

The Impact of Anxiety on Students' Learning at English Department, Faculty of Education, Balkh/ Herat Universities

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Abstract

Language anxiety is a specific aspect of language acquisition on students' learning. In this research, the impact of anxiety on students' learning English was investigated. It, first of all, introduces some theoretical study of anxiety on students' learning conducted by some scholars in relevant field. This research was carried out with a quantitative research design by using a survey methodology to collect data about the participants' learning anxiety. The sample of the study included 80 university students from the English Departments of Balkh and Herat universities. The participants were chosen randomly. The survey asks the students about their experiences, feelings and thoughts related anxieties during study process. The causes are less preparation, do not having courage, less background knowledge and so on. The recommended solutions are coming to class with preparation, do not border by someone, and do not fear from their teachers.

Keywords: Anxiety, students' learning, quantitative research, survey, participants, Balkh and Herat Universities.

Introduction

Foreign language anxiety is a universal phenomenon which is not just found in English classes but also in other languages. University students have a big problem of anxiety during the class. These are like losing motivation during the explanation of the lesson, in presentations or in seminars, in group work or pair work. Feeling anxiety can be interrupt students' performance. Researchers found that learners have anxiety in different times, like while study, and during exam. Anxiety while study is a big problem in academic performance. In addition, anxiety interferes with concentration and memory, which are critical for students' learning in English classes. In this study, the researchers use a questionnaire to find out the impact of anxiety on students' learning in English classes of Balkh and Herat Universities in order to find out its need and effectiveness.

Research Questions

The authors of this research try to find out the answers for these questions.

- 1- What is the level of learning anxiety among the students of English department of Balkh and Herat universities?
- 2- What are the reasons that students contribute to their anxiety in English classes?

Research Objectives

- 1- To find out the impact of anxiety on students' learning.
- 2- To understand the reasons of having anxiety on students' learning in English Departments.
- 3- To discover the way of do not having anxiety on students' learning in English Departments.

Hypothesis

The researchers believe that anxiety has a bad effect on students' learning, and obstacle the students' improvements.

Literature Review

In this section, literature review is done in accordance with the research questions of the study. It, considered that only those research studies are reviewed that are related with the questions of this study.

Anxiety has been found as an important factor that cause effects on learners' performance in English classrooms. Furthermore, researchers explain anxiety as one of the most important phenomena that makes the language learning outcomes difficult. As Mohammad (2017) defines that anxiety affect the quality of student's communication or willingness to communicate.

Shera & Mobarak (2020) stated that "Anxiety is a psychological construct, commonly described by psychologists as a state of apprehension, a vague fear that is only indirectly associated with an object" (P. 33). When anxiety is related to students' second language learning process it is known as a second language anxiety. They also added that psychological dimension to language anxiety saying that it is a factor that creates a negative effect on students' psychology. For example, while a teacher asks some shy students to explain a lesson in front of the class, he or she may feel anxiety. Anxious students may not be able to be success in oral exam because of their anxiety. In contrast, relaxed students may perform better because they do not experience the language anxiety.

Shehadeh (2018) explained that among university students, the level of anxiety in learning English language was very high and concluded that 50 % of all language learning students have got with unfavorable language anxiety. She also added that an English language class has many students who have anxiety than the other classes. In addition, Vitasari (2010)

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showed that advanced level of anxiety has very big effects on motivation that students anxiety can discourage from getting academic or professional careers.

Anxiety is one of the internal components of second language learners that might obstruct performance and achievement. It has occupied a most important great body of research for the past few decades. Last research shows that anxiety has revealed the fact that anxiety can impede foreign language performance and production. Sometimes students face some kinds of problems in learning English language. Anxiety has been recognized as an obstacle in English language learning. It is also believed that anxiety has influence on students' achievements of their goals. Furthermore, anxiety is one of the most important factors that affect in English language learning.

According to Russell (2012) anxiety is a mental health problem that resides on a continuum of distress and disability. "In its mildest form, it may present as transient social apprehension, occurring in response to common social-evaluative situations, while its more severe form is characterized by disabling, pervasive fear and avoidance" (Russell, 2012, P. 12). As the researchers also examined that anxiety is a mental health problem which is happen on students' learning in English Departments of Balkh and Herat Universities.

As Djafri and Wimbari (2018) explain three components of foreign language anxiety: such as communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension is defined as fear or anxiety in communicative with people, manifested in oral communication anxiety in a group. Test anxiety belongs to a type of performance from a fear of failure. Fear of negative evaluation is apprehension about others' evaluations. These three components were used to measure the foreign language anxiety happened in English classes.

Methodology

The data for this research is based on a quantitative method of collection by distributing questionnaires for 80 students of English Departments of Balkh and Herat universities. The students were from second, third and fourth classes. The questionnaire investigated the participants' responses and attitudes towards the difficulties among them. Then the collected data were analyzed, and the percentage were calculated by using Microsoft Excel and then showed into visual tables and charts.

Participants

The participants of this research are students of English Departments of Balkh and Herat universities. They were chosen randomly. The participants were both male and female with different learning background. There were 35 male and 45 female. All the participants were told they would remain anonymous in the report to encourage a wide range of submissions and findings.

Data Collection

Data collection comes from questionnaire as it was discussed on the literature review to improve participants' answers. The questionnaire is divided into three main sections starting with 10 personal information about anxiety followed by close ended questions, and five multiple choice questions, then it ended with three open ended questions that participants can write their ideas about anxiety.

Data Analysis

All the questionnaires were collected back from the students by reasonable responses to the research responses. Excel program was used for accounting the percentage of answers. Therefore, the process of data analysis began by putting all questions into Excel sheet and after that tables were made.

Findings

This research paper is made to implement at the university level and based on the survey of participants' ideas about anxiety. In this study, the researchers collected the responses for the following questionnaires and concluded the findings regarding the students experience and their opinions. Thus, these tables show the satisfaction of students' speeches, their ideas and thoughts.

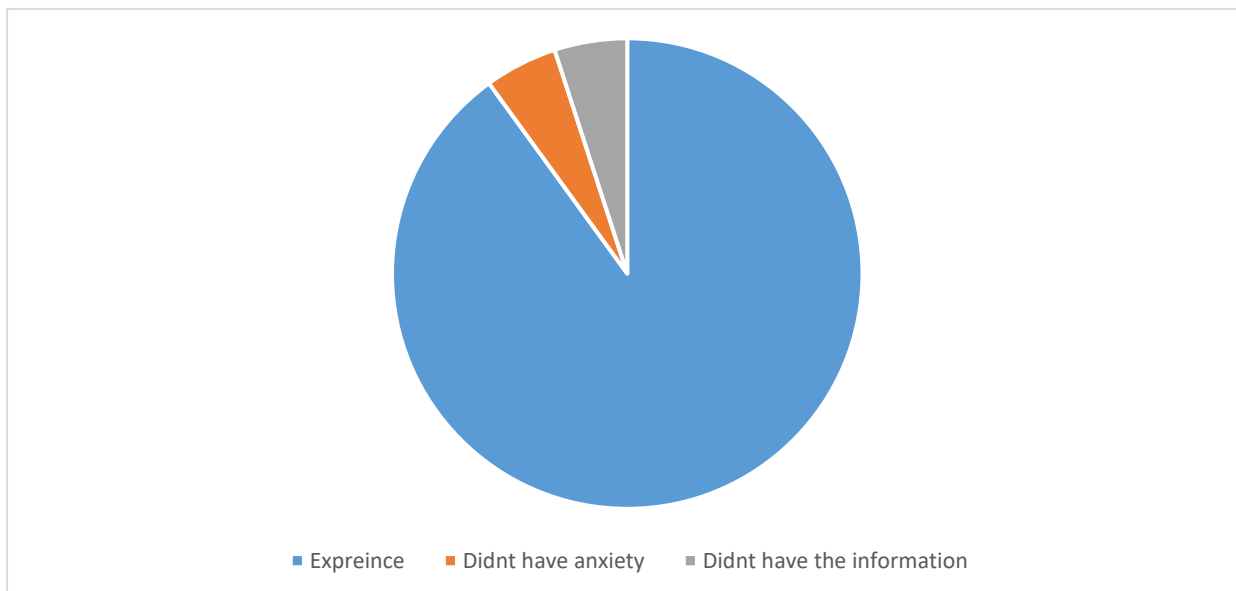
Results

The data collected from questionnaires about the impact of anxiety is analyzed and there is a quantitative analysis of participant's answers and feedbacks on the impact of anxiety among students of English Departments of Balkh and Herat Universities. It also shows the students' background information which includes their level of educations too.

Gender	Number	Participant
Male	35	35%
Female	45	45%
Total	80	80%
Age		
21-23	50	50%
23-25	30	30%
Total	80	80%
Class		
2	10	10%
3	35	35%
4	35	35%
Total	80	80%
Education Level		
Advanced	30	30%

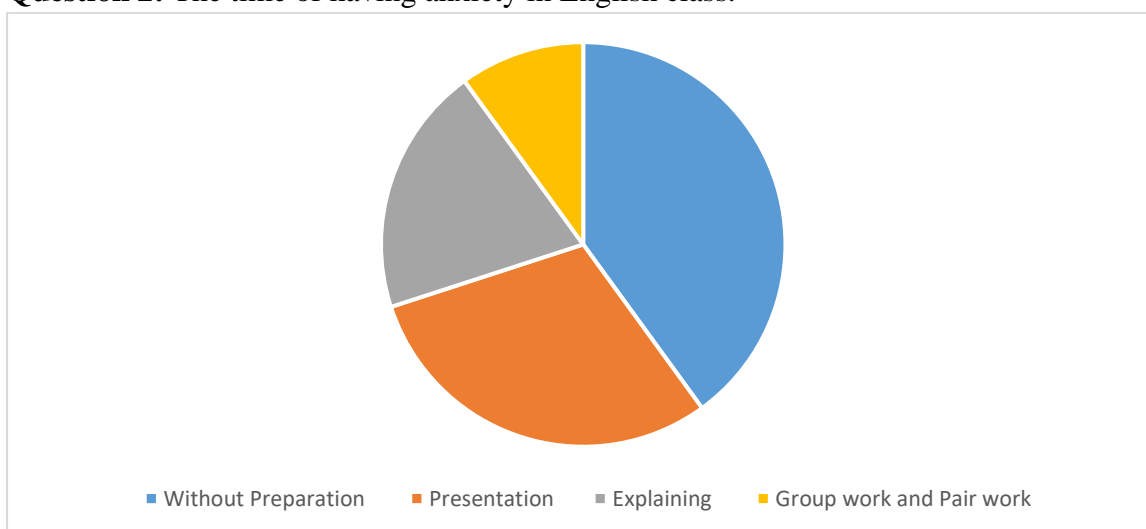
Intermediate	25	25%
Upper-Intermediate	25	25%
Total	80	80%

Question 1: Definition of anxiety in English classes.



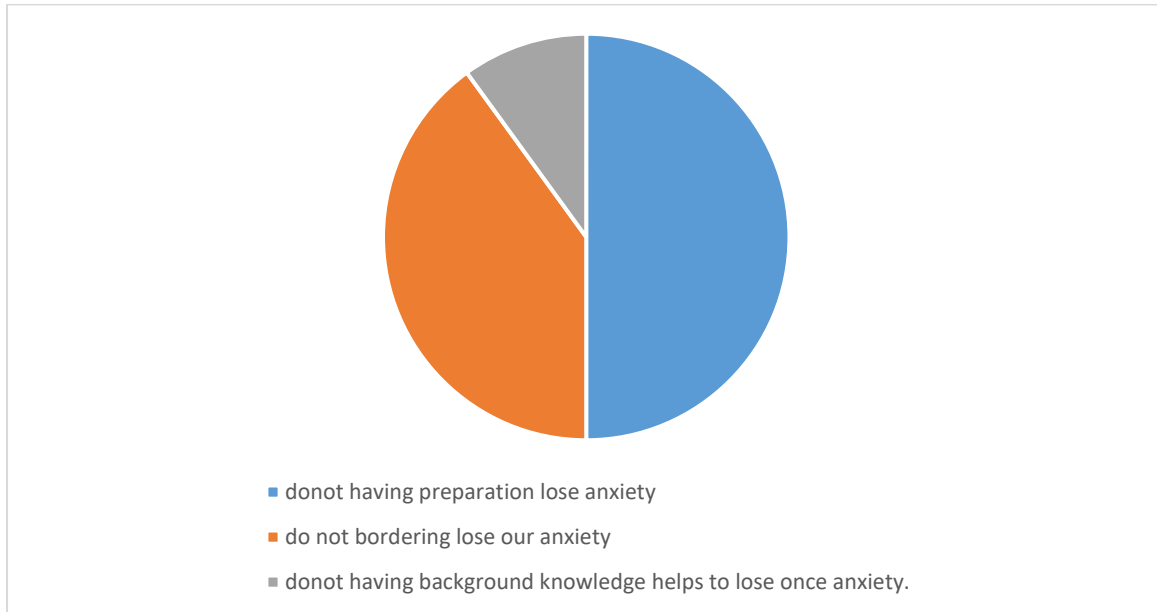
Anxiety is defined as an emotional and attitudinal fluctuation that almost every student has in different times. It shows that almost all participants have the problem of anxiety in English classes. About (90%) of participants had information and they experience anxiety. Although (5%) of them did not have anxiety in their classes and the rest of them still didn't have the information of anxiety.

Question 2: The time of having anxiety in English class.



As we know anxiety is a psychological construct that will happen unconsciously. Like this, participants' answers were different in this question. (30%) of them had anxiety while presenting seminars, while (20%) of them had anxiety while explaining the lesson. About (40%) of them had anxiety while they are coming to class without preparation. Therefore, (10%) of participants had anxiety while group work and pair work.

Question3: Losing anxiety on students' learning in English classes.



Most of the time losing anxiety is belong to the students. In my point of view if a student wants to lose anxiety it will be easy. For example, he or she must have a good preparation, do not feel shy and so on. At that time there would not be anxiety. This figure shows that (50%) of participants believed that getting involved in preparation helps them lose anxiety, whereas (40%) of them wrote that they were in the border of losing anxiety, and the others felt that their knowledge of the background helps them lose anxiety.

Conclusion

Anxiety is a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about something with an uncertain outcome. It acts as a state of apprehension of a threatening event or situation. In other word, it is an uncomfortable feeling of nervousness or worry about something which is happening or may happen in the class in future. As the researchers investigate that there are many kinds of anxiety like communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. It is also believed that anxiety has influence on students' achievements of their goals. In addition, anxious students may not be able to succeed in oral exam because of their anxiety. In contrast, relaxed students may perform better because they do not experience the language anxiety. Based on the data analysis, this study concluded that students have anxiety during presentations, seminars, working in groups and pairs. The causes are less preparation, do not have courage, less background knowledge, and so on. To sum up, this article investigated some

of the main causes of anxiety in students' learning in English classes of Balkh and Herat Universities. Finally, it could be said that anxiety has an important role on students' learning in English classes.

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Appendix: Students' awareness survey questionnaire

Questions:

Directions: Dear participants,

This survey means to identify study anxiety sources and ask you to fill the questionnaire base on your feelings, experiences, and thoughts regarding anxiety during your study process. For each question choose one of the following alternative. Please answer the questions as truthfully as possible.

Alternative question:

1=never 2=almost never 3=rare 4=fairly often 5=very often

No	Questions	1	2	3	4	5
1	I feel anxiety during explaining the lesson due to the lack of preparation					
2	I feel anxiety when speaking activities in class					

3	I feel anxiety when I stand in front of the classroom					
4	I often feel anxiety when giving class presentation					
5	I face with difficulties of study when there are too many students are in the class					
6	I feel anxiety when I do not know the answer of questions					
7	I feel anxiety when I think that my teacher is very strict					
8	I feel anxious because English is my second language					
9	I feel nervousness when my lecturer interrupting to correct my mistakes					
10	I feel anxiety when my peer's knowledge be upper than me					

Please indicate whether you experience embarrassment and anxiety or feel inhibited in one or more of the following situations.

1. Seminars
 - a) Frequently
 - b) Occasionally
 - c) Never
2. Presentations
 - a) Frequently
 - b) Occasionally
 - c) Never
3. Lectures
 - a) Frequently
 - b) Occasionally
 - c) Never
4. Problem based learning
 - a) Frequently
 - b) Occasionally
 - c) Never
5. Using from peer work and group work
 - a) Frequently
 - b) Occasionally
 - c) Never

Question 1: Do you know the definition of anxiety?

Question 2: When do you have anxiety in your class?

Question 3: How should we lose anxiety on students' learning in English classes?



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