.66	-.457	5.71	.15	.3	

From the above table (Table 1), it was found that the female students of the sample scored higher in English language anxiety ($M = 116.11$, $SD = 22.50$) than male students ($M = 108.54$, $SD = 21.77$). Comparatively rural students ($M = 114.62$, $SD = 21.19$) were higher than urban ($M = 110.42$, $SD = 23.13$) in English language anxiety scores. Similarly, the male students of the sample scored higher in academic achievement ($M = 330.40$, $SD = 90.08$) than female students ($M = 277.58$, $SD = 88.85$). Comparatively urban students ($M = 325.11$, $SD = 93.70$) were higher than rural students ($M = 276.93$, $SD = 85.08$) in academic achievement scores.

Analysis pertaining to Null-Hypothesis 1:

H_{0.1} : There would be no significant correlation between students’ English language anxiety and their academic achievement.

Table 2: Result of the correlation of students’ English language anxiety and their academic achievement.

<i>Correlations</i>		SLA	AA
English Language Anxiety (SLA)	Pearson r	1	-.327**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	266	266
Academic Achievement (AA)	Pearson r	-.327**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	266	266

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 shows a significant correlation ($r = -.327, p < 0.001$) between English language anxiety and academic achievement of the students of class XI which indicates that the Null Hypothesis ($H_{0.1}$) will be rejected. Hence, it may be interpreted that the correlation of English language anxiety and academic achievement of total students is negative and statistically significant. Therefore, it is evident that higher level of English language anxiety lowers the academic achievement of the students.

Analysis pertaining to Null-Hypothesis 2:

H_{0.2} : There would be no significant correlation between English language anxiety and academic achievement of male and female students.

Table 3: Result of the correlation of male students’ English language anxiety and their academic achievement.

<i>Correlations^a</i>		SLA	AA
English Language Anxiety (SLA)	Pearson r	1	-.242**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	139	139
Academic Achievement (AA)	Pearson r	-.242**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	139	139

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

a. Sex = Male

Table 3 shows a significant correlation ($r = -.242, p < 0.01$) between English language anxiety and academic achievement of male students of class XI. Therefore, it may be interpreted that the correlation of English language anxiety and academic achievement of male students is negative and statistically significant.

Table 4: Result of the correlation of female students’ English language anxiety and their academic achievement.

<i>Correlations^a</i>		SLA	AA
English Language Anxiety (SLA)	Pearson r	1	-.351**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	127	127
Academic Achievement (AA)	Pearson r	-.351**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	127	127

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).

a. Sex = Female

Table 4 shows a significant correlation ($r = -.351, p < 0.001$) between English language anxiety and academic achievement of female students of class XI. Therefore, it may be interpreted that the correlation of English language anxiety and academic achievement of female students is also negative and statistically significant.

Table 3 and Table 4, both show significant correlations between English language anxiety and academic achievement of the male and female students of class XI respectively, which indicate that the Null Hypothesis ($H_{0,2}$) will be rejected.

Analysis pertaining to Null-Hypothesis 3:

H_{0,3} : There would be no significant correlation between English language anxiety and academic achievement of rural and urban students.

Table 5: Result of the correlation of rural students’ English language anxiety and their academic achievement.

<i>Correlations^a</i>		SLA	AA
English Language Anxiety (SLA)	Pearson r	1	-.220*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.021
	N	110	110
Academic Achievement (AA)	Pearson r	-.220*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.021	
	N	110	110

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

a. Locality = Rural

Table 5 shows a significant correlation ($r = -.220, p < 0.05$) between English language anxiety and academic achievement of the students from rural schools. Hence, it may be interpreted that the correlation of English language anxiety and academic achievement of rural samples is negative and statistically significant.

Table 6: Result of the correlation of urban students’ English language anxiety and their academic achievement.

<i>Correlations^a</i>		SLA	AA
English Language Anxiety (SLA)	Pearson r	1	-.370**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	156	156
Academic Achievement (AA)	Pearson r	-.370**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	156	156

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).

a. Locality = Urban

Table 6 shows a significant correlation ($r = -.370, p < 0.05$) between English language anxiety and academic achievement of the students from rural schools. Hence, it may be interpreted that the correlation of English language anxiety and academic achievement of rural samples is negative and statistically significant.

Both the Table 5 and Table 6 show significant correlations between English language anxiety and academic achievement of rural and urban students which indicate that the Null Hypothesis ($H_{0.3}$) will be rejected.

Hence, it may be interpreted that the correlation of English language anxiety and academic achievement of rural and urban students are negative and statistically significant.

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that the students' anxiety for English language is one of the major issues for their academic achievement as it was found negatively correlated with the academic achievement of the students. The inverse correlation is an indication for the decreased academic achievement for those who showed a higher level of English language anxiety. Therefore students, parents and the teachers should be more conscious about the issue of second language anxiety and measures to be taken to make it more interesting in the classroom.

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