

The Impact of Language Anxiety on Academic Achievement among ESL Learners

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Inspiring Excellence

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The Impact of Language Anxiety on Academic Achievement among ESL Learners

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By

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Declaration

I hereby assure that the study presented in this dissertation is my own research work to the best of my knowledge and belief. The contribution of other sources and information has been acknowledged wherever they have been used. I have not copied it from any other student, work or from any other institution.

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Dedication

This work is in dedication to my parents specially my mother who supports me in every ups and down of my life and always inspires me to do my best. Their blessings and encouragement have always been a source of motivation and power for me.

Acknowledgement

Expressing my heartfelt gratitude to the Almighty Allah who has bestowed me with His blessings, I would like to start. I am truly thankful to Allah for giving me the physical as well mental strength to accomplish this research and to figure out the result successfully. Then I am deeply indebted to Dr. Asifa Sultana miss who is undoubtedly cooperative, helpful and sincere supervisor. Her guidance, advice and generous academic as well practical knowledge has shown me insights on the paper. Along with that, her support has inspired me to complete the study on time. Furthermore, I am grateful to all those students and honorable teachers who have behaved warmly as well as cooperated with me and have also participated as respondents. In addition, I wish to thank the authority of the selected Universities. Without their cooperation data collection would have become impossible. I am thankful to my family members for their support and encouragement that eventually helps me to complete the research work successfully. Their support, inspiration and care have made me dedicated to work sincerely for the research.

Abstract

Anxiety, kind of emotion which can be considered as complicated state of mind. In learning English as a foreign language classroom context language anxiety is one of the most significant variables. Anxiety influences learner physically and psychologically that makes learner uncomfortable in the ESL classroom. Therefore, making better classroom environment where students feel less anxious is one of the current challenges to ensure effective learning. In this research, a survey had been conducted to analyze 50 students from BRAC University and National University. And the result indicated that 96% of the undergraduate students of BRAC and National University had foreign language classroom anxiety that influences on their normal learning process. The possible sources of foreign language anxiety along with different strategies that can be adapted to reduce foreign language classroom anxiety had been identified. The objective of this study is to examine learner's level of anxiety in foreign language classroom context, to find out possible sources of foreign language anxiety, and also to suggest possible ways to reduce anxiety in the ESL classroom. To conduct the study different types of instruments had been used including Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) of Horwitz (1986) that consists of 33 items, structured in a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." "The use of Likert-scale questionnaires seems to be well established in L2 research, and reliable, valid, Likert-scale questionnaires have value when the data they yield are appropriately analyzed" (Turner,1993, p.738). The data collected from the participants were analyzed through SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solutions) version13.0 Windows and to calculate the means and standard deviations. Descriptive analysis such as mean and standard deviation performed for each item and each kind of anxiety. "SPSS 13.0 Base software runs on the following platforms: Windows XP, 2000, and Me. It also can be run on

Windows 98, but its speed may be slower. The software requires a Pentium compatible computer with a minimum of 128MB of RAM and 220MB of free hard drive space for the various files, including space required for temporary files. Add-on modules such as exact statistics need 512MB of RAM if it is to be used for anything but small tables. Graphics require a SVGA monitor or better” (Hilbe,2005, p.185).

Keywords: Anxiety, foreign language anxiety, source, reduce, communicative techniques.

Table of contents

Declaration.....	3
Dedication.....	4
Acknowledgement.....	5
Abstract.....	6
Table of contents.....	7-8
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	9-12
1.0 Introduction.....	9-10
1.1 Problem statement.....	10
1.2 Purpose of the study.....	11
1.3 Central research questions/ objective of the study.....	11
1.4 Significance of the study.....	11
1.5 Delimitation.....	12
1.6 Limitation.....	12
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	13-21
2.0 Introduction.....	13
2.1 What is Anxiety?.....	13-14
2.2 Types of anxiety.....	14-15
2.3 Sources of language anxiety.....	15-16
2.4 Foreign language classroom anxiety scale.....	16-18
2.5 Communicative techniques and anxiety.....	18-20
2.6 Ways to reduce foreign language anxiety in the classroom.....	21

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	22-25
3.0 Introduction.....	22
3.1 Participants.....	22
3.2 Procedure.....	22-23
3.3. Instruments.....	23
3.3.1 Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCS).....	23
3.4 Data Analysis.....	25
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....	26-39
4.0 Introduction.....	26
Language anxiety status of the University students according to sex and institution....	26
Correlation between language anxiety and academic achievement.....	27
Frequency and Percentage of the foreign language anxiety.....	27-28
4.1. Analysis of the student's responses.....	28-39
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION.....	42-43
REFERENCES.....	44-47
APPENDICES.....	48-56
Appendix A.....	48-51
Appendix B.....	52-56

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Anxiety is a kind of emotion which can be considered as complicated state of mind. Anyone can be affected by anxiety. The feeling of anxiety is associated with fear. When we are afraid of something we know the reasons but for the anxiety, the causes are not specific, sometime it is vague. Anxiety manipulates our thought process and also regulates our feeling. We all feel anxiety at some point in our life but for some people it becomes very severe that hampers their normal lifestyle. Similarly, most of the learners go through anxiety to perform in the second language in the process of language learning. The learners do not feel the type of ease they feel for using L1. Sometimes knowing the content may not help for the feeling of anxiety. Anxiety filters out available language input that make learning very difficult one. Language anxiety influences students' performance most among the other affective factors. Language researchers are very concerned about the foreign language learners and also their affective factors. Thus Foreign language learning situations seem to be threatening for the learners who go through a high level of Anxiety. Therefore, their performance become poor in the class. According to MacIntyre & Gardner (1989), learner's learning anxiety influences their performance (p.251–275). Students experiencing high level of communicative anxiety tend to have lower scores on their oral as well as the written vocabulary test. Gardner, Tremblay and Masgoret (1997) found out from their research that foreign language anxiety is the most powerful variable that negatively affects learners' performance is correlated with language anxiety. Olivares-Cuhat (2010) also studied on the relative importance of various learner variables such as cognitive, meta-cognitive and affective variables on foreign language

performance to prove that foreign language anxiety is the important factor in learning a foreign or second language. The concern in Foreign language anxiety and its relation with achievement have increased since last few decades. According to initial studies language anxiety can be considered as a facilitator. To support the studies, a lot of work has been done that indicates achievement can be slowed down for language anxiety. Scovel (1978), to assess foreign language anxiety various measures had been used. Therefore, results were very different (p.129–142).

1.1 Problem statement

In university level students of different educational background and culture are found. Both Bengali medium and English medium students are studying in same university. In Bangladesh context, the students of Bengali medium are taught in GTM (grammar translation method). Through this process, students cannot be able to develop the communicative functions of the second language. They may know the rules and grammaticality but most of the time cannot produce communicative language. Moreover, most of the Bengali medium schools of our country do not have any speaking and listening type activity in their academic curriculum. So, students cannot be able to develop their speaking and listening skills. The only focus in Bengali medium schools is to develop good writing skills. According to Mukalel (2013) said that GTM assists to gain the skill of “flawless writing” (p.55). Therefore, students of Bengali medium background experiences different types of language anxiety related symptoms. Some of the problems are extreme level and some are mild. Students are struggling inside to cope with the new environment where they have to use their L2 for classroom discussion as well as participation. Therefore, it becomes very difficult for them to switch their language learning process from GTM to communicative teaching approach. The number of Bengali medium

students are comparatively high than English medium students. As most of the students in a class are struggling with language anxiety it actually affects their normal learning process.

1.2 Significance of the study

This study would try to identify undergraduate students' anxiety perspectives on their feeling of foreign language anxiety in the ESL classroom. In addition, this paper also tries to find out the ESL classroom activities that makes learners more anxious. Moreover, possible ways to cope with the foreign language anxiety suggested by the students are included in this paper. Finally, in this study the researcher illustrates on communicative techniques in relation to foreign language anxiety.

1.3 Purpose of the study

This research aims to find out the correlation between foreign language anxiety and academic achievement, to examine students' anxiety level when learning foreign language and to identify the factors that the students believe can contribute to foreign language anxiety (FLA)

1.4 Research Questions

1. Is there any relationship between students' level of language proficiency and anxiety?
2. What are the possible sources of language anxiety?
3. Is there any relationship between students' academic achievement and language anxiety?
4. Does language anxiety differ in terms of gender?

5. Are there possible ways to make classroom environments less anxious?

6. Is there any relationship between communicative techniques and language anxiety?

1.5 Limitations:

This research has several limitations. This study was primarily limited by its small sample size. The sample size could have been expanded by including more participants. An earlier start in data collection would have increased the time needed to survey more participants. More contact between the researcher and the participants may have increased participation. The participants represented a narrow range of ethnicity/ages. A larger sample with more diversity would have benefited the results. Including multiple colleges/groups on campus could have diversified the ethnicities/ages represented in the sample.

1.6 Delimitation

Even if this is just a small attempt for measuring and identifying the relationship between language anxiety and academic achievement among university level students. This area of research is very specific that provides measurable data and makes the way for a vaster study in future. In future it can also be considered as a secondary source of data. Notably, the quantitative data analysis system used to assemble and investigate the data is something which tends to give a more information based data comparing to the qualitative data analysis process. As a result, the researcher hopes that this paper will at least assist its purpose of assembly and investigating data on foreign language classroom anxiety.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Literature review clarifies the “context” for a study along with the results, “strengths” and “weaknesses of previous studies” (Mackey and Gass, 2010, p.310). Literature sheds light on the specific areas those are required to be concentrated on. The opportunity to gather relevant information and knowledge is provided by the literature. Moreover, connecting the previous studies with the present studies will be useful for conducting the research. Therefore, this chapter will discuss the theoretical overviews on anxiety, types of language anxiety, sources of language anxiety, foreign language classroom anxiety scale, communicative techniques and anxiety etc.

2.1 What is Anxiety?

Anxiety can be referred as a feeling of unease or nervousness. It is a psychological construct that includes different variables. According to Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope (1986), “Anxiety is the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system”. Scovel (1978) refers anxiety “a state of apprehension, a vague fear ...”. From the following definitions of anxiety, we can regard learners’ anxiety a state of negative feelings that affect learning. We all feel anxiety more or less while we are learning a foreign language. We tend to feel anxious when we are doubtful on our ability for performing a particular task. In addition, it creates a feeling of fear in mind about the failure. Young (1991) suggests, “people with low self-esteem worry about what their peers think” (p.426). Researchers have found out that “anxiety” and “performance” are correlated. The

recent studies suggest making a learner-centered and low anxious classroom environment for reducing students' anxiety level.

2.2 Types of anxiety

According to Cassady and Johnson (2002), "Anxiety has been linked to the application of cognitive learning strategies and the investment of individual resources such as attention, effort, or time" (pp. 270-295). Anxiety can be categorized as facilitating and debilitating anxiety. Anxiety can also be categorized as trait anxiety and state anxiety. State anxiety is situational. People generally faces state anxiety for exercising unpleasant stimulus. state anxiety is a temporary feeling of anxiety. On the other hand, People suffering from trait anxiety likely experience extreme worry regularly. Trait anxiety is long lasting originated from continuous over thinking about the future events. The people with trait anxiety experiences problems like neuroticism. The term situational anxiety is also known as "stage fright". MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) explains situational anxiety as "the apprehension experienced when a situation requires to use of a second language with which the individual is not fully proficient" (p.296). Situational anxiety is associated with fear of public speaking. Stage fright is a normal phenomenon experienced by almost all. Even if most renowned public speakers also face it. As a symptom of stage fright, one may feel faint, impulsive, or fidgety while he/she is undergoing stage fright. It also happens that heart beat becomes so faster, mouth feels dry and feels problem in normal breathing. These are the very general symptoms of anxiety that can be get rid of. Anxiety is not always bad. Eventually, the anxiety of moderate level is helpful for us. This type of anxiety is known as facilitating anxiety. As the name goes, it facilitates our energy. On the other hand, debilitating anxiety is a kind of anxiety that hampers our normal activity. Facilitating anxiety encourages to "fight" the challenge.it encourages the learner mentally for taking the appropriate

action. In contrary, debilitating anxiety encourages the learner to “flee” the challenge. it motivates the learner psychologically to avoid the appropriate behavior. The effects of facilitating and debilitating anxieties are studied by many researchers including Alpert and Haber (1960), Bailey, (1983), Scovel, (1978) and Oxford (1999). Scovel (1978) defines facilitating and debilitating anxiety “the source of all affective arousal.”

2.3 Sources of language anxiety:

The sources of language anxiety are connected with learners, teachers and the practice of instruction. (Young 91, p.427) According to Young (1991), the factors responsible for language anxiety are “1) personal and interpersonal anxieties; 2) learner beliefs about language learning; 3) instructor beliefs about language teaching; 4) instructor-learner interactions; 5) classroom procedures; and 6) language testing.” Horwitz's (20) study on language learner shows that language learner generally have the following characteristics “1) expressed great concern over the correctness of their utterances; 2) placed a great deal of stress on speaking with "an excellent accent"; 3) supported the notion that language learning is primarily translating from English; 4) believed that two years is enough time to become fluent in another language; and 5) believed some people were more able to learn a foreign language than others.” Among them, many of the learner beliefs are quite impractical and illogical which eventually creates learners’ anxiety. Among the beginning level learners, only a few (highly motivated student) could grasp the native-like accent. Therefore, he who believes pronunciation is the prime factor of a language will become frustrated and depressed on learning. Similarly, learners get frustrated when they believe they can be fluent in the particular language within a specific time period. Young (1991) suggests, “when beliefs and reality clash, anxiety result.” There are various reasons for language anxiety. Palacios (1998) listed different factors associated with teacher that creates language

anxiety “absence of teacher’s support, unsympathetic personalities, lack of time for personal attention, favoritism, absence that the class does not provide students with the tools necessary to match up with the teacher’s expectations, and the sense of being judged by the teacher or wanting to impress the teacher.” According to Wu (2010), “Learner self-esteem, language testing, teacher attitudes, peer competitiveness, academic levels, the experience of visiting an FL country, gender differences, and work experience are possible sources that contribute to learner FL anxiety” (p.174).

2.4 Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

The self-report measures give clearer picture of anxiety of the students than other measures (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986). Therefore, self-report of students can provide very important information for making effective treatment and intervention plans (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986; MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991). Horwitz et al. (1986) developed the most commonly used tool for assessing the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) which was used as a research tool to determine the students’ foreign language anxiety level. To identify the degree of anxiety and its’ type we need a measurement instrument that can be regarded as anxiety scale. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) were the first to introduce language anxiety scale in the field of foreign language learning. They gathered students of beginner level language learner for their research purpose. The participants were asked about the language learning difficulties they face. The participants bring out different issues like fear of oral performance, various symptoms they suffer before test taking like headache, trembling, nervousness. Later on, these experiences shared by the participants were used develop a foreign language anxiety scale that is abbreviated as FLCAS. This scale basically consists of anxiety measurement, communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative feedback in foreign

language learning situation. Communication apprehension refers to the understanding of the message of the target language. If a learner is anxious or frustrated, he/she cannot be able to understand the message. Test anxiety is another type of anxiety. The language learner feels more anxious when they are taking a test. The anxious learner may not perform well even if he/she is well prepared for the exam. Moreover, a student feel anxiety for answering in front of the class for the fear of negative evaluation from the teacher and also the peers. The learners in a language learning class believe everyone will judge him/her based on his/her performance so he/she rarely performs any risk taking activity. The anxiety scale was given to students of Spanish classes. Later on, this result was showed to other students to know whether they agree or disagree with the questionnaire statement. The overall result of the research shows that majority of the students are afraid of speaking in a foreign language. Therefore, they anxious learners are hesitant to participate in language classes for the fear of being judged. So, it can be said that anxious learners are common in language classroom. The FLCAS can be used to identify the anxious learner having same type of problems so that useful suggestions can be proposed to help them. FLCAS is proved to be effective as it is centered on the issues of fear (Horwitz, 1991; Young, 1991; Horwitz et al; 1986; Gardner, Moorcroft & MacIntyre, 1987). For instance, choices are suggested by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) for teachers when dealing with anxious learners: teachers can support them to adjust with their current anxiety issues (p.125). Another way is making the classroom environment more comfortable and relaxing rather than competitive so that learner may not feel any stress regarding foreign language anxiety. Ganshow and Sparks (1996) asserts that there is no connection between performance and anxiety. In addition, they believe that cognitive disabilities are responsible for learner's poor performance that creates anxiety (Horwitz, 2000). This idea of Ganshow and Sparks is not accepted by

Horwitz. Horwitz eventually rejects their idea. She thinks learners of prominent colleges in America experience anxiety when they are learning a foreign language. Therefore, it is impossible to assume all students having cognitive disabilities. Horwitz (1996) states that language anxiety is experienced by many foreign language teachers as well as advanced level learners so that the hypothesis related with cognitive disabilities seems illogical. Moreover, the study of Horwitz is criticized by Ganshow and Sparks (1996) as it does not say anything about learner's native language skills whether they had any difficulties for acquiring their native language. On the other hand, MacIntyre (1995) states that Horwitz et al. might have ignored "native language deficits as the cause of both higher anxiety and lower proficiency, so aptitude influences both proficiency and anxiety". Macintyre believes that for the correlational studies the third variable could influence the existing variables related to the study. In addition, he does not support the idea of self-report questionnaire of Ganshow and Sparks for the measurement issue. MacIntyre, Gardner and Moorcroft (1987) pointed out that the study of Horwitz et al. is based on oral test situation and they suggested to include some other aspects like written test and also test anxiety. They claimed FLCAS as a useful tool as it is centered to the learner's fear in foreign language learning process rather than the linguistic instruments for reducing the learner's anxiety.

2.5 Communicative techniques and language anxiety

There is a relationship between the strategies of foreign language learning and anxiety in foreign language classroom. To fully understand the learner's perception about their learning English studies have been done to correlate foreign language classroom anxiety scale and communicative language teaching attitude. The studies show that though students of foreign

language learner are very positive about the communicative approach, they also express their feeling of anxiety in the classroom. As anxiety always affects learner's acquisition of second language, the teachers of language classes try to achieve the objective of language learning classes. The language learning strategies are meant to facilitate learning. For most of the students learning a foreign language in the classroom is very challenging. Learning a foreign language in class is difficult to them for the affective factors like language anxiety. language learner finds it difficult to cope with the completely new language setting. Foreign language is taught using different approaches meant for particular purposes. After the grammar translation method and audio-lingual method, the communicative approach of language learning becomes a preferable technique of language learning since 1970's. Learning is proved to be effective in meaningful context rather in isolated linguistic setting. The methods in communicative language teaching are centered to improve students' communicative language competence (Hymes, 1972). The difference between traditional learning approach and the communicative approach is that one is teacher centered and the other is learner centered. MacIntyre (1998) states students are unwilling to participate in foreign language classes because "readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2." it has been found that the learners from Asia like China, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Korea are inactive and reluctant to participate in the classroom. studies of Flowerdew, J. and Miller, L., 1995; Ferris, D. and Tagg, T., 1996 explores that previous education and cultural background are responsible for student's unwillingness and inactiveness of language learners. language learners feel motivated when they can correlate the reasons of using the strategies and success in language learning. In traditional teacher-centered teaching pedagogy students do not get opportunity to practice language in classroom. Therefore, they lack real life communication skills. They hardly use the target

language to communicate in class rather most of the time they are using their L1 in class. Students who are habituated with traditional method may face problems in coping with learning environment of the communicative classroom. In some cases, students in the class willing to participate in class activity may remain silent in class because of their low proficiency over the language. The sources of language anxiety are intertwined in a sense that various factors are responsible for creating language anxiety in the classroom like teachers, pair work/ group work activities, pedagogical practices, assessment and so on. Kashan's affective filter hypothesis illustrates the issue of creating less threatening classroom environment for the anxious learners to make their learning effective. In CLT classes students are supposed to participate in activities that generate negotiation of meaning. According to Wu (2010), "in the EFL context, native teachers in the classroom are regarded as one of the anxiety-provoking factors". Therefore, as many students feel anxious in language classroom the native teachers need to be very supportive and sensitive to the students' problem. Teachers' continuous encouragement and non-threatening instruction can be a good way to overcome learners' anxiety. It will be hard for learners to take active roles in class when they have difficulties using the target language. If language learners have fewer problems with language, both in perception and production, they are more likely to take active roles in class. The most important thing that teachers should be concerned about is finding ways to improve their teaching skills and to handle challenges such as professional training, linguistic and sociolinguistic competence, and understanding better the needs of students.

2.6 Ways to reduce foreign language anxiety in the classroom

All students are unique. Therefore, the symptoms of anxiety are displayed in various ways. The language related anxiety generally results from perfectionism, avoidance, procrastination, feeling overwhelmed, easily frustrated, fear of failure, worrying about time limitation and routine changes and so on. Teachers can take some initiative to help the students feel calm, comfortable and understood. Some extra effort can be given to make the classroom environment less anxious. For examples, activities like presentation in front of the whole class can be replaced by video or poster presentation. Students feel more anxious when they work in a large group so the group size can be made shorter so that everyone can voice their opinions. Moreover, students feel overwhelmed by the rules they need to learn in that case their lessons can be broken down into small sections. Many a time students feel anxious for the competitive activities, in that case, it can be replaced by relaxing one. Sometimes, the students who are perfectionist try to avoid speaking in front of class for the fear of negative impression. Here the teacher can play a role like a mediator who assures him/her that no one is going to judge him/her.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the procedure of conducting the study will be explored. The research tends to investigate foreign language classroom anxiety among university level students and the effect of language anxiety on academic achievement. The study is held in universities. The study is intended to complete through correlational analysis and descriptive analysis of survey questionnaires which would be represented by table. Likert scale is used to define the attitude of the respondents regarding the items. The collected data is presented on the basis of mean score so that the data can be analyzed numerically as well as reliably.

3.1 Participants:

The sample for this study consists of 50 students (30 males, 20 females) studying in two different University National University and BRAC university. The participants are from department of English and humanities. The participants are mostly Honours 1st year student and their age range is (19-23) yrs. The native language (L1) of the participants are same. Their proficiency level is from mid intermediate to low advanced. Most of them are from Bengali medium background.

3.2 Procedure

The data collection places were also selected in accordance with the participants' convenience, such as - University campus, specially department class room and library. participants were all informed about the purpose of the study. After getting the permission of the

participants, a friendly rapport was established to make them comfortable. Voluntary participation was appreciated and students were assured about the confidentiality of the collected data. The questionnaire was distributed to 50 first-year non-English undergraduate students. Forty-nine copies were collected back from the students and forty-eight responses were found statistically valid. All the participants provided their CGPA of last semester as they are assured their name need not to be mentioned.

3.3 Instruments

The questionnaire used in this study consisted of two sections one is objective type question where participants are provided with 5 point “ Likert Scale” (a. Never sometimes c. Often d. Usually e. Always) and the second part is like an interview session where participants are asked different question related to their reasons of anxiety, their preference of classroom activities, the difficulties they face using L2 in class, possible steps to overcome classroom language anxiety, their perceptions about interactive classes. The collected answers will be used for the purpose of this study. The questions provided in this part are both objective and subjective type.

3.3.1 Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCS)

For this study Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale by Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope is used as a research instrument. This scale is designed focusing on communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative feedback. This scale consists of 33 statements in a five point Likert type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. It includes 8 items for communication anxiety (1, 9, 14, 18, 24, 27, 29, 32), 9 items for fear of negative evaluation

(3, 7, 13, 15, 20, 23, 25, 31, 33) and 5 items for test anxiety (2, 8, 10, 19, 21). The students were asked to rate each item on a five-point Likert scale. “Likert scales present individuals with positively or negatively stated propositions and solicit respondents' opinions about the statements through a set of response keys. Generally, the students are required to point out their agreement and disagreement from this five point Likert scale. For neutral or undecided responses an option ‘neither agree/ disagree’ is given in the scale. The underlying construct are hypothesized to reveal from the positive statements. The responses are structured with integers like strongly agree would be equated as 0, agree would be equated as 1 and the other options would be equated in the same way. Negatively worded items are reverse scored. The items are summed, creating an index that indicates the degree to which the respondent exhibits the traits in question” (Duncan & Stenbeck, 1987, p. 245–259). This scale is regarded as a reliable tool for measuring foreign language classroom anxiety. This scale is generally used to measure the degree of language anxiety faced by the language learner. By using this scale, we can identify both the anxious and less anxious learners. The Bangla version (Fatema-Tu-Zohra Binte Zaman Md. Abdus Sabur Pramanik Shimul,2013) of foreign language anxiety scale (Horowitz, 1986) was used to identify the language anxiety patterns among the participants in Bangla. The FLCAS includes four self-report measures that is Communication Apprehension, Fear of Negative Evaluation, Test Anxiety and Anxiety of Foreign Language Classes. These sub scales give a general anxiety measure that shows Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety. According to FLCAS scale adapted from outing’s scale individuals can be classified as very anxious learner (124-165), anxious (108-123), mildly anxious (87-107), relaxed (66-86), very relaxed (33-65). There are 9 positive statement in the questionnaire they are 2,5,8,11,14,18,22,28, 32.the negative statements are 1,3,4,6,7,9,10,12,13,15,16,17,19,20,21,23,24,25,26,27,29,30,31,33. The reversed score is

(strongly agree=5 from strongly disagree=1). The Bangla version of the scale was found culturally appropriate for the study as it has satisfactory level of validity and reliability factors.

3.4 Data Analysis

Statistical analysis was performed by using ‘Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)’, Version 16. Errors and outlier’s data were cleaned. In this research, association of language anxiety and academic achievement was determined by Pearson correlation coefficient and t test analysis and also using descriptive statistics, in which frequency, mean, standard deviation.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

To analyze the research data collected from the participants to find out the impact of language anxiety on academic achievement among ESL learners is the purpose of this chapter.

Table-1: Language anxiety status of the University students according to sex and institution.

Variable	Characteristics	Frequency (%)	Language anxiety (mean, SD)	T
Sex	Male	28(56)	82.43(14.60)	0.430
	Female	22(44)	80.68(13.82)	
Institute	Brac University	20(40)	86(12.32)	1.812
	National University	30(60)	78.77(14.73)	

Table-2 Correlation between language anxiety and academic achievement

	1	2
2. Language anxiety	1	0.174
1. CGPA		1

Table-3 Frequency and Percentage of the foreign language anxiety

	Frequency	Percent
Relaxed	4.0	8.0
Anxious	46	92

Table 1 shows the consistency of language anxiety of University students according to institution and sex. According to the results of the study, 56% of male students and 44% female students experience language anxiety. Participants especially feel anxious when they are asked to speak in front of the class. The mean value of language anxiety for male students is 82.43 and the SD is 14.60. Similarly, the mean value of language anxiety for female students is 80.68 and the SD is 13.82. The T test value for male and female is 0.430. As I mentioned before that the participants are from two different universities, according to the research findings 40% participants of BRAC University and 60% participants of National University experience language anxiety. The mean value for BRAC University is 86 and SD is 12.32. Likewise, the mean value for National University is 78.77 and the SD is 14.73. The T value for both the institutions are 1.812.

4.1 Students' Responses:

1.How often do you participate in classroom discussion?

	Frequency	Percent
Never	7	14.0
Sometime	23	46.0
Often	6	12.0
Usually	9	18.0
Always	5	10.0

According to the responses of this question 14% of them answered ‘Never’, 46% participants answered ‘Sometime’, 12% replied often, 18% replied usually, only 5 of the participants (10%) replied always.

2. How often do you use English in class?

	Frequency	Percent
Never	14	28.0
Sometime	17	34.0
Often	11	22.0
Usually	6	12.0
Always	2	4.0

According to the responses of the participants 28% replied ‘Never’, 34% replied ‘Sometime’, 22% replied ‘Often’, 12% replied ‘Usually’ and only 4% participants replied ‘Always’

3.How often do you use English while talking with your peers?

	Frequency	Percent
Never	5	10.0
Sometime	9	18.0
Often	11	22.0
Usually	12	24.0
Always	13	26.0

According to the responses of the participants 48% replied 'Never', 30% replied 'Sometime', 16% replied 'Often' and 6% of them replied 'Usually'.

4.How often do you use your L1 while asking question to your course instructor?

	Frequency	Percent
Never	5	10.0
Sometime	9	18.0
Often	11	22.0
Usually	12	24.0
Always	13	26.0

In response to this question 10% of the participants replied ‘Never’, 18% replied ‘Sometime’, 22% replied ‘Often’,24% replied ‘Usually’ and 26% replied ‘Always’.

5.How often do you avoid classroom participation for the fear of pronunciation error?

	Frequency	Percent
Never	22	44.0
Sometime	13	26.0
Often	4	8.0
Usually	4	8.0
Always	7	14.0

In response to this question 44% of them replied 'Never', 26% participants answered 'Sometime', 8% of them answered 'Often', 8% replied 'Usually', 14% replied 'Always'.

6.How often do you feel motivated to overcome your language anxiety?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	44	88.0
No	6	12.0

According to the responses of the participants 88% of them replied 'Yes' and rest of them (6%) replied 'No'.

7.How often do you feel different symptoms of anxiety while you are asked to speak in the class?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	45	90.0
No	5	10.0

Majority of the participants (90%) replied 'Yes' and only 5 of them (10%) replied 'No'.

8. Do you think people in your classroom will react if you make mistakes?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	45	90.0
No	5	10.0

In response to this question 90% students replied 'Yes' and 10% replied 'No'.

9. How often do you feel your language proficiency hinders you to participate in class?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	33	66.0
No	17	34.0

According to the responses 66% of them replied 'Yes' and 34% replied 'No'.

10. Do you feel nervous when the teacher pointed to you to answer in the target language?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	37	74.0
No	13	26.0

According to the responses 74% participants replied 'Yes' and 26% replied 'No'.

11. Do you feel your language anxiety is responsible for your academic result?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	29	58.0
No	21	42.0

According to the participants' responses 58% replied 'Yes' and 42% replied 'No'.

12. Do you ever think of skipping the class for the fear of speaking on front of the class?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	27	54.0
No	23	46.0

According to the students' responses 54% answered 'Yes' and 46% answered 'No'.

13. Do you ever think of skipping the class for the fear of speaking in ups and front of the class?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	27	54.0
No	23	46.0

Among the participants 54% replied 'Yes' and 46% replied 'No'.

14. What are the difficulties you face while participating in classroom discussion in L2?

Their responses of this questions indicates that almost all of them experiences different types of difficulties while participating in L2 discussion in classroom. There are multiple responses for this questions. Some of them want to skip class for the fear of participation in L2. They hardly make eye contact with the teacher for the fear of being asked. When they are asked about their opinion in class they avoid long answers. They tend give answers only in short forms

to avoid mistakes. Their answers were likely, “Vocabulary problem”, “Stammered”, “Frequently forget the words I want to say”, “Conscious off making pronunciation mistake,” “Out of word”, “Lack of vocabulary,” “Nervousness,” “Every time I think English medium students’ pronunciations are better than Bengali medium students that makes me very self-conscious,” “Sometime I feel less confident to speak in L2 but happens for the very first time. Later, I try to recover myself”, “Poor vocabulary”, “problem in fluency”, “choosing appropriate words”, “Eye contact and grammatical error”. From the following responses it can be said that students in foreign language classroom are very much anxious of negative evaluation. They are very much afraid of public speaking. As a result, while using L2 publicly they became very self-conscious that causes high affective filter. So, students face different types of difficulties for English language usage in the classroom discussion and try to avoid participating.

15. What kind of classroom activities triggers anxiety in the classroom? Why is it?

Most of the participants are afraid of the activity like giving presentation or speaking related activity. According to their responses it can be said that they tend to avoid speaking related activity for the fear of negative impression. The responses from the participants are like, “Speaking in English”, “Presentation because everyone is listening to me”, “Participation in classroom discussion, ”Speaking in front of the whole class, ”Fear of public speaking, ”The classroom activities that includes debates or one to one question answer”, “Classroom setting based on communicative language learning as I feel more anxious in class, ”Pop up presentation and inadequate preparation”, “Critical thinking, ”Peer teaching and presentation because I fear speaking publicly in L2”, “Ice –breaking Session. I have to introduce myself in L2 in front of others. It makes me uncomfortable as it is the very first time I am speaking in L2 in front of unknown people, I don’t want to make any mistake and create negative impression about me.”

16. What are the types of classroom activities you feel less anxious? why is it?

The responses received from the participants to this question are mostly writing activity. They think writing is less challenging than any other activity. They can get enough time to think and to develop on the writing topic. As nobody will judge instantly so they feel less threatened to writing activity. They replied “Writing activity, more comfortable and can be precise”. Other responses are like, “Paper writing, ”Group activities”, “Presentation is less anxious because one can easily get away with it by memorizing the speech”, “Classroom setting based on GTM because students can be relaxed and teacher does all the works”, “Reading in front of the class, I think I am good at pronunciation, ”essay writing”, “Group work and written assessments because it sometime does not require much talking in L2”, “Where there is no ice-breaking conversation, no question session, it makes me less anxious. I usually do not like to talk too much in class unnecessarily.”

17. What kind of skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening) do you feel confident the most in English class?

As the majority of the participants are from Bengali medium background they hardly used L2 for speaking. They are only habituated with writing papers in English. So, they do not show enough confidence for their speaking and listening skill. They feel comfortable only with reading and writing skills. They feel very anxious when they get any activity of speaking and listening skill. Some of the responses collected from the participants are like “I feel comfortable in reading, writing, listening skills”, “Reading speaking”, “Writing”, “Reading listening”, “Writing listening reading”, “All of the above”, “Reading writing listening”.

18. What kind of skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening) do you feel nervous the most in English class?

Many a researcher (Horwitz et al., 1986; Young, 1990) agree that anxiety in foreign language learning manifests itself primarily in listening and speaking in the foreign language. Most of the responses centered around speaking and listening. Some of them also mentioned about reading skill. The responses are like “I feel a bit nervous while speaking in English but not too much”, “Speaking”, “Writing speaking”, “Reading”, “Speaking and reading”.

19. Do you agree communicative techniques are suitable for language learning? If yes, why and if not why not mention the reasons?

The participants respond positively to this question. They appreciate communicative techniques for learning a foreign language. Some of them mentioned about different advantages of using communicative techniques in their language learning process. Though it is difficult for some of them to adjust in a communicative classroom environment but they understand it will be helpful to assist their learning. Some of the responses collected from the students are like “Yes, it helps to develop their speaking skill”, “It is the effective way to learn communicative English”, “Yes, because it helps us to learn English practically and we feel less anxious”, “Yes, we get to know varieties of contexts”, “Yes, I can learn real life conversation”, “Yes, it gives students the opportunity to overcome speaking anxiety in second language”, “Yes, good way to practice”, “Communicative techniques, the only way to improve the command over English because interactive and shared discussion is very effective in learning English”, “I don’t think only communicative techniques can bring out the effective language learning. Mixture of all kind of suitable teaching techniques is the best because these things depend on many factors like settings, environment, students, content etc.”, “Yes, communication triggers the fluency and

enriched our vocabulary in L2”, “Yes, it is. Those techniques are effective cause instructor can communicate”, “Yes, because it helps the students to overcome fears by competing in class communication”, “Yes, because it involves students in participation which ultimately improves their language learning”, “Speaking in L2 is more suitable for learning language as it develops one’s listening, speaking skills simultaneously. As we have less time to think before communicate, it enables us for quick responsive conversation and enrich our fluency in L2. Moreover, it also helps us to think critically to implement new vocabularies and build up appropriate sentence structure in no time.”

20. What are the symptoms you face while you are feeling worried about your language use?

Here students mentioned about various symptoms of anxiety they experience in the foreign language classroom. Almost all of them said they feel very much anxious in the foreign language classroom. Very few students only 3of them said they don’t feel anxious in the foreign language classroom rather they feel confident in those classes. Their responses are like “nervousness”, “Pronouncing wrong”, “Stuttering”, “Became blank”, “Trembling”, “Anxiety”, “Fear”, “Stammering”, “None”, “Anxiety”, “Panicky”, “Blank headed”, “I feel nervous, my heart pounds faster, my mouth becomes dry at the very first time because I want to deliver my speech perfectly.”

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Almost all studies reviewed have revealed that foreign language anxiety was found to be significantly and negatively correlated with English achievement such as the studies of Dordinejad and Ahmadabad (2014) and Awan et al., (2010), Gardner (1997), Horwitz (2001), Park and Lee (2005), Liu (2006), and Atasheneh & Izadi (2012). Before starting the study, it was hypothesized by the researcher that excessive nervousness or anxiety leads to poor academic achievement. It was also hypothesized that female students are more anxious than male their male counterparts. In contrast to the previous studies the results of the current study showed that there is a positive correlation between anxiety and academic achievement. According to the findings of my research the outcome of correlational analysis is 1 that is positive. This positive 1 indicates that there is a positive correlation between language anxiety and academic achievement. In a sense, it indicates that the more anxious the learners are the higher grades they achieve. It means that learners struggling with language difficulties do their best to achieve their academic goals. Students feeling more relaxed are unlikely to achieve good grades. On the other hand, the students were those who felt moderate level of anxiety are tend to achieve good grades. Motivation lays behind employing much effort to achieve academic goals that afterwards results in anxiety symptoms. This corresponds with other studies results that revealed that instrumental motivation is more than integrative motivation in situations where English is a crucial for progress and economic benefits. Another surprising point about results found from the study us that there are no statistically significant differences in the scores of participants based on the gender/grade factor. learners facing learning difficulties have the same type of symptoms. The observation of the academic grades and their level of anxiety reveals that the moderate anxious students are doing good in academics in compare to the relaxed students. The current study was

conducted to investigate prevalence of language anxiety among BRAC and National University students in order to examine its relation with academic achievement. A total of 50 students from both Universities participated in this study in which 70% belongs to faculty of English and humanities and other 30% belong to institute of Business studies. Result shows that 100% students have language anxiety. From which 28% was moderate and severe and 72% students was identified below moderate level anxious. Result of the study does not support that excessive nervousness or anxiety leads to poor academic achievement that does not match with the first hypothesis of study. While comparing both universities' student's researcher has found out that students' of national University have more language related anxiety in compare to BRAC University students. Results indicated that average number of anxious students is higher in National University than BRAC university. Similarly, the result of this study shows that language anxiety in male is higher in compare to female. The mean score of male in language anxiety is 82.43 and female 80.68. Furthermore, t-score for the comparison of both genders is 0.430 shows no significance of test. So, according to the outcome of the study it can be said that language anxiety does not have any significant relationship with academic achievement.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This study aims to investigate define anxiety in terms of gender, academic achievement, communicative techniques. According to the result the researcher finds out that there is no significant difference in anxiety in terms of gender. Before doing this research I had a generalized idea that female students prove to be more anxious than the male students. The second research question was ‘is there any correlation between language anxiety and academic achievement’. According to the research result there is no significant correlation between language anxiety and academic achievement. Basically, the anxiety level declines when the learner moves to higher level of language proficiency. The third question was ‘is there any relationship between communicative techniques and language anxiety’. The result of the research shows that some techniques of communicative language learning accelerate learners’ anxiety but students are very positive about the approach of communicative techniques. They appreciate communicative techniques as their language learning strategy. In addition, it has been found that students studding their courses in mother language experience less anxiety than students who study all courses in the foreign or target language which slightly effect on their academic achievement. At present, we feel the necessity of English language in every aspect of our life. To strengthen one’s position in the job market competition one needs to have a good command over the English language. The students of English language classroom face anxiety that creates problem like stuttering and high palpitation. in our educational arena, the importance of learning

English is very high so criteria of measuring foreign language classroom anxiety are unavoidable. Though it is not quite possible for researchers to measure students 'anxiety using the original scale in English considering the prevalent conditions of students. If the original scale is administered to the students, they will be anxious that will not be helpful for getting honest results of the research. Thus, the researchers of this study decided to adapt the original version of the Foreign Language Classroom Scale into Bangla. Students will feel relaxed when the Bangla scale is administered to them. Therefore, the adapted Bangla version of the scale can help to classify Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety more correctly.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire of students' backgrounds:

Dear participants,

I am preparing my undergraduate thesis in ELT and Applied Linguistics under the title: "The impact of foreign language anxiety on academic achievement". The objective of these questionnaires is to gather information and to measure the level of anxiety participants may face. Please read each statement of the two appendixes and locate your true feelings about English classroom. The success of the study mostly depends on your honest opinion of scoring. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you in advance

Date of Birth _____ Month _____ year _____

Gender: female _____ male _____

What is your admission session in the university? _____

Faculty / Institute: _____

What was the result of your last semester / year? CGPA _____

1. How often do you participate in group and pair work?

a) Never b) Sometimes c) Often d) Usually e) Always

2. How often do you participate in classroom discussion?

a) Never b) Sometimes c) Often d) Usually e) Always

3. How often do you use English while speaking in class?

a) Never b) Sometimes c) Often d) Usually e) Always

4. How often do you use English while talking with your peers?

a) Never b) Sometimes c) Often d) Usually e) Always

5. How often do you use your first language while asking question to your course instructor?

a) Never b) Sometimes c) Often d) Usually e) Always

6. How often do you avoid classroom participation for the fear of pronunciation error?

a) Never b) Sometimes c) Often d) Usually e) Always

7. Do you feel motivated to overcome your language anxiety?

a) Yes b) No

8. Do you feel different symptoms of anxiety while you are asked to speak in the class?

a) Yes b) No

9. Do you think, people in your classroom will react if you make mistakes?

a) Yes b) No

10. Do you feel your language proficiency hinders you to participate in class?

a) Yes b) No

11. Do you feel nervous when the teacher pointed to you to answer in the target language?

a) Yes b) No

12. Do you feel your language anxiety is responsible for your academic result?

a) Yes b) No

13. Do you ever think of skipping the class for the fear of speaking in front of the class?

a) Yes b) No

14. What are the difficulties you face while participating in classroom discussion using the second language?

15. What kind of classroom activities triggers anxiety in the classroom? Why is it?

16. What are the types of classroom activities you feel less anxious? why is it?

17. What kind of skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening) do you feel confident the most in English class?

18. What kind of skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening) do you feel nervous the most in English class?

19. Do you agree communicative techniques are suitable for language learning? If yes, why and if not why not mention the reasons?

20. What are the symptoms you face while you are feeling worried about your language use?

Appendix B:

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125-132.

Directions:

Statements 1 through 33 refers to how you feel about English . For each statement, please indicate whether you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) disagree, or (5) strongly disagree by marking the appropriate number on the line following each statement. Please give your first reaction to each statement and mark one answer for each statement.

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

2. I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

6. During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

8. I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

10. I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

12. In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

14. I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

16. Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

17. I often feel like not going to my language class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

18. I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

19. I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

21. The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

23. I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

25. Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

26. I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

28. When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

33. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

