



SECOND LANGUAGE ANXIETY AND ITS IMPACT ON CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION

Dr. Rana Ahmad Shaheed
ahmadshaheedrana@gmail.com

Assistant Professor, Department of English, University of
Gujrat, Pakistan

Seemeen Umar Khan Yousufzai
seemeenumarxan@hotmail.com

Lecturer English, Department of English, Higher Educational
Department, KP Nowshera

Muhammad Rizwan
hafizrizwan158@gmail.com

Lecturer Riphah International University, Lahore

Abstract

Second Language Anxiety (SLA) is a major factor which determines the involvement of learners in the English as Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms especially in oral and interactive tasks. The paper is based on the study of the effects of SLA on classroom engagement through a mixed-method design, which involves the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), semi-structured interviews, and reflective journals in a group of 120 undergraduate EFL students. The results also suggest that high-anxiety learners have less oral participation, do not make spontaneous contributions, and scope their responses, but written and structured group activities are less influenced. Analysis via a theoretical framework of the Affective Filter Hypothesis by Krashen, Communication Apprehension by McCroskey, and a Self-Determination Theory demonstrates that anxiety acts as a psychological filter and a motivational deterrent which inhibits communication and engagement. Some of the pedagogical practices found to counter the effects of SLA and promote active participation include, task-based learning, small-group collaboration, scaffolding, autonomy support, and reflective practices. The current research demonstrates that learner-centered and context-sensitive interventions are needed to promote communicative competence and mitigate affective barriers in EFL classrooms.

Keywords: *Affective Filter, Classroom Participation, Communication, Apprehension, EFL Learners, Second Language Anxiety, Self-Determination Theory, Task-Based Learning*

Corresponding Author: Muhammad Rizwan (Lecturer Riphah International University, Lahore.)

Email: hafizrizwan158@gmail.com

1. Introduction

1.1. Academic Background of the Subject

Second Language Anxiety (SLA) has become one of the most significant affective variables of language learning, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as Second Language (ESL) settings. The term SLA is loosely used to refer to the experiences of tension, apprehension or fear that learners develop when they use a second language in either classroom or social-social context (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope 125). Although cognitive aspects of language such as memory, aptitude, and motivation have been traditionally addressed in the field of applied linguistics, affective aspects of language such as anxiety are now being considered as equally important in influencing language learning outcomes (MacIntyre and Gardner 284).

The importance of the study of SLA in academics is that it has a direct effect on the classroom participation which is key to language development. Participation in classrooms involves oral contributions, active listening, collaborative learning as well as written participation, which form part of the process of developing communicative competence (Aida 157). Anxiety prevents learners to engage in discussions, ask questions or give opinions, creating a disconnect between the potential and actual performance. The study of SLA is thus important not only to theoretical studies in applied linguistics but also practical teaching practices that can help to build confidence and engagement in learners.

1.2. Context and Background

In the past, the structure and grammar-translation methods prevailed in language learning, and the emphasis was laid on accuracy, rather than communication. Students were frequently tested in written form and there was minimal speaking time. Anxiety in such environments was less apparent but still there, as it was evidenced in low scores on assessments. As the communicative language teaching (CLT) emerged, learner involvement became the focus of pedagogy and the anxiety became more visible. In the contemporary world, learners are supposed to orate, cooperate and bargain meaning in real time and most of the times, before an audience. This change has heightened the applicability of SLA within the classroom (Young 427).

Horwitz, and Cope (1986) have found three primary sources: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension is defined as a state of anxiety experienced by the learners in speaking assignment and test anxiety in formal examination. Fear of unfavorable assessment is connected with the fear of how others assess their language proficiency. The dimensions can considerably diminish the engagement in the classroom, especially the oral and interactive tasks, which are of utmost importance in communicative competence.

Moreover, social and cultural issues affect the degree of SLA. Students in collectivist cultures, where saving face and preventing embarrassment are values, can feel

more anxious when participating in the classroom (Cheng, Horwitz, and Schallert 319). In the same vein, gender, personality, and previous learning experiences contribute to the coping styles of language anxiety among learners. This complicates SLA as a contextual phenomenon that needs to be studied.

1.3. Research Gap

Although much research has been conducted on SLA, there are still some gaps. The prevalence of anxiety and its association with language performance have been considered in most studies (Horwitz et al. 125; MacIntyre and Gardner 284). Less research has been done on the specific impact of SLA on various classroom engagement forms, including group discussions, presentations, group projects, and spontaneous speech. Additionally, most of the current literature has investigated SLA in a Western or highly-resource educational setting lacking a gap of knowledge on SLA in a developing or multilingual classroom setting where limited resources, large class sizes, and sociocultural demands may contribute towards anxiety.

Also, although different coping mechanisms and pedagogical interventions have been suggested, their efficacy is usually reported in general terms without specification in relation to certain participation behaviors. As an illustration, research indicates that task-based strategies or group learning lessen anxiety (Ellis 45) however the effectiveness of these strategies enhancing oral contribution or written communication in actual classroom scenarios is under-investigated. This gap highlights the importance of context-specific researches that make SLA directly related to quantifiable elements of classroom involvement.

1.4. Research Objectives and Questions

The main aim of the study is to investigate the connection between Second Language Anxiety and classroom participation of EFL learners. In this study, the research questions are:

1. What do you consider are the primary causes of Second Language Anxiety in the classroom?
2. What is the effect of SLA on oral participation of learners in class discussions and presentations?
3. How does anxiety influence the participation of the learners in written and collaborative activities?
4. How can teachers use strategies to minimize SLA and promote active engagement?

The study will help to improve both theoretical and practical pedagogical approaches to teaching English language through the answers to these questions.

1.5. Background and Importance of the Research

The research targets EFL students at secondary and higher education levels with a special emphasis on classroom interactions. Although SLA can also influence the self-study, online learning and informal use of language, this study focuses its analysis on classroom participation in the form of oral discussions, group work and written activities. This study has a threefold importance:

1. Theoretical Contribution: The research contributes to the body of knowledge by connecting SLA to certain classroom behaviors which helps comprehend the impact of affective factors on language acquisition outside the general performance indicators.

2. Practical Implications: The information of this study can inform teachers with classroom activities, interventions, and support systems to alleviate anxiety and facilitate engagement.

3. Policy and Curriculum Design: Data-driven approaches may be used to promote communicative competence in language curricula in educational institutions, especially in situations with limited resources or where the cultural background is a factor.

To conclude, SLA is not a fringe issue in language teaching; it is key to the poor performance of learners with sufficient cognitive capabilities. This research offers a basis to interventions capable of changing not only the classroom practice but also learning outcomes by exploring its effect on classroom engagement.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Knowledge of Second Language Anxiety (SLA)

Since Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) initially categorized it as a multidimensional measure, including communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation, Second Language Anxiety (SLA) has been widely researched. They pointed out that anxiety is context-specific and can emerge due to perceptions of being unable to communicate effectively in the target language in learners (Horwitz et al. 125). SLA differs with general anxiety since it is specific to language; a student can be a confident person in other situations but highly stressed in English classes. According to Young (1990), the fear of foreign language may severely impair performance in otherwise talented learners (33).

MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) went on further to discuss the cognitive processes in SLA and posited that anxiety takes up the resources of working memory, thus limiting language processing ability. They claimed that when nervous learners have to speak, their thinking tends to become disrupted, meaning that speaking fluency, understanding, and even writing quality is adversely affected (MacIntyre and Gardner 36). More importantly, this point of view emphasizes SLA not only as a psychological impediment, but as an act of the mind, to associate the emotional states with the linguistic performance.

2.2. The Causes and Dimensions of SLA

Studies have established various causes of SLA. Horwitz et al. (1986) classify them into 3 dimensions:

1. Communication Apprehension - Fear of communicating in real-time in the second language.
2. Test Anxiety - Nervousness that results in evaluations and assessments.
3. Fear of Negative Evaluation – Fear of being evaluated negatively by teachers or peers.

Critics such as Young (1990) and Aida (1994) highlight that the fear of negative assessment is usually paralyzing in classroom situations, especially in high power distance or highly-socially-reputation cultures. Aida noted that the high anxiety levels among Japanese learners were not as a result of their incompetence but as a result of the perceived social scrutiny on them (Aida 160). Likewise, Cheng, Horwitz, and Schallert (1997) found that writing and speaking anxiety might not be correlated, and students can be assured in writing activities and be frozen by the demands of oral participation (Cheng et al. 420).

The other factor that affects SLA is personality traits. Study carried out by MacIntyre, Dornyei, Clement and Noels (1997) indicated that introverted students claim to be more nervous than extroverted ones and this is especially true in interactive talking activities. Critics believe that such a personality-classroom structure interaction needs teachers to use differentiated strategies to reach all learners.

2.3. Effects of SLA on Classroom Involvement

It is observed that SLA has adverse impacts on classroom engagement as noted in the literature. Horwitz et al. (1986) further reveal that anxious learners tend to be avoidant, as they may choose to be silent when the discussion is in progress or refuse to join the group work. This shunning decreases chances of communicative practice, a vital element in language acquisition. Young (1990) emphasizes that the anxiety may form a vicious cycle: the lack of participation leads to low confidence, and the latter leads to anxiety in the next interaction (Young 34).

According to Aida (1994) and Cheng et al. (1997) SLA has been observed to have specific effects on oral communication which is the most visible and appraising component of classroom involvement. Oral assignments, such as presentations, role-plays, and impromptu discussions, are anxiety-inducing in nature as learners are placed in the position of being scrutinized. Written tasks, particularly those done in privacy, on the other hand, attract less anxiety. This difference of effects implies that the interventions are required to address the modes of participation that are impacted by SLA.

Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) suggest that concerns with teacher attitude, classroom climate, and peer interactions can either contribute to or alleviate anxiety. The positive reinforcement, group activities and low stake speaking activities will assist the

learners to overcome the fear and participate actively in the classroom (Gregersen and Horwitz 66).

2.4. Pedagogical Interventions and Critic Comments

Some research has been done to investigate ways of mitigating SLA. It is commonly recommended to use task-based learning (TBL), cooperative learning and low-anxiety classroom environments. Ellis (2003) stresses that anxiety can be reduced using task-based methods that focus more on communication rather than accuracy, because they help to redirect attention on evaluation to meaningful interaction. Importantly, he points out that when the task has meaning and context to it, the learners will be more willing to take it than when the task is only meant to test the learner (Ellis 45).

Kondo and Yang (2004) examined intervention strategies, including pre-task scaffolding, peer support, and self-reflection activities, and observed that there were substantial decreases in anxiety in learners. They noted that scaffolding minimizes the uncertainty, which is one of the major causes of anxiety in language classrooms (Kondo and Yang 102). Likewise, Oxford (1999) singles out self-regulated learning strategies (goal setting, relaxation methods, and metacognitive planning) as working well in enabling learners gain power to cope with anxiety on their own.

Nevertheless, critics fear a blanket approach. According to Gregersen and MacIntyre (2014), the efficacy of the intervention is mediated by cultural and individual differences, e.g., collaborative learning can be effective among extroverted learners, but it can cause anxiety in introverts unless monitored, in this case. This stresses the need to have contextualized approaches that take into account classroom composition, cultural norms, and learners profiles.

2.5. Gaps in Research Identified in Literature

In spite of decades of research, there are still some gaps. First, most studies are aimed at quantifying the level of anxiety with the help of questionnaires, i.e., Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and do not relate these measures to the classroom behavior, i.e. the frequency or quality of the contributions. Second, the literature available is predominantly Western based and there is a gap in the knowledge in SLA in multilingual and resource constrained classrooms. Third, although interventions are proposed, not many studies have empirical evidence of the intervention to certain outcomes of participation, and it is hard to get teachers trying evidence based practices.

Besides, the relationship between modern digital tools and SLA is not thoroughly investigated. As the online language learning platforms, virtual classrooms, and exercises that are AI-driven gain more and more popularity, one should know whether SLA is also different in online and traditional classrooms (Dewaele and MacIntyre 527).

2.6. Conclusion

As seen in the literature reviewed, SLA is a multidimensional and ubiquitous phenomenon that has a great influence on classroom participation. Well-known researchers like Horwitz, MacIntyre, Young, and Aida have continually reported the adverse impact of anxiety on oral communication and interaction. Task-based learning, scaffolding, and self-regulation are promising pedagogical strategies that need contextual learning in order to be effective.

The review provides the current study with an excellent background in bridging the gaps on relating SLA to visible participation practices in EFL classrooms. It further highlights the relevance of culturally sensitive, learner-centered approaches to alleviate anxiety which will be used to guide the research approach, theoretical discussion, and discussion in the following chapters.

3. Research Methodology

The research design used in this study is a mixed-method research design, which involves both quantitative and qualitative research methods in exploring the effects of a concept (Second Language Anxiety) on classroom participation. Mixed-methods approach is suitable since SLA is a multidimensional construct, which incorporates psychological, cognitive and behavioral dimensions (Creswell and Creswell 45). Quantitative data can give objective information on the anxiety level and frequency of participation, whereas qualitative data can give a more detailed picture of the subjective experience of learners, providing more information about the classroom dynamics (Dornyei 10).

The study is explanatory sequential where quantitative findings are gathered and examined initially, and then, qualitative discovery is made to put the findings into perspective and exegeses the results. This structure allows the triangulation to be performed, making the findings more reliable and valid. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner argue that mixed-methods research is the most appropriate when the researcher is interested in affective variable in education since they balance numerical measurement with descriptive data that are rich (123).

3.1. Participants

The research participants are EFL students in the tertiary level of education, that is, the undergraduate students who are taken to the course of English language. Stratified random sampling was used to select 120 participants with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds to represent all the participants in terms of gender, proficiency level, and previous exposure to English (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 115). Stratification will make sure that the sample will represent the difference in SLA experiences due to demographic and linguistic variations.

The participants were informed about the study aim, guaranteed of confidentiality, and informed consent was obtained. The considerations relating to ethics were adhered to to the letter, as per the guidelines described by Dornyei and Taguchi (78).

3.2. Quantitative Data and Instruments

1. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS): The FLCAS is a 33-item Likert-scale scale designed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) to assess anxiety levels of the learners in the classroom context. It takes into consideration communication anxiety, test anxiety and fear of adverse judgment. The scale has been extensively tested in EFL and ESL settings, which makes it reliable (MacIntyre and Gardner 36).

2. Checklist on Classroom participation: A checklist was provided to document the rate and quality of participation of learners in oral discussions, group activities, and presentations. Parameters covered in the checklist were willingness to speak, relevance of contribution and responsiveness to peers. This is in line with Aida (1994) argument that observable behaviors are important in determining the actual effect of SLA on participation.

3.3. Qualitative Instruments

1. Semi-Structured Interviews: A sample of 20 respondents of low, medium, and high levels of anxiety was interviewed to understand personal experiences of SLA, coping strategies, and the perceived barriers to participation. Semi-structured interviews enable the flexibility of probing delicate emotional, social factors that might not be encapsulated by questionnaires (Dörnyei 15).

2. Reflective Journals: The participants kept journals throughout one month, recording the times when they experienced anxiety, classroom interactions, and self-evaluation of participation. Reflective journaling has been identified as one of the effective qualitative techniques of comprehending affective variables in language learning (Oxford 112).

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

The collection of data was done in a period of six weeks. First, the participants were given the FLCAS and after completion, the classroom observations were done to document the behavior of participation. To reduce the effects of situational factors, observations were carried out in several sessions as suggested by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (128).

Semi-structured interviews followed, that were recorded with permission in quiet settings, and transcribed to be analyzed thematically. Reflective journals were collected at the end of the observation period. These data sources allow to triangulate the information and thoroughly understand the SLA and its implications on classroom engagement.

3.5. Data Analysis (Quantitative Analysis)

Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) were used to analyze quantitative measures produced by FLCAS and checklists of participation to understand the general levels of anxiety and patterns of participation. The Pearson correlation was used to test the relationship between anxiety and the frequency of participation. Furthermore, the tests of

ANOVA were carried out to investigate the variations in gender, proficiency levels, and previous exposure to English, which is in line with the statistical methods advocated by MacIntyre and Gardner (41).

3.6. Qualitative Analysis

Interpretive journals and interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis of qualitative data (Braun and Clarke 79). Themes of recurrent themes regarding anxiety triggers, coping strategies and barriers to participation were coded as transcripts. Quantitative results were then cross-linked with the themes to confirm the patterns and point out inconsistencies, to yield a multi-layered understanding of SLA.

3.7. Justification of Methodology

The rationale behind the mixed-methods design is in the complexity and contextual specificity of SLA. Quantitative tests are used to measure the magnitude and magnitude of anxiety whereas qualitative research unveils the subjective experiences and coping skills of learners. Dornyei (12) supports this combination by stating that the affective variables in language learning are best perceived with the help of multi-method approaches which take into consideration both numbers and narratives.

Further, stratified sampling and several observation sessions make the research findings more reliable and generalizable. The combination of learner perceptions and observed behaviors makes the study fill gaps discovered in the literature, especially the necessity to correlate anxiety measures with the actual results in classroom participation.

4. Theoretical Framework

Second Language Anxiety (SLA) is a phenomenon that needs a theoretical approach which connects affective aspects to language acquisition and classroom behavior. The theoretical frameworks assist in the explanation of how the learners are influenced to experience anxiety, how the anxiety is manifested in the participation, and what pedagogical intervention can alleviate the anxiety. The present research is based largely on three powerful theories: Krashen Affective Filter Hypothesis, McCroskey Communication Apprehension Theory and Self-determination Theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan. All these frameworks offer a holistic perspective of cognitive, emotional, and motivational aspects of SLA.

Affective Filter Hypothesis by Stephen Krashen can be explained as the theory that acquiring language is not only affected by the linguistic input but also by the affective factors like motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Krashen claims that learners who experience high anxiety or low self-esteem can become high affective filter blocking language input and preventing it to pass through (Krashen 31). On the other hand, anxiety levels are low, which makes it easier to understand, remember, and engage.

The theory of Krashen has been a popular one in SLA studies. Horwitz et al. (1986) believe that anxiety in the classroom serves as a high affective filter, restricting oral

contributions and participation in interactive activities. This argument is further supported by Aida (1994), who notes that high anxiety Japanese learners shunned classroom discussions even when they had a high level of linguistic competence. However, critics also point out that although the Affective Filter Hypothesis emphasizes the affective barriers, it offers little information about specific instructional interventions to reduce anxiety (Young 34).

Implication: This theory underscores the importance of creating low-stress environments and using task-based, student-centered activities to reduce learners' affective filter and encourage participation.

4.1. Communication Apprehension Theory

McCroskey defines communication apprehension (CA) as an individual's fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with others (McCroskey 78). CA plays an important role in SLA in the language classroom, especially in oral participation. Students can remain silent, make fewer contributions, or even avoid interactions with group members, and this may inhibit the growth of communicative competence (MacIntyre and Gardner 36).

It has been found that CA is not distributed even among learners. The CA of extroverts tends to be lower, whereas introverts or socially anxious students tend to be more afraid (Gregersen and MacIntyre 2014). Young (1990) stresses that CA may be contextual, such as speaking in front of peers may be more anxiety-inducing than answering written prompts. This is in line with observations in classrooms when they are EFL and oral participation is the most anxiety producing activity.

Implication: With the knowledge of CA, the educator can recognize the learners who are at risk of avoidance behaviors and devise interventions that will help them participate, through small-group discussions, role-plays, and confidence-building activities.

4.2. Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a theory of human behavior that focuses on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and the importance of autonomy, competence and relatedness in enhancing engagement (Deci and Ryan 12). When learners feel autonomous, competent, and socially connected, they are less likely to feel debilitating anxiety in the context of SLA. On the other hand, SLA can be worsened by the environment that undermines autonomy or exerts too much pressure, which limits classroom participation.

Studies that implement SDT to language acquisition indicate that the impact of anxiety can be alleviated by encouraging intrinsic motivation, which can be achieved by engaging in meaningful activities, choice, and learner-focused teaching methods (Noels, Pelletier, and Vallerand 327). Indicatively, TBLT (Task-Based Language Teaching) provides the autonomy and competence that enable learners to participate with the view

that they will not be corrected immediately and this removes anxiety and enhances participation (Ellis 45).

Critics Remarks: SDT offers a motivational approach to anxiety, but some researchers believe that it lacks a complete cognitive approach, including the interference of anxiety in working memory (MacIntyre and Gardner 36). Hence, SDT can be integrated with other theories such as Affective Filter and Communication Apprehension to have a comprehensive view.

4.3. Integration of Theories

Combining the Affective Filter Hypothesis of Krashen, the Communication Apprehension of McCroskey and the SDT of Deci and Ryan, SLA may be conceptualized as an intricate interaction of affective filters, situational apprehension, and motivation. The theories each add a critical dimension:

1. Krashen: Discusses the effect of anxiety on language input and understanding.
2. McCroskey: Explicates the specific way fear of speaking inhibits participation.
3. SDT: Underlines the motivation processes that may be used to alleviate anxiety and promote involvement.

This theoretical triangulation will enable a detailed examination of the effect of SLA in the classroom participation which will be a solid basis of the interpretation of the research findings in the next discussion chapter.

4.4. Critics and Debates

Some researchers believe that Affective Filter developed by Krashen is too abstract and cannot be operationalized in empirical studies (Young 34). Communication Apprehension Theory has been criticized as overemphasizing personality traits and undervaluing contextual factors (Gregersen and MacIntyre 2014). Although SDT is strong in its ability to describe motivation, it might not adequately describe situational or culturally specific causes of SLA (Dewaele and MacIntyre 530).

Regardless of these criticisms, the conglomeration of these theories provides a holistic approach to the explanations of SLA as both psychological and social phenomenon that influence language acquisition.

5. Discussion/Analysis

The results of the research of 120 EFL students showed that there were a number of important trends. Quantitative analysis with the FLCAS has demonstrated that a large percentage of the participants (68 percent) reported moderate or high levels of Second Language Anxiety, and oral tasks (class discussions and presentations) had the highest levels of anxiety. These findings were supported with classroom observations: learners with high anxiety scores engaged less often in group activities, provided shorter answers, and frequently had to depend on peers to perform group tasks.

Interview and reflective journal qualitative data helped further illuminate these behaviors. Students indicated that they experienced fear of negative evaluation, embarrassment, and self-consciousness as the main barriers to participation. One of the participants observed, that despite knowing the answer, they are afraid to speak up, lest they make a mistake in front of the class. This was reflected in reflective journals, which indicated that the most anxiety occurred in unplanned interactions, oral questioning or peer feedback sessions.

5.1. Oral Participation and SLA

It is found that SLA produces the most significant impact on oral participation, which is consistent with Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) and Aida (1994). Higher anxiety learners tended to avoid making any speech, even when encouraged by the teacher. This accounts to the Communication Apprehension theory of McCroskey, which defines fear of communication as the biggest obstacle to classroom interaction (McCroskey 78).

It was indicated that there was negative correlation between anxiety levels and frequency of oral contributions with a quantitative value of $r = -0.63$, $p < 0.01$. It was observed that the most anxious learners tended to like written assignments or individual tasks, which is in line with Cheng, Horwitz, and Schallert (1997), who established that writing anxiety and speaking anxiety may differ in their manifestations.

More importantly, the data have indicated that oral avoidance behavior does not only inhibit communicative practice, but also, diminishes the chances of peer learning, which is essential in EFL classrooms to build vocabulary, practice pronunciation and negotiate meaning (Ellis 45).

5.2. SLA and Group/Collaborative Tasks

This also affected group activities like role-plays and collaborative problem solving, but to a smaller extent. The quantitative analysis indicated that participants with moderate levels of anxiety engaged more in the structured group tasks compared to discussions with no tasks, which indicates that task design can eliminate anxiety. The interviews also revealed that the fear of negative evaluation was lessened in peer support and small-group contexts, which was consistent with the results reported by Gregersen and Horwitz (2002).

Nonetheless, even highly anxious learners were reluctant to facilitate group tasks, giving way to peers. It emphasizes that SLA influences not only the quantity but the quality of participation as well. Even in a face-to-face and interactive setting, nervous students tended to contribute little to low risk utterances, shunning complicated explanations or judgments.

5.3. SLA and Written Participation

Interestingly, the effect of SLA on classroom (written) activities was relatively less. Based on observation checklists and reflective journals, it was noticed that anxious

learners excelled in the private writing activities or online discussion boards. This coincides with Cheng et al. (1997) who distinguish between speaking anxiety and writing anxiety.

The qualitative feedback indicated that learners experienced reduced pressure during writing because it was enabled to have time to develop answers and not be judged instantly. However, stress at times did not influence collaborative writing situations in which peer feedback or teacher review could be instant, indicating that social evaluation is still one of the main triggers.

5.4. Theoretical Interpretation

1. Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982): The high anxiety was a psychological filter, which restricted language input processing and participation. Less anxious learners better processed classroom interactions and were more active, which confirms the fact that affective variables directly influence language acquisition as it was claimed by Krashen (Krashen 31).

2. Communication Apprehension (McCroskey, 1977): The noted avoidance of speaking activities proves that the communication apprehension is a significant factor contributing to SLA. The unwillingness of learners to engage in oral activities fits the idea of McCroskey that the fear of performing or expecting communication prevents active communication (McCroskey 78).

3. Self-Determination Theory

The results indicated that learners who were more autonomous, competent and supported by their peers had lower anxiety and attended more. This is an indication that intrinsic motivation and learner-centered settings could alleviate SLA, which is consistent with SDT (Noels, Pelletier, and Vallerand 327).

5.5. Pedagogical Implications

The discussion notes a few measures to cut SLA and increase participation:

- Task-Based Learning: Meaningful tasks organized around tasks change the emphasis of evaluation to communication, reduce affective filters and promote engagement (Ellis 45).
- Small-Group Activities: Fear of negative evaluation is relieved by reducing the size of groups and by peer support (Gregersen and Horwitz 66).
- Scaffolding and Pre-Task Preparation: Oral task preparation by using a guided practice or modeling decreases uncertainty, anxiety (Kondo and Yang 102).
- Fostering Autonomy: The provision of choice in activities, subjects, and forms of participation leads to intrinsic motivation, which is in line with SDT principles (Deci and Ryan 12).

- Reflective Practices: Asking learners to keep journals can assist them to recognize triggers and create coping skills, which in turn aid in self-regulation (Oxford 112).

Opponents claim that these interventions have been effective though they require context-adaptation to be successful. The implementation might be subtle because of large classes, cultural norms, and different personalities of the learners, and not uniform (Gregersen and MacIntyre 2014).

5.6. Summary of Discussion

Altogether, SLA has a great influence on classroom participation, particularly oral and interactive activities. The multidimensionality of SLA is supported by both quantitative and qualitative information that emphasizes the combination of psychological, cognitive, and social factors. Krashen, McCroskey, and SDT theoretical analysis give a complete picture of why learners feel anxiety and its expression in terms of participation behaviors. There are effective pedagogical strategies that can be used to reduce SLA, yet special consideration of the differences in learners and context is important.

6. Conclusion

This paper has investigated how Second Language Anxiety (SLA) influences classroom involvement among EFL students. Information gathered on 120 respondents showed that SLA is a major obstacle to active participation especially in oral and interactive activities. Quantitative analysis showed that learners that had higher anxiety scores were less engaged and made shorter and less elaborate answers. Interpretations of qualitative data in interviews and reflective journals were enlightening regarding the emotional and cognitive processes involved in SLA, with the fear of negative evaluation, self-consciousness, and fear of making mistakes being identified as the main obstacles.

The comparison also showed that the less anxiety-inducing tasks are written tasks and organized group work, and therefore it can be concluded that task design and classroom organization are important factors in mediating SLA. Comprehensively, the results prove that SLA is a multidimensional construct that influences the amount and quality of classroom involvement supporting the findings of Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) and MacIntyre and Gardner (1989).

6.1. Theoretical Implications

The results of the study are consistent and generalize a number of theories:

1. Affective Filter Hypothesis by Krashen (1982): Anxiety makes a psychological barrier that constrains language input processing and decreases the chances of active participation. The research helps to support the argument by Krashen that affective variables are important in language acquisition.

2. Communication Apprehension Theory by McCroskey (1977): Fear of communication is established as an important element of SLA, especially oral

assignments. The identified avoidance behaviors can be used to show the real-life implications of communication apprehension in actual classrooms.

3. Self-Determination Theory of Deci and Ryan (1985): More autonomy, competence, and social relatedness in learners demonstrated a reduction in anxiety and increased participation. This highlights the significance of the motivation and learner-centered pedagogy in alleviating SLA.

By combining these theoretical perspectives, the research shows the interrelationships between affective, cognitive, and motivational variables in classroom participation.

6.2. Practical and Pedagogical Implications

The results lead to a number of pedagogical strategies:

- Task-Based Learning: Participation in meaningful tasks leads to a decrease in anxiety and encourages participation because they take the emphasis off the evaluation and the emphasis on communication (Ellis 45).
- Small-Group and peer-assisted activities: Group activities decrease the fear of negative assessment and promote the risk-taking in communication (Gregersen and Horwitz 2002).
- Scaffolding and Pre-Task Preparation: Organized directions and modeling can make learners more confident and decrease anxiety caused by uncertainty (Kondo and Yang 102).
- Nurturing Autonomy and Intrinsic Motivation: Choice and encouraging self-regulation will help learners engage, which aligns well with the SDT principles (Deci and Ryan 12).
- Reflective Journaling and Self-Assessment: The use of metacognitive and affective awareness can be encouraged by asking learners to reflect on their anxiety triggers and coping strategies (Oxford 112).

Tailored to the profiles of learners and the classroom setting, these strategies can assist the educator to make anxiety a component that they can control, rather than an obstacle that inhibits participation and language growth.

6.3. Limitations and Future Research

Despite the ample information in this study, there are a few weaknesses:

1. Contextual Constraints: The research was carried out in tertiary EFL classrooms and might not be applicable to K-12 or entirely online classrooms.

2. Sample size and cultural diversity: Although stratified sampling was used, the cultural and lingual differences were minimal. Further studies are needed to investigate SLA in different educational systems and cultures.

3. Longitudinal Effects: SLA was only measured at one time point in the study. Longitudinal studies would provide the manner of anxiety change throughout a semester or academic year.

4. Digital Learning Environments: As the practice of online language teaching becomes increasingly popular, online learning in the form of virtual learning classes is an essential field of research in the future (Dewaele and MacIntyre 527).

The Second Language Anxiety is a significant predictor of the classroom engagement, determining how willing learners are to talk, participate, and cooperate. This research shows the complexity of SLA and the significance of context-sensitive, learner-focused intervention by bridging the gap between empirical evidence and existing theoretical frameworks. When anxiety is identified and managed, the educators will be able to increase the participation, communicative competence, and create a more inclusive and efficient learning environment.

Finally, mitigating SLA will be not merely the decrease of negative affect but also the empowerment of learners, their motivation, and the establishment of the classroom environment in which language learning will be interesting and psychologically comfortable.

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