SECOND LANGUAGE ANXIETY: EXAMINING ITS ROLE AS A BARRIER OR FACILITATOR IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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ABSTRACT

There has been extensive research into the close connection between second language anxiety (SLA) and language acquisition, although findings have been inconsistent regarding its role in either facilitating or impeding learning. This study aims to investigate the potential impact of second language anxiety on language learning, determining whether it acts as a facilitator or barrier. Additionally, the researchers aim to explore potential differences in attitudes toward SLA among respondents of varying age groups, genders, and educational institutions. The study included 102 English language learners from five language institutions in Lahore, Pakistan, who completed a self-designed questionnaire. The findings indicate that anxiety tends to assist language learners in various scenarios such as test preparation and oral exercises, fostering focus, planning, alertness, and a drive for success and perfection. However, during class participation, learners often feel embarrassed about making mistakes in the presence of instructors and more proficient language speakers, which leads to increased anxiety. Conversely, heightened anxiety can also result in increased self-consciousness among learners.

Keywords: Second language anxiety (SLA), Second language acquisition, Facilitative anxiety, Debilitative anxiety

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary context where English has become a global lingua franca, there is a growing emphasis among the younger generation on acquiring proficient communication skills (Trang et al., 2013). According to Saddiqa (2018), students in Pakistan perceive learning the language of instruction and assessment, i.e., English, as both obligatory and challenging at their educational institutions. English, considered the most esteemed second language (Rahman, 1999) for socio-economic and political reasons, is seen as an indispensable tool for survival in the global community. However, second language acquisition is a complex process influenced by various internal and external factors affecting both, language acquisition process and results. Researchers in the field of second language acquisition have recognized affective factors like motivation, gender, and anxiety as crucial elements that can either enhance or impede the journey of acquiring a second language. Second Language Anxiety (SLA) has particularly garnered significant attention in this context and stands out as one of the most thoroughly examined and debated affective variables in the realm of second language acquisition (Alias & Rashid, 2018; Awan et al., 2010; Cheng, 2001; Dörnyei, 2005; Horwitz et al., 1986; Kráľová & Sorádová, 2015; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, 1991; Serraj & Noordin, 2013; Scovel, 1978; Woodrow, 2008; Zheng, 2008).

However, the considerable research conducted to elucidate the connection between SLA and the process of second language acquisition, yielded a plethora of mixed and inconsistent findings (Kráľová & Sorádová, 2015; Li & Wei, 2023). Numerous studies concluded that anxiety could play a facilitative role in language learning (Alpert &

Haber 1960; Chastain, 1975; Kleinmann, 1977; Scovel, 1978; Spielman & Radnofsky, 2001). A certain level of anxiety is necessary to motivate learners to exert greater effort and meet deadlines, thereby aiding in accomplishing desired objectives in classroom tasks and activities. It has also been argued that 'not all anxiety is bad and that a certain amount of tension can have a positive effect and even facilitate learning' (Lightbown & Spada, 2021; Dörnyei, 2005). This facilitative anxiety is still under debate by researchers. Conversely, numerous studies confirm a notable negative correlation between SLA and language learner's performance (Awan et al., 2010; Chen & Lin, 2009; Ellis, 2008; McIntyre & Gardner 1989; Woodrow, 2008) indicating that numerous students, who excel in other areas of learning, may experience anxiety when acquiring a second language. This anxiety is considered as a mental block to language learning by most researchers (Baralt & Gurzynski-Weiss, 2011; Sheen 2008). Horwitz (2017) has recently contended that the relationship between anxiety and language achievement is not linear but rather curvilinear. These findings collectively underscore the necessity for additional empirical research to elucidate the role of SLA in second language acquisition.

On another dimension, some researchers debate whether anxiety should be considered a cause of poor performance or learning, as proposed by Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis. Others argue that anxiety is a consequence of inadequate achievement, aptitude, and skills, as discussed by Granschow and Spark (1996). Backman (1976) found that the two Spanish-speaking individuals with the poorest English proficiency scored both the highest and lowest on anxiety scales (as cited in Scovel, 1978, p. 132). This discrepancy highlights the complexity of the construct. Conversely, Horwitz (2001) is skeptic of any connection between anxiety and its impact on learning, stating that "the issue is unresolved" (p. 121). This scenario accentuates the importance of SLA as a focal point for second language researchers, urging them to delve into this relatively unexplored domain to examine the correlation between second language anxiety and language acquisition. Addressing the question of whether anxiety contributes constructively to learning warrants further investigation for a deeper understanding.

1.1 Purpose Statement

The purpose of the present study was to investigate and explain the role of second language anxiety (SLA)—feeling of worry, nervousness, and stress that many learners experience when learning a second language— as having positive or negative effect on language learning. The study differed from other studies in assuming that anxiety may play a role of facilitator in language learning. Some past studies which showed that anxiety may be constructive, never hypothesized that it may facilitate language learning. On the other hand, recent studies have focused only on the debilitative role of anxiety.

1.2 Research Question

- ❖ What is the effect of language learners' anxiety on second language acquisition?

1.3 Null Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female students' experiences regarding the effect of anxiety on language learning.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of different age groups students' experience towards the effect of anxiety on language learning.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of students' experience belonging to different institutions, towards the effect of anxiety on language learning.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Anxiety

Anxiety is the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system (Spielberger 1983, in Horwitz et al., 1986). Psychologists often categorize language anxiety into three: trait anxiety, state anxiety and situation specific anxiety. Trait anxiety is relatively stable personality characteristics—often being anxious. State anxiety is a transitory nervousness, experienced at a certain moment of time. Situational anxiety is anxiety experienced in a well-defined situation (MacIntyre, 2017; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). As described by Tobias & Everson (1997), anxiety encompasses a multifaceted range of emotions related to one's sense of competence, assessment of potential threats, and perception of risks in specific contexts. Consequently, experiencing anxiety while communicating in a second language, particularly

English, can profoundly impact students, affecting their educational objectives and performance.

2.2 Anxiety—Constructive or Destructive

There has always been a debate on whether anxiety acts as a facilitator or a barrier, leading to success or causing failure. Ritter (1990) argues that anxiety can manifest in either constructive or destructive ways. Constructive anxiety can ignite vitality and spur energy, such as the pre-performance jitters experienced before a creative endeavor. Conversely, destructive anxiety has the potential to induce isolation, paralysis, and may even escalate to psychological or psychosomatic illness. He believes that anxiety functions like a warning system: when an individual responds appropriately and takes action to address potential threats, it serves a constructive purpose. However, if the individual resorts to avoidance behavior, anxiety becomes detrimental. Dörnyei (2005) also mentions two different features of anxiety: Beneficial/facilitating vs. inhibitory/debilitating anxiety. He contends that anxiety isn't always inversely correlated with performance; rather, it can also serve to enhance and bolster it. At times, feeling concerned can have a beneficial and positive impact.

2.3 Second Language Anxiety

Anxiety when related with a foreign language learning is termed as "second/foreign language anxiety" (SLA/ FLA) often referred to the off-putting emotional response of the students towards language acquisition (Horwitz, 2001). Horwitz et al. (1986) perceived SLA as an intricate and multidimensional phenomenon of self perceptions, beliefs, mind-sets and behaviors related to Second language classroom learning. As noted by Papi and Khajavy (2023), L2 anxiety, extensively studied in second language acquisition, has undergone examination from multiple perspectives over recent decades. Studies can be categorized into three groups: conceptualization and operationalization of L2 anxiety, exploration of its impact on various aspects of L2 learning, and investigation of its sources. These research endeavors aim to understand the complexity and implications of L2 anxiety in language learning. Several factors have been identified in various studies as contributing to Foreign Language Anxiety. These include a lack of self-confidence (Tridinanti, 2018), insufficient self-efficacy (Bensalem, 2018), inadequate practice (Bárkányi, 2018), limited proficiency in the foreign language (Teimouri et al., 2019), deficient emotional intelligence (Chen et al., 2021), fear of making mistakes (Suparlan, 2021), insufficient exposure to comprehensible input, overreliance on the first language, cultural factors (Shan et al., 2020), socioeconomic status (Ali et al., 2021), and negative perceptions of instructors regarding students' academic performance (Liu & Wu, 2021).

2.4 Language Anxiety as social/cognitive and physical anxiety

Language anxiety has frequently been viewed from three angles. Schwarzer (1986) characterizes social anxiety as comprising feelings of tension and discomfort, negative self-assessment, and a propensity to withdraw in the presence of others (as cited in MacIntyre, 1995, p-91). Psychological anxiety encompasses emotions like embarrassment and worry, while physical anxiety manifests as uneasiness, increased heart rate, excessive perspiration, and trembling. Managing anxiety demands individual resilience and courage, leading the way to success (Young, 1992).

2.5. Research on S|LA & Language Acquisition

Research has revealed that anxiety and second language learning are associated with each other. Krashen's (1982) affective filter hypothesis also portrays anxiety as contributing negatively towards learning, and acting as a metaphorical barrier thwarting a learner's process of language acquisition. Initially, anxiety was termed as a permanent characteristic of SLL's personality. The tools utilized to assess anxiety (as formulated by Horwitz et al., 1986) were insufficient in accounting for context-specific or transient anxiety. Subsequently, researchers in second language acquisition realized that anxiety is dynamic, context-specific, and contingent upon particular circumstances. This led psychologists to introduce the concept of specific anxiety reaction, distinguishing between anxiety that is situation-specific and anxiety experienced routinely. Horwitz (2017) identified three interrelated types of performance anxieties: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. He hypothesized that anxiety might contribute to performance or learning challenges in a second language classroom, leading to the development of the Foreign Language Classroom

Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) in 1986 to assess anxiety levels. The findings revealed that many second language learners experience anxiety during the language learning process, and a notable negative correlation between anxiety levels and foreign language proficiency scores was observed.

Ganschow and Spark (1996) have also contributed in the field of anxiety and based their research initially on FLCAS but moved a step higher to find a relationship among native language skills, foreign language aptitude, and foreign language anxiety. The findings revealed that high-anxious students were not good performers on account of foreign language aptitude and native language skills. The study additionally reinforced the idea that variations in language skills could result in varying levels of anxiety, including high, average, and low levels. Other research endeavors explored the correlation between second language acquisition and specific language proficiencies, such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Cheng 1998; Cheng, 2002; Serraj & Noodin, 2013)

Woodrow (2008) also studied situation specific anxiety. She measured different factors such as fear of failing, comfort level in talking to people sharing the same native language and others factors related to oral language performance through a specially devised questionnaire and then interviews. The findings revealed a notable inverse correlation between SLA and oral language proficiency. Chen and Lin (2009) conducted a study where 120 students filled out questionnaires. Cluster analysis was utilized to identify distinct groups based on writing self-efficacy, English writing anxiety, and written General English Proficiency Test scores. Three clusters emerged, and demographic variables such as age, sex, program of study, years of English instruction, native language, and number of English-speaking acquaintances were compared across these clusters. It was found that efforts aimed at reducing writing anxiety and enhancing writing self-efficacy could potentially improve participants' writing scores. similarly noted the adverse impact of SLA on academic performance and writing competence. Awan et al. (2010) endeavored to ascertain the correlation between anxiety and various situations that induce and exacerbate anxiety. Their findings indicated a negative influence of anxiety on learning outcomes and academic performance. Additionally, they highlighted the fear of public speaking as a common source of anxiety. Serraj and Noordin

(2013) posit anxiety as a fundamental factor contributing to numerous distressing encounters in second language acquisition, potentially exerting detrimental effects on language learners' performance and accomplishments.

Likewise, Alias and Rashid (2018) examined the impact of language learning anxiety on students in Malaysian Polytechnics, where English language courses were compulsory. The absence of a placement test results in mixed proficiency levels in classrooms, leading to anxiety among students. The study aimed to correlate language learning anxiety with proficiency levels among 96 semester three Civil Engineering students. Findings revealed moderate anxiety levels, with test anxiety showing a significant correlation with language proficiency. Recommendations include careful error correction by lecturers to avoid student humiliation. Li and Wei (2023) investigated the impact of enjoyment, anxiety, and boredom on L2 achievement among junior secondary English learners in rural China. Data collected over four time points showed that anxiety negatively influenced achievement.

All the studies discussed above indicate the anxiety incapacitates learners from learning language effectively. On the contrary, there is a little done to explore the positive effect of anxiety. Ritter (1990) believes that anxiety can be constructive if it is helpful in focusing more on tasks at hand and adorns one with proactive approach. In his study, Revesz (2011) investigated how linguistic self-confidence, anxiety, and self-perceived communicative competence moderate learners' task performance. Utilizing a self-report questionnaire, the results indicated a lack of significant relationship between individual difference scores and learner accuracy and complexity. The researcher proposed the potential for negative personality traits, such as high anxiety, to prompt learners to adopt compensatory strategies aimed at mitigating these adverse characteristics. Scovel (1978) asserts that the lack of a definitive link between anxiety and second language acquisition stems from the inconsistency of anxiety measurement tools employed. Through a review of numerous studies, he highlights the ambiguous nature of the relationship between second language acquisition and anxiety, which can sometimes be positive, negative, or nonexistent. Scovel (1991) leans towards viewing anxiety as more facilitative than detrimental in the process of language learning. Djigunovic (2006) notes that

individuals with high levels of anxiety in second language acquisition tend to produce longer texts compared to those with lower anxiety levels, despite potential weaknesses in speaking skills. Additionally, there is debate regarding whether anxiety should be considered the cause or the consequence of poor achievement.

Alpert and Haber (1960), creators of the Achievement Anxiety Test aimed at gauging facilitating and/or debilitating anxiety, posit that facilitating anxiety spurs the learner to confront the new learning task, fostering approach behavior. Conversely, debilitating anxiety prompts the learner to avoid the learning task, instigating emotional tendencies toward avoidance behavior (as cited in Yanling and Guizhen, 2006). Kleinmann (1977) endeavored to elucidate the correlation between learners' avoidance behavior and anxiety. The study indicated that heightened anxiety facilitated learners in employing English structures that native speakers of their language tended to avoid. Scovel (1978) succinctly encapsulates the matter commenting that some degree of test-related concern may be beneficial, yet excessive anxiety can yield adverse outcomes.

Similarly, Spielman and Radnofsky (2001) advocated for viewing anxiety as potentially beneficial rather than solely detrimental. MacIntyre (1991) acknowledged that although several studies had shown a connection between anxiety and performance, questions persisted regarding how anxiety impacts learning. Numerous factors aside from anxiety may impede the performance or learning of second language learners. Thus, further research is warranted to comprehend the intricate role of anxiety, necessitating an open-minded approach to considering anxiety as both a facilitator and a barrier.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Method & Design

The researchers employed quantitative research methodology in the research. Survey design was used to collect data from the study sample.

3.2. Sample

The study employed convenience sampling method. The participants comprised 102 non-English speakers, including 58 males and 44 females, with ages ranging from 15 to 35 years, all enrolled in English Language Courses across five prominent institutions in Lahore, Pakistan. Two age groups

were established: the group 1 encompassing individuals aged 15 to 25 years, and the group 2 ranging from 26 to 35 years. Gender and different language institutions were considered as additional variables to explore variations in their responses towards SLA. The sample exhibited homogeneity in terms of cultural and academic background.

3.3. Instrument

The study utilized a questionnaire survey method, chosen for its suitability in capturing opinions, given the nature of the research. Its objective was to gauge students' perspectives on the role of anxiety in language learning, a methodology aligned with previous studies exploring the correlation between SLA and second language acquisition (Horwitz et al., 1986; Ganschow & Sparks, 1996). The instrument comprised 31 Likert scale items, custom-designed by the researcher to assess the impact of anxiety on English language learners. Responses were measured on a continuum ranging from 5 (Strongly Agree) to 1 (Strongly Disagree). The questions included were such as "Anxiety before my oral presentation in class is helpful in good preparation"; "Anxiety pushes me to plan and organize things properly and timely"; and "sometimes being anxious about my task, I work for perfection". The reliability coefficient (Cronbach alpha) for the instrument was .87.

3.4. Procedure

The researchers personally collected the data from the field. They visited all the selected schools and distributed questionnaires to the students included in the sample. The students completed the questionnaires in the presence of the researchers to ensure clarity and accuracy. Initially, pilot testing was conducted with one-third of the sample, and the remaining data was collected after satisfactory results from the preliminary test.

4. Findings & Discussion

4.1 Respondents' views on the Role of Anxiety

To address the research question regarding the effect of language learners' anxiety on second language acquisition—whether it plays a facilitative role or acts as a barrier—the researchers conducted descriptive analysis of the data. The percentages representing respondents' perceptions are as follows:

a. **Anxiety: A Facilitator**

A significant majority of respondents, comprising over seventy percent, expressed beliefs aligned with the notion that experiencing anxiety yields beneficial outcomes. These include enhanced focus and motivation for success, as well as improved preparation before oral presentations and heightened awareness of vocabulary usage. Additionally, respondents reported better organization and concentration, facilitating language acquisition and fostering a desire for perfect language learning as a result of anxiety before their tests/class. Moreover, respondents acknowledged that anxiety encouraged them to increase their learning pace, remain attentive during class discussions, and strive for comprehensive language knowledge while ensuring timely test preparation.

b. **Anxiety: A barrier**

Fifty percent of respondents acknowledged feeling uncomfortable in the presence of instructors and proficient language speakers in class due to anxiety. Conversely, 25 % disagreed, while the remaining 25 % expressed neutrality on the matter. Fifty-four percent of respondents admitted to feeling embarrassed when making mistakes in the language classroom, while only 23 % disagreed, with the remaining 23 % expressing neutrality. Woodrow (2008) and Awan et al. (2010) similarly corroborate these findings, noting that second language learners exhibited heightened anxiety particularly during interactions with native speakers of the language.

c. **Mixed Responses**

Forty-eight percent of students admitted that anxiety inhibits their participation in language classrooms, while 30% disagreed. Additionally, 43% of students expressed that they lose interest when the teacher introduces unfamiliar topics. Half of the respondents (50%) indicated that perceiving other students as more proficient in language skills discourages their participation in class activities, while the remaining 50% disagreed. Thirty percent of respondents agreed that the fear of other students laughing at their mistakes impairs their performance, whereas 46% disagreed. Forty percent of respondents acknowledged that second language anxiety leads to forgetting things they know in the classroom, while 41% disagreed.

d. **Changing Role—debilitative to facilitative:**

A notable response pertained to the acquisition of numerous language rules. Thirty-eight percent of learners acknowledged feeling overwhelmed by the abundance of second language rules, leading to disorientation, while thirty-one percent disagreed, and other thirty-one percent remained neutral. On the contrary, when later in the questionnaire, participants were prompted to express their agreement or disagreement with the statement 'When I am stressed about learning a large number of rules of foreign language, I become more organized,' seventy percent of respondents affirmed that feeling anxious about mastering a significant amount of new material led to increased organization and categorization of rules, with only nine percent expressing disagreement. This implies that despite experiencing anxiety, individuals find it beneficial in enhancing their organizational skills that helped them perform better during language assessments.

4.2 Examining Null Hypothesis

The researchers used inferential statistics (t-test and One-way ANOVA) to test null hypotheses.

a. **Ho1= There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female students' experiences towards effect of anxiety on language learning.**

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the mean scores of male and female students' experiences (on the basis of their responses) towards effect of anxiety on language learning.

Table 1
t- test comparing mean score on effect of anxiety on language learning on the basis of gender.

Dependent Variables	Gender	N	M	SD	T	Sig
Anxiety on Language Learning Scale	Male	44	104.68	17.65	4.785	0.000
	Female	58	118.31	11.00		

According to the table 1, there was a significant difference in the mean scores of female students' responses (M= 118.31, SD=11.00) and male students' responses (M= 104.68, SD= 17.65) towards effects of SLA on language acquisition; t (100) = 4.785, p =.000. These results suggest that females' attitudes towards the role of anxiety and its effects, whether facilitative or debilitating, on language learning differ from, and are stronger than those of males. Furthermore, the data, with a t-value of 4.785 and p-value less than .05 (p = .000), indicate a significant difference between the two groups. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. This aligns with Spielberger's (1983) findings, which indicated that females exhibit greater emotional resilience than males during periods of heightened anxiety. Thus, this prior research bolsters the current study's findings in this regard.

b. Ho2: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of different age groups students' experience towards effect of anxiety on language learning.

Table 2
t- test comparing mean score on effect of anxiety on language learning on the basis of age groups of students.

Dependent Variables	Age Groups	N	M	SD	T	Sig
Anxiety on Language Learning Scale	15-25	69	116.63	11.13	4.22	0.000
	26-35	33	103.63	19.94		

According to table 2, there was a significant difference in the mean scores of age group (15-25) responses (M= 116.63, SD=11.13) and age group II (26-35) responses (M= 103.63, SD= 19.94) towards effects of SLA on language learning; t (100) = 4.222, p =.000. These results show that attitudes of students belonging to the age group of 15-25 differ from those of the age group of 26-35 years regarding the effect of anxiety on language learning and are more sensitive to the facilitative or destructive role of anxiety. The t-test (t = 4.222, p = .000) for the mean difference indicates that this difference is statistically significant. The p-value is also in the tail of the curve, so the null hypothesis has been rejected.

c. Ho3=There is no significant difference in the mean scores of students' experience belonging to different institutions, towards effect of anxiety on language learning.

Table 3
ANOVA test comparing students' experiences about effect of anxiety on language learning on the basis of different institutions

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Groups based on Different Institutions	Between groups	7974.289	4	1993.572	11.396	.000
	Within Groups	16968.73	97	174.93		
	Total	24943.02	101			

Table 3 displays the findings of One-Way ANOVA, which reveal that there is a significant difference in students' experiences who belonged to different institutions about effect of anxiety on language acquisition. There is a significant difference (F=11.39, p=0.000) in students' experiences belonging to different institutions about effect of anxiety on language learning. The researchers applied LSD to identify the differences between institutes where these students were enrolled.

Table 4
LSD multiple comparisons of perceptions about effect of anxiety on language learning on the basis of institutions enrolled

(I) Language Center	(J) Language Center	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Institution 1	Institution 2	-7.31429	5.55175	.191	-18.3330	3.7044
	Institution 3	-7.21111	3.94332	.071	-15.0375	.6153
	Institution 4	-21.85000*	3.81811	.000	-29.4279	-14.2721
	institution 5	-18.78519*	3.50860	.000	-25.7488	-11.8216
Institution 2	Institution 1	7.31429	5.55175	.191	-3.7044	18.3330
	Institution 3	.10317	5.89147	.986	-11.5898	11.7961
	Institution 4	-14.53571*	5.80840	.014	-26.0638	-3.0076
	institution 5	-11.47090*	5.60980	.044	-22.6048	-.3370
Institution 3	Institution 1	7.21111	3.94332	.071	-.6153	15.0375
	Institution 2	-.10317	5.89147	.986	-11.7961	11.5898
	Institution 4	-14.63889*	4.29714	.001	-23.1675	-6.1103
	institution 5	-11.57407*	4.02464	.005	-19.5619	-3.5863
Institution 4	Institution 1	21.85000*	3.81811	.000	14.2721	29.4279
	Institution 2	14.53571*	5.80840	.014	3.0076	26.0638
	Institution 3	14.63889*	4.29714	.001	6.1103	23.1675
	institution 5	3.06481	3.90203	.434	-4.6796	10.8093
institution 5	Institution 1	18.78519*	3.50860	.000	11.8216	25.7488
	Institution 2	11.47090*	5.60980	.044	.3370	22.6048
	Institution 3	11.57407*	4.02464	.005	3.5863	19.5619
	Institution 4	-3.06481	3.90203	.434	-10.8093	4.6796

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

According to the table 4, there was a significant difference in students' attitudes towards SLA among the five institutions, as determined by a one-way ANOVA (F (4, 97) = 11.396, p = .000, α = .05). The study involved students from five different

institutions, and it was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference in their attitudes towards anxiety. The results of the one-way ANOVA in Table 3 indicate significant differences ($p < .05$) between groups of students regarding anxiety. The LSD post-hoc test for multiple comparisons shows that the largest mean differences occur among students from different institutions. Table 4 demonstrates that students from institution 1 exhibit the highest sensitivity in their attitudes toward anxiety. The results suggest that variations in institutional environments and teaching methodologies across different institutions may contribute to differences in students' attitudes toward anxiety in second language learning. Additionally, in line with Feng and Rawian (2023), the findings suggest that educators should take into account these factors when designing language instruction programs. This approach aims to create a supportive and conducive learning environment that minimizes anxiety and enhances students' language learning experiences.

5. Conclusion

The study sought to examine the impact of second language anxiety on language learners, exploring the possibility that anxiety might serve as a facilitator in language acquisition, despite commonly being perceived as a hindrance. The results reveal that anxiety facilitates learning in several ways. It makes learners more focused and motivated for success. Anxiety also helps with preparation before oral presentations or tests and increases awareness of vocabulary usage. It encourages learners to plan and organize effectively and concentrate more. Additionally, anxiety motivates learners to interact with proficient speakers, increase their learning pace, and stay alert in class. It also promotes in-depth knowledge of the language and ensures timely preparation. Anxiety was perceived as a hindrance specifically during class communication, as students feared ridicule and embarrassment due to mistakes, which hindered their speaking abilities and confidence. The findings are supported by Scovel (1991) who suggests that facilitating anxiety "motivates the learner to fight the new learning task, preparing the students emotionally for approach behavior", in contrast, debilitative anxiety, motivates the learner to "flee" the new learning task; it stimulates the individual emotionally to adopt avoidance behaviour (p.22). Hence, the findings corroborate the notion that anxiety can also enhance

learning, as suggested by Alpert and Haber (1960), Chastain (1975), Scovel (1978), and Kleinmann (1977). The study also sought to examine the relationships between age groups, gender, and institutional affiliation. The findings revealed significant statistical differences in the mean scores across all variables. Furthermore, females, individuals aged 15-25, and students from institution one exhibited greater sensitivity to the impact of second language anxiety (SLA) on language acquisition. However, further research efforts, including longitudinal studies, are warranted to provide a more comprehensive investigation into the relationship between SLA and second language acquisition.

6. Implications/ Recommendations

The current study holds significant relevance in today's global landscape, characterized by heightened competition in English language acquisition and communication. Therefore, it is imperative to explore the affective factors that both impede and shape second language acquisition. It is counterproductive to solely associate anxiety with negative outcomes; while it may hinder learning in specific contexts, this effect is not universal. Thus, identifying the root causes of anxiety and implementing effective solutions are essential steps moving forward.

Alternative factors such as motivation (Granschow & Sparks, 1996), self-efficacy (Cheng 2001), and recognition of the significance of English (Trang et al., 2013) could potentially influence anxiety to assume a constructive role in language acquisition. Due to the intricate nature of the construct and the conflicting findings in previous research, anxiety's precise function remains indeterminate, with evidence suggesting both beneficial and detrimental effects on learning (Granschow and Sparks, 1996). Therefore, rather than emphasizing the negative aspects, researchers should focus on identifying other contributing factors, such as possessing adequate skills, willingness, and motivation, which may correlate with subpar language learning outcomes.

Furthermore, it is crucial to recognize anxiety as a commonplace human emotion, except in cases where it manifests in acute psychological or clinical forms. Whether encountered in second language acquisition or everyday human

interactions, anxiety is a natural phenomenon experienced by most individuals.

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