

ANXIETY IN SECOND LANGUAGE PAKISTANI LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

The present research study probed the causes of anxiety in second language learners. This research aimed to explore the cause of anxiety and its effects on second language learners. To attain the objectives the instruments used were a Likert scale questionnaire and classroom observation. The sample was taken from the 50 students of Kinnaird College and The Home Economics College. The data was analysed on SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) by using bar charts after the data collection. The findings suggest that anxiety originates from the learner's self, class environment, teachers' behaviour and learning difficulties such as grammar, tense, and vocabulary especially the fear of being negatively evaluated by the teacher. Pakistani language learners commonly express feelings of anxiety while learning English as a second language. The negative feelings of anxiety result in negative behaviours of students. So, it is recommended that teachers provide a friendly environment to students in class.

Keywords: anxiety, Likert scale questionnaire, classroom observation, fear, teachers' behaviour

1. INTRODUCTION

Many language learners intuitively believe that anxiety hinders language acquisition and is one of the most researched factors in psychology and education. (Horwitz, 2001:13)

Anxiety may refer to such times when we feel 'anxious' about some circumstance. It has both physical and mental impacts on the human body. Physical impact includes high blood pressure, sweating, and trembling, and mental impact includes negative thinking, difficulty in concentrating and comparing yourself with others.

According to psychologists, anxiety is a psychological concept that is typically defined as a feeling of apprehension, a nebulous worry that is only tangentially connected to an object. (Scovell, 1991:18 cites Hilgard, Atkinson, & Atkinson, 1971). Three primary categories of anxiety have been identified by psychologists: situation-specific anxiety, state anxiety, and trait anxiety. According to Scovel (1978: quoted in Ellis (1994:479), trait anxiety is a personality attribute that is "a more permanent predisposition to be anxious." Individual

differences exist in trait anxiety, such as the ways in which people have trained themselves to react to and handle stress. It's also been suggested that anything that makes one person feel stressed and anxious might not make another feel anything at all. These individuals frequently exhibit high degrees of anxiety features and are agitated and nervous. An important test is one example of a stimulus that might cause anxiety, and state anxiety is a temporary form of that fear. Horwitz (2001:113) cites Spielberger (1983). State anxiety is an emotional reaction to a specific dread. Students' academic performance may also be impacted. Anxiety that is situation-specific is defined as persistent and multifaceted (Macintyre Gardner, 1991a:113). Certain types of situations, including public speaking, exams, or class engagement, can trigger it (Ellis, 1994:480).

For many students, learning a second language can occasionally be a terrible process. It is astounding how many students claim to be worried language learners. Between one-third and one-half of the kids are said to be suffering from crippling levels of

language anxiety, according to Worde (1998). It is claimed that a variety of emotional elements influence one's capacity for learning. These consist of motivation, anxiety, intelligence, and attitudes. Anxiety is the primary influencing element among these.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Second language learners frequently face anxiety, nervousness and stress while learning a second language. This problem not only arises in beginners but also in highly advanced learners in different circumstances.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the causes of anxiety in second-language Pakistani learners.
2. To suggest ways to reduce language anxiety in the learners.

1.3. Research Questions

1. What are the factors that cause anxiety in second language learners?
2. What strategies can be used to overcome anxiety in second language learning?

1.4. Significance of the study

Anyone who acquires a second language has to face fear and anxiety. Various researches are also being conducted on language anxiety as it affects second language learning, achievement and performances of students. This study will be of great interest to language instructors and students. Students feel uncomfortable in classrooms as English is not our native language. This also creates difficulty in language learning. Students experience frustration. Our education system is formed in such a way that it examines students' weaknesses rather than their strengths. Students need to learn the techniques to improve their performance. From this research educational institutions, teachers and students can get useful information. They can use the techniques to make less stressful atmosphere and to reduce anxiety.

2. Literature Review

One major barrier to learning a second language is anxiety. Scovel (1978) reported that there was a very wide range of data regarding anxiety and second

language acquisition. He claims that if it is possible to distinguish between anxiety that is enabling and anxiety that is crippling, then uncertainties can be cleared up. In a challenging scenario, anxiety is facilitated. Teachers can lessen anxiety by employing a variety of techniques. The methods used to measure anxiety also reflect the complexity of the condition. Three methods are used in research to quantify anxiety: self-reports from participants, which reflect internal sentiments and behaviors; behavioral observation; and physiological measurement, such as blood pressure tests (Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2001; Daly, 1991).

Many studies on anxiety in second languages have been conducted, but it has proven challenging for researchers to paint a clear picture of how anxiety affects language acquisition and performance. On it, there's a little confusion. Some researchers claim that there is a negative correlation between anxiety and achievement because anxious students are less likely to meet expectations.

A comparison of the experimental studies looking at the connection between anxiety and learning a second language is, in some ways, confusing since it presents contradictory data and shows that anxiety is a multifaceted, complex concept, according to Philip (quoted in Shams, 2006:8). One could argue that anxiousness helps the student and inspires them. Low anxiety and good achievement are positively correlated. Facilitating anxiety, in accordance with Scovel (1991:22), encourages the student to "fight" the new learning activity.

Shams (2006:5) claims that scholars studying second language acquisition did not start examining the part motivational and personality factors play in second language acquisition until the late 20th century. Due to its detrimental effects on students' performance, anxiety has gained recognition as a crucial topic of study for second language learners.

According to Young (1991), there are six elements that can contribute to anxiety: learner-teacher interactions, classroom procedures, learner views about language acquisition, learner-teacher ideas about language teaching, and personal and interpersonal issues. Three sources of language anxiety were recognized by Horwitz et al. (1986): test anxiety, assessment anxiety, and dread of communication. Because of their anxiety, students

often experience anxiety when they make mistakes on tests. or when pupils receive subpar grades.

Horwitz et al. (1986:127) described three linked performance tasks while accounting for linguistic anxiety in relation to performance appraisal.

- a. fear of not being liked.
- b. test anxiety.
- c. fear of not being liked.

Students can take action when they feel a little anxious. For instance, it can encourage students to consistently attend class, read their assigned readings, turn in assignments on time, and prepare for tests. Additionally, it encourages pupils to pay close attention in class. On the other hand, anxiousness can also have a negative impact on pupils' performance. We refer to it as crippling anxiety. Excessive anxiety causes students to get distracted and lose focus. It's advisable to approach most challenging jobs with a modest amount of worry (Kirkland, 1971; Yerkes & Dodson, 1908). Take assignments that require creativity and problem-solving methods, for instance. Most often, students experience anxiety when they make mistakes. To make up for this, they study more, which ultimately leads to frustration. It makes sense that they would become frustrated when their efforts yield poor grades. Additionally, a student who is apprehensive might not want to attend class and might put off studying. Students that are anxious believe they are not as competent as other students. Students who are anxious also fear making mistakes.

3. Methodology

3.1. Qualitative Study

Anxiety during second language acquisition is described by Horwitz et al. (1986) as a subjective experience characterized by tension. It differs from person to person as well. It was believed that the qualitative approach would be a better means of recording the experiences (Cohen et al., 2000:23). By attempting to comprehend an individual from within, the researcher can gain a subjective understanding of the world of human experience by determining the reasons and experiences of language anxiety among students..

3.2. Population

College-level students have participated in this study endeavor. Two Lahore colleges are the sources of the data being gathered.

3.3. Research Sample

The samples in this study are selected through non-probability sampling in which respondents are selected through convenience. The procedure involved selecting those students who were conveniently available.

The sample has been chosen from the college level. Two colleges in Lahore were selected for this research. A sample of 50 girls was selected. Students from Kinnaird College and Home Economics College were selected.

3.4. Instruments

A self-constructed questionnaire was been developed. Questionnaires were conducted in a second language. A 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, is used in the questionnaire. It discusses the feelings, beliefs, and kinds of anxiety that students encounter in the classroom. The students' individual classroom experiences are highlighted.

There were five points on a Likert scale for each of the 19 items in the questionnaire: strongly agree (point 5), agree (point 4), neutral (point 3), disagree (point 2), and strongly disagree (point 1). For example, if it is asked that is the student scared of making mistakes while speaking in English. The most anxious student will strongly agree whereas the least anxious student will strongly disagree. Students' behaviours in classrooms were also observed. In addition, teachers' techniques and activities were also observed.

3.5. Data Collection Procedures

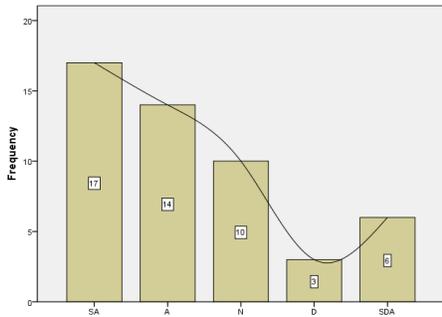
In this study data collection procedure include Questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed among students of two colleges which are Home Economics and Kinnaird College. The data was collected from 50 students. In some came cases extra time was also given.

3.6. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics analysis was used in analysing the data. A structure questionnaire was used as data collection tool. The responses were carefully analysed. After the data collection data was analysed on SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) by using bar charts. The populated

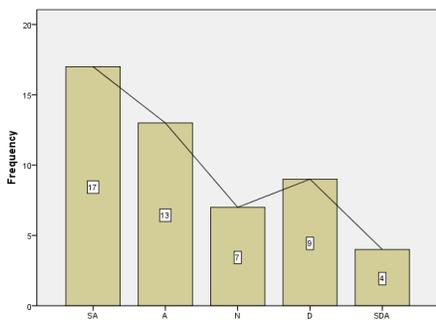
included students from two different colleges. 25 students were selected from Home Economics College and 25 from the Kinnaird College. Students were selected by using a convenient sampling technique. It included 19 questions about the causes

Q1. I feel that learning and speaking English as a second language is difficult.



The findings show that a sizable portion of students—17%—believe that learning and using English as a second language is challenging. Just 14% of students agree. 10% of students hold a neutral opinion, while 6% strongly disagree that learning English as a second language is challenging. 3% of pupils, however, disagreed.

Q2. I get panic when I have to speak in English without preparation.



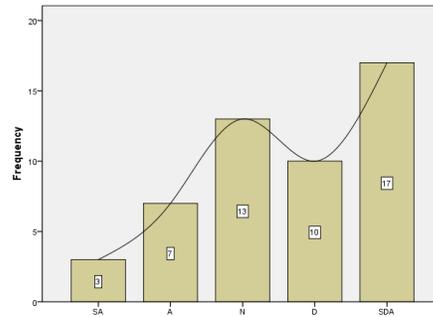
According to the research, 15% of pupils feel anxious when they have to talk in English without having practice. Only 12 percent of students agree. Just 9% of respondents deny feeling anxious when compelled to speak in English without any prior preparation. Just 7% are uninterested. However, 4% of students strongly disagreed.

of anxiety in second language learning. Findings and conclusions were drawn and conclusions were given.

4. Analysis And Interpretation of Data

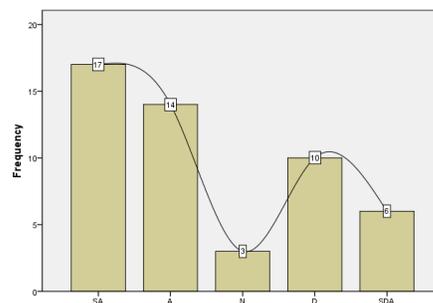
This chapter focuses on the results generated by the SPSS applied in the research. The data collected in the form of questionnaires was subject to analysis.

Q3. I get scared when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.



The majority of students—17%—strongly disagreed with the assertion that they become afraid when they can't understand what their English-speaking teacher is saying. Students who are neutral make up 13%. The 10% of pupils disagree, while 7% agree and 3% strongly agree that they become afraid when they can't understand what the teacher is saying in English.

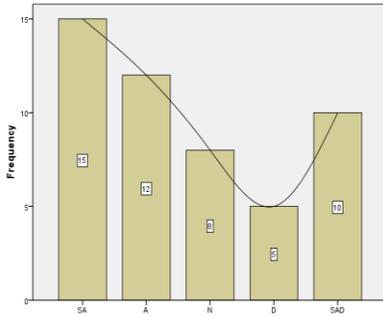
Q4. I become nervous when the teacher asks me unexpected questions and I start to forget the things.



The findings show that a significant portion of students—17%—get anxious when teachers pose unexpected questions, which causes them to lose track of what they've learned. 14% of students concur. 10% of respondents contest the claim that

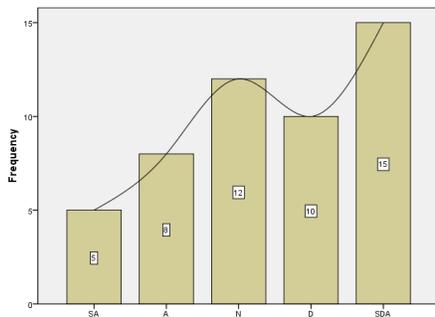
they get anxious when a teacher asks unexpected questions and I start to forget things. Students who are 6% strongly disagree. 3% of pupils, however, are unbiased.

Q5. I get embarrassed when I have to answer something in class in English.



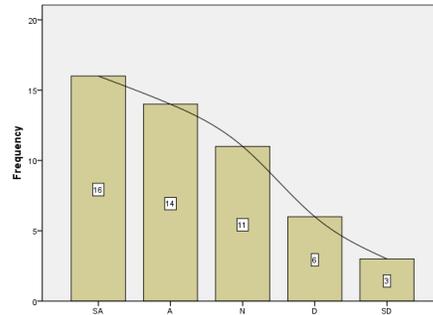
Results illustrate that large number of students which are 15% get embarrassed when they have to answer something in class in English. 12% students agrees. 10% strongly disagrees that they get embarrassed when they have to answer something in class in English. 8% students are neutral. Whereas 5% students disagreed.

Q6. I feel confident when I have to speak English in front of class.



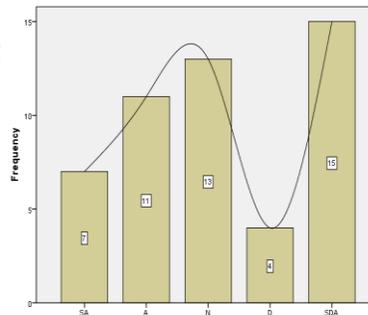
According to the results most of the students which are 16% agrees that they tremble when they know their name is going to be called in the class. 14% students are neutral. 10% students strongly agrees whereas 6% students disagrees that they tremble when they know their name is going to be called in the class and 6% students disagrees.

Q7. I'm afraid that other students will laugh at me when I will speak in English.



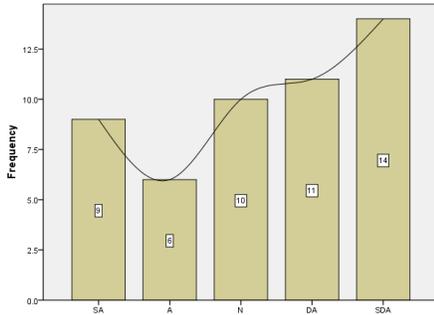
The majority of students, or 16%, strongly agree, according to the results, that they are scared other classmates will make fun of them if they communicate in English. Just 14% of students agree. Neutral students make about 11% of the student body. Comparatively, 6% of students disagree that they worry that other classmates will make fun of them if they speak in English.

Q8. I get worried about failing in my English language class.



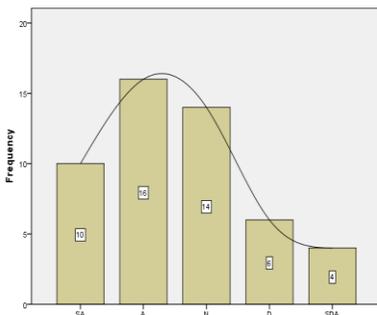
Results shows that large number of students which are 15% strongly disagrees that they don't get worried about failing in language class. 13% students are neutral. 11% students agrees that they get worried about failing in language class. 7% students strongly agrees whereas 11% students agrees.

Q9. I don't feel pressure to prepare for my language class.



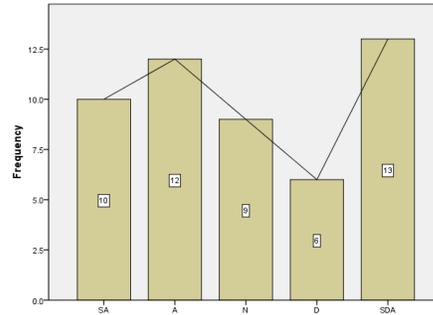
According to the results, 14% of students strongly believe that they are under no obligation to study for language classes. Just 11% of students are in disagreement. 10% of students are indifferent, 9% strongly agree, and 6% agree that they don't feel under pressure to get ready for their language class.

Q10. I tremble when I know that my name is going to be called in the class.



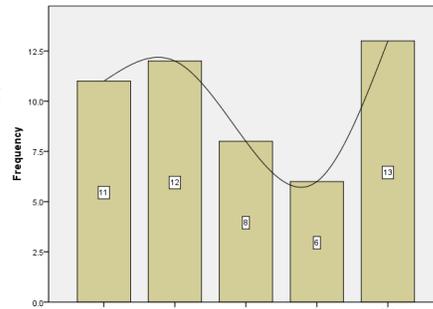
The majority of pupils, or 16% of the total, concur, according to the data, that they shiver when they hear their name called in class. 14% of pupils have no opinion. Students disagree that they shiver when they hear their name called in class, whereas 6% disagree that 10% of students definitely agree.

Q11. For fear of being laughed at by others, I don't ask questions in class.



Results shows that large number of students which are 13% strongly disagreed that due to fear of being laughed at by others they don't ask questions in class. 12% students agrees. 10% students strongly agrees that due to fear of being laughed at by others they don't ask questions in class. 9% students responded neutrally while 6% students disagreed.

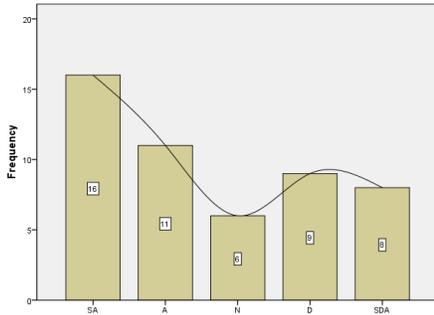
Q12. I enjoy English lessons in class because I am comfortable with this level of English.



Majority of the students that is 13% said that they enjoy English lessons in class because they are comfortable with this level of English. 12% students are neutral. 11% strongly agrees .5 % disagrees that they enjoy English lessons in class because they are comfortable with this level of English. While 1% strongly disagrees.

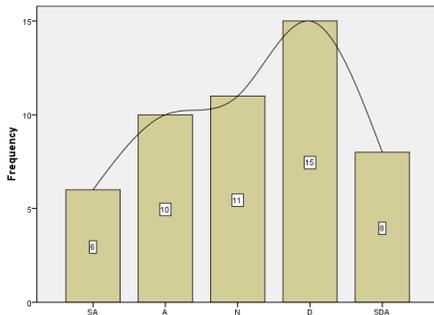


Q13. I feel more anxious in my language class than in my any other class.



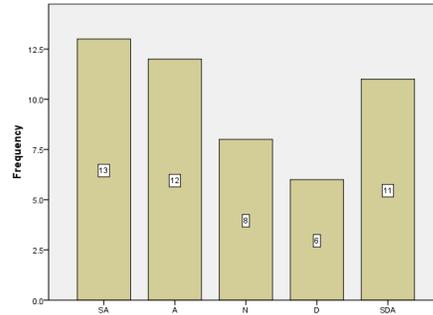
Results shows that 16% students strongly agrees that they feel more anxious in language class than in any other class and 11% students agrees . 9% students disagrees that they feel more anxious in language class than in any other class. 8 % students strongly agrees whereas 6% students are neutral.

Q14. I am afraid that will my teachers be ready to correct my every mistake.



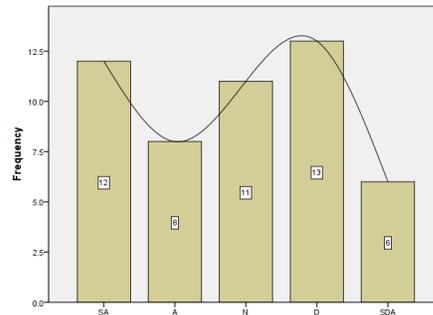
Results shows that a large number of students which are 15% disagrees that they are afraid that will their teachers be ready to correct their every mistake . 11% students are neutral . 10% students agress that they are afraid that will their teachers be ready to correct their every mistake . 8% students strongly disagrees. Whereas 6 % students strongly agrees.

Q15. I often don't feel like going to my English class.



Results shows that a large number of students which are 13% strongly agrees that they often don't feel like going to English class. 12% students agrees. 11 students strongly disagrees that they often don't feel like going to English class. 8% students are neutral whereas 6 % students disagrees.

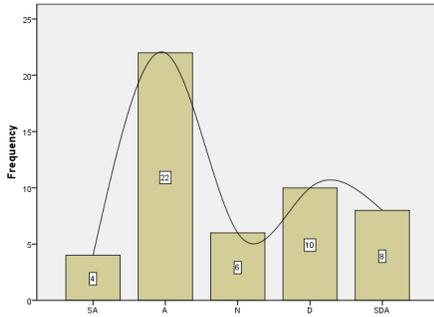
Q16. I do not understand why people become so upset about language class.



According to the results, 13% of students disagree that they don't know why people get so worked up about language classes. Just 12% of students strongly agree. Neutral students make about 11% of the student body. While 6% of students strongly disagree, 8% of students say that they do not understand why people get so worked up about language class.

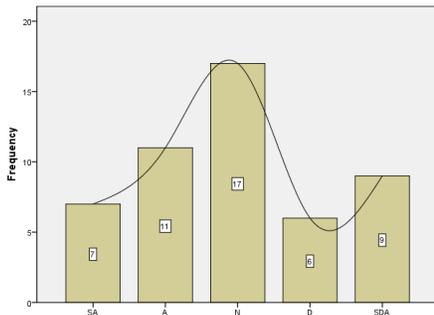


Q17. I am afraid of making mistakes in class.



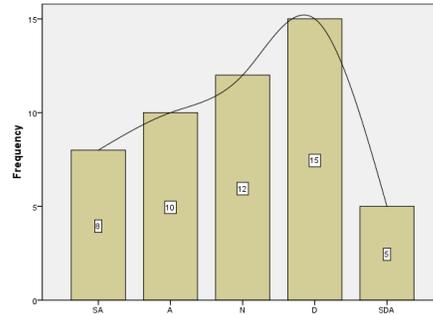
The findings show that while 10% of students disagree, the majority of students—22%—agree that they are terrified of making mistakes in class. Of the students, 8% strongly disagree. 4% of students strongly agree that they are not frightened to make mistakes in class, whereas 6% of students are neutral.

Q18. I feel that other students are better at language class than I am.



The findings indicate that a sizable portion of pupils—17%—were neutral, and 11% thought that other students did a better job in language class. Nine percent say they strongly agree. While 9% strongly disagree, 7% strongly agree that other pupils perform better in language class.

Q19. I am scared of making mistakes while speaking English.



Results illustrate that large number of students which are 15% are not really scared of making mistakes while speaking in English. 12% students are neutral. 10% agrees that they are scared of making mistakes while speaking in English. 8% are very much scared of making mistakes. Whereas 5% students strongly disagreed.

5. Discussion

The main objective of this study was to identify the factors that contribute to anxiety during second language acquisition and the ways in which anxiety affects performance and learning. A questionnaire was used in the qualitative approach of study. The research's conclusions are based on college-level students. Anxiety types, as well as circumstances and actions that elicit them, are covered. The majority of pupils concurred that anxiety hinders language acquisition. Students that suffer from anxiety struggle academically since they communicate less in class and don't participate as much in activities. Presentations make the classroom more formal, which makes the majority of kids anxious. Anxiety might also arise when speaking in front of the class or the teacher. The majority of pupils experience anxiety and confidence loss. Price (1991:105) stated that a significant proportion of students considered oral presentations to be anxiety-inducing. Koch and Terrell (1991), Young (1990, quoted in Young, 1991:429), and Price (1991) all observed this. Additionally, learners become anxious when they make mistakes. "A fear of appearing awkward, foolish, and incompetent in the eyes of learners peers or others," according to Jones (2004:31). Most of the time, students are terrified to make mistakes in front

of their teachers because they believe it would lower their grade.

The common types of anxiety includes fear of being fail in class, thinking that other students are better at language than they are and test anxiety. Teachers play an important role. The teacher should provide friendly environment in class to make students comfortable. Teachers can do this by analysing students learning needs and ability. There is no doubt that teachers supportive attitude with continuous effects can bring significant difference not only in creating student centred classroom but also facilitate students learning process. The teacher should use such evaluation techniques to assess students performance their strengths and weaknesses. Not only teachers are responsible for students anxiety but students should themselves take the responsibility of their learning. Active learning should take place in class.

The signs of anxiety include rubbing palms, breathlessness, poor performance, less eye contact, hesitation, use of broken sentences or quickly finishing the conversation. Young (1992,169: cited in Ohata, 2005:150) gave some suggestions to teachers which are :

- a. Pay attention to the signals that students give you;
- b. identify the behaviors for what they are
- c. have faith in your own judgment; and
- d. take steps to lessen language anxiety.

The classroom environment should be less formal where students can make mistakes. Teachers should try to build confidence among students by telling them that making mistakes is a part of learning process and they should try to correct their mistakes instead of feeling shy. If individual attention is provided by the teachers, it can also reduce anxiety among students. Students feel more comfortable if the teacher is more like a friend and less like an authority. Language anxiety needs special attention of the instructor.

6. Conclusion

This study deals with two main questions which are what are the causes of anxiety in second language learning and what strategies can be used to overcome these problems. The sources of anxiety, types of learner's anxiety and anxiety provoking situations were also discussed. This study is conducted through

questionnaire from the students of college level of Kinnaird College and Home Economics College. The results of this study are based on questionnaire and on observation of students and teachers in class. Most of the participants agreed that language anxiety effects language learning process. Learners' anxiety has negative effect on learning. Students mostly feel anxious when they have to speak in front of class or when they are unable to understand what the teachers is saying and fear of negative evaluation. It is seen that feeling of anxiety becomes threatening when the process of error correction becomes more humiliating. Students lack of confidence is also one of the main causes of anxiety. They feel that it is a complex task and easily gets discouraged.

Teachers need to be good observers and need to identify what situation can be improved. Such learning environment should be provided to learners that should be encouraging. The teachers should take steps to minimize the effect of anxiety in class. Counselling should be provided to the students. Environment of the classroom plays an important role in making learner comfortable or uncomfortable. Classroom environment should be friendly and new techniques should be used to lesson L2 anxiety. Teacher should not discourage students and avoid criticism. Counselling of students should also be done to overcome anxiety. It is true that teacher's supportive attitude towards students' anxiety can make significant contribution not only in creating friendly classroom environment but facilitates students learning process in long run. Teacher should also locate strengths and weaknesses of students and provide suggestion to students. For reducing language anxiety teacher should pay attention to learners' affective domain. The teacher should try to reduce anxiety and build confidence among students.

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