

Second Language Anxiety and Oral Communication Performance of Grade 11 Senior High School Students

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Abstract: This paper aims to determine the level of second language anxiety and oral communication performance of grade 11 senior high school students at Santa Teresita National High School in the school year 2017-2018, as assessed by the grade 11 students with the end view of proposing plan of action to minimize the second language anxiety among them. The researcher employed the descriptive method of research and questionnaire was utilized as the main data-gathering instrument. This study involved 105 grade 11 students of Santa Teresita National High School, Sta. Teresita, Batangas. The statistical tools applied in the treatment of the data were weighted mean, ranking, frequency, percentage and coefficient of correlation. Results showed that students agreed that they have experienced communication apprehension, somewhat agreed that they have experienced the remaining three categories namely anxiety in English class, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. In terms of oral communication performance, students somewhat agreed that language anxiety affects their oral communication performance.

Keywords: Second Language Anxiety, Oral Communication Performance.

1. Introduction

The aim of every teacher is to teach their students something useful, something they will benefit from real-life situations. In today's globalized and interconnected world, being able to communicate and being understood comes to be more urgently than before. The rationale behind teaching language is to teach students to communicate effectively. In teaching-learning process, good communication skills are vital in achieving quality education and in attaining success. The acquisition of these skills has a positive effect not only for the achievement but also for personal satisfaction. Having good communication skills is essential to quality instruction and learning.

English is the language of international communication. In a nutshell, English becomes the second most important language to students. In some schools here in Philippines, English is the medium of instruction. The students with the help of the teacher need to equip themselves with excellent communication skills so they will gain confidence in front of other people.

The ability to speak English effectively is essential to be globally competitive citizen; but anxiety impedes the ability to speak English as a second language. Anxiety is a negative way

to present human feelings. When we are anxious, we feel nervous, worried and fearful. We struggle, tremble, perspire, and hearts beat quickly. In general, anxiety can be defined as a complex concept dependent upon not only on one's feelings of self-efficacy but also appraisals concerning the potential and perceived threats inherent in certain situations Tobias (1986).

In order to address these issues concerning second language anxiety, the present study was intended to determine the effects of second language anxiety to grade 11 students' oral communication performance and how they can muddle through with the anxiety. In view of foregoing concepts, this study gave the researcher the interest to determine how essential for us to know language anxiety and how to minimize the second language anxiety among the students.

2. Review of literature

Language anxiety is one of the negative factors in second language acquisition. Anxiety in communicating in a second language, especially when that language is English can have a debilitating effect and can influence students' adaptation to the target environment and ultimately their educational goals. Second language anxiety is defined here as a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feeling, and behaviors related to using a second language for communication beyond the language classroom. Most people experience language anxiety. Even though anxiety might not be the most important reason for failure or success in learning, we cannot ignore its affection.

It cannot be denied that learning a second language is important especially when that second language is English. English is the most widespread and important language in the world today. It is a major language of international business, diplomacy, science and the professions. English is also an official language of many international and professional organizations. It is used not only for communication between native speakers of English but also between non-native speakers.

Language anxiety is conceptualized as a situation-specific personality trait having two psychological components: emotional arousal and negative self-related cognition (MacIntyre, 1995). These components ostensibly interfere with

behavior instrumental to language learning, and are more intense in people who are high in language anxiety. Because language anxiety is consistently associated with problems in language learning such as deficits in listening comprehension, reduced word production, impaired vocabulary learning, lower grades in language courses, and lower scores on standardized tests (Horwitz and Young, 1991), understanding the mechanism of anxiety in language learning has been of major concern to educators and researchers (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1994).

In general, the effects of language anxiety have been explained with reference to the cognitive consequences of anxiety arousal. When an individual becomes anxious in any setting, negative self-related cognition begins. Once present, it consumes cognitive resources that might otherwise be applied to the task at hand. This can create additional difficulties in cognitive processing because there are fewer resources available, possibly leading to failure, more negative cognitions that consume more resources, and so on. The question of what students are actually doing to cope with their anxiety in language classrooms has received hardly any attention, nor has the possibility been considered that such coping behaviors may play a role in the customary decrease in the performance of highly language anxious students.

Indicators related to the learner which eventually because anxiety include low esteem, competitiveness, self-perceived low level of ability, communication apprehension, lack of group membership and attitudes and beliefs about language learning (Young, 1994)

For many students, language courses are the most anxiety-provoking courses they take (MacIntyre 1995). Campbell and Ortiz, (1991) estimated that up to one half of all language students experience debilitating levels of language anxiety. When people are confronted with a situation that they think will make them anxious, the most expected response is to avoid the situation and thus avoid the discomfort. However, in most language classrooms, avoidance is not a viable option; they are expected to find some way to cope with the anxiety.

Language teachers have observed on numerous occasions the apprehension and discomfort experienced by many students who are attempting to acquire and produce a second language. This nervousness or anxiety frequently seems to become particularly aggravated when students are required to speak in class, and during exams and tests.

3. Research questions

This study sought to determine the level of second language anxiety and oral communication performance of grade 11 senior high school students. Specifically, this study attempted to answer the following questions:

What was the level of second language anxiety of grade 11 students in terms of,

1. Communication apprehension;
2. Fear of negative evaluation;
3. Test anxiety and

4. Anxiety in English class?

To what extent did the second language anxiety affect the students' oral communication performance in terms of:

1. Pronunciation;
2. Vocabulary;
3. Structure and
4. Fluency?

Was there a significant relationship between the second language anxiety and oral communication performance of grade 11 students?

What plan of action was done to minimize the second language anxiety among respondents?

4. Methods

This study focused on the level of second language anxiety among grade 11 senior high school students and their oral communication performance. The descriptive method of research aimed to present information on how second language anxiety: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety and anxiety in English class affect the oral communication performance of students in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary, structure and fluency. The data were gathered through the use of questionnaire.

5. Results/Discussion of results

A. Second language anxiety of grade 11 students

- *Communication Apprehension.* The students agreed that they have experienced communication apprehension as manifested by the average weighted mean of 3.13. This was supported by the disclosure of the grade 11 students that they felt confident when they spoke in English as evidenced by the highest weighted mean of 3.53. They got nervous when they didn't understand every word that their English teacher said and they started to panic when they have to speak without preparation in class obtained the lowest weighted mean of 2.87.
- *Fear of Negative Evaluation.* The students somewhat agreed that of having fear of negative evaluation as indicated in the average weighted mean of 2.73. Students got nervous when the English teachers asked questions which they haven't prepared in advance ranked first by the respondents having the weighted mean of 3.13. The students' hearts were pounding when they were going to be called by the English teacher in English class obtained the lowest weighted mean of 2.13.
- *Test Anxiety.* The average weighted mean of 2.84 indicated that grade 11 students somewhat agreed that they have experienced test anxiety. They worried about the consequences of failing in their English class was ranked first by the students having the weighted mean of 3.32. Last in the rank was the students were

afraid that their English teacher was ready to correct every mistake they made with a weighted mean of 2.36.

- *Anxiety in English Class.* The grade 11 students somewhat agreed that they have experienced anxiety in English class with the average weighted mean of 2.85. This meant that there were some instances that they got anxious during English class hours. This was substantiated by the idea that respondents agreed that when they were on their way to English class, they felt sure and relaxed as demonstrated by the highest weighted mean of 3.30. More so, they didn't feel like going to English class obtained the lowest weighted mean of 2.13.

B. Oral communication performance

- *Pronunciation.* The students somewhat agreed in the indicators of their performance in pronunciation as revealed by the average weighted mean of 2.83. Foremost in the rank, when they speak they pause when appropriate and use emphasis to reinforce meaning with the average weighted mean of 3.21. The students felt embarrassed about their pronunciation was ranked last by the respondents with the average weighted mean of 2.34.
- *Vocabulary.* The students somewhat agreed that they have experienced the indicators in term of vocabulary as confirmed by the average weighted mean of 2.87. This was supported by the idea that when they speak, their ideas and words usually flowed smoothly as revealed by the highest weighted mean of The students mind went blocked when they started to speak English with the weighted mean of 2.39 was ranked last by the students.
- *Structure.* The students agreed that they have experienced the indicators in structure as manifested by the average weighted mean of 3.25. This was substantiated by the idea that they found understanding grammar easy with the weighted mean of 3.64 which was ranked first by the student respondents. The students were also conscious in the way they used expressions and sentence pattern improperly with the lowest weighted mean of 3.07.
- *Fluency.* The students somewhat agreed that they have experienced the indicators in terms of fluency as revealed by the average weighted mean of 2.90. This was substantiated by the idea that they usually felt comfortable and at ease when speaking in English with the highest weighted mean of 3.33. Students freeze up when unexpectedly asked to speak in English was ranked last with the weighted mean of 2.68.

C. Relationship between Language Anxiety and Oral Communication Performance of Grade 11 Students

There was no significant relationship that existed between

the language anxiety and oral communication performance of grade 11 students because the computed coefficient of correlation of 2.091 (r) was much lesser than the tabular value of 0.811 at the 0.05 level of significance using 4 degrees of freedom. Hence, it was safe to accept the null hypothesis that there was no significant relationship between the language anxiety and oral performance of the grade 11 students.

Summary of the Students' Assessment on the Second Language Anxiety They Experienced

The summary of the students' assessment on the second language anxiety they experienced.

Table 1
Summary of the Students' Assessment on the Second Language Anxiety they Experienced

Category	AWM	VI	Rank
1. Communication Apprehension	3.13	Agree	1
2. Fear of Negative Evaluation	2.73	Somewhat agree	4
3. Test Anxiety	2.84	Somewhat agree	3
4. Anxiety in English class	2.85	Somewhat agree	2
Overall Weighted Mean	2.88	Somewhat agree	

The data revealed that the students somewhat agreed that they have experienced language anxiety with the overall weighted mean of 2.88. It was further revealed that students agreed that they have experienced communication apprehension with the highest average weighted mean of 3.13. The students somewhat agreed that they have experienced the remaining three categories namely anxiety in English class, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation having the average weighted mean of 2.85, 2.84, and 2.73 respectively. This could imply that the grade seven students were experiencing second language anxiety to a considerable extent.

Summary of the Effects of Second Language Anxiety of Students

The summary of the effects of second language anxiety of the

Table 2
Summary of the Effects of Second Language Anxiety of Students

Area	AWM	VI	Rank
1. Pronunciation	2.86	Somewhat agree	4
2. Vocabulary	2.87	Somewhat agree	3
3. Structure	3.25	Agree	1
4. Fluency	2.90	Somewhat agree	2
Overall Weighted Mean	2.97	Somewhat agree	

students in their oral communication performance.

It is clearly reflected in the table that the students somewhat agreed that language anxiety affects their oral performance as revealed by the overall weighted mean of 2.97.

Based on the foregoing table, the students agreed that they have experienced the indicators in structure as manifested by the highest average weighted mean of 3.25. The students somewhat agreed that they have experienced the indicators in fluency, vocabulary and pronunciation as revealed by the average weighted mean of 2.90, 2.87 and 2.86 respectively. This implied that the students' language anxiety affect their oral performance in a considerable extent. It also revealed that

Table 3
 Relationship between Language Anxiety and Oral Performance of Grade 11 Students

Variables	df	Computed R	Interpretation	r at 0.05	Level	Decision on Ho
Language Anxiety		0.291	Low Correlation	0.811	Not significant	Accept
Oral Communication	4					

Table 4
 Proposed action plan to minimize language anxiety among the grade 11 students

Areas of Concern	Objectives	Activities	Persons Involved	Success Indicator	Time Frame	Expected Outcome
1. English Proficiency	1. Discuss the significance of English Proficiency among students.	Orienting the Program	Teachers in English and students		Year round	
Fluency	2. Familiarize the students with the use of correct expressions.	Giving of common errors in English that students make and their corrections.	English Coordinator; teachers in English and students	A community who is well-conversant and adept in using English in communication.	Second Semester	Familiarized with the use of correct expressions.
Vocabulary	3. Determine the Meaning of the Word Through the Use of Context Clues	Presenting and discussing the types of context clues Providing drills on how context clues would widen one's comprehension	Teachers in English and students	Students with quick-witted comprehension	Second Semester	Determined the meaning of the word through the use of context clues.
Pronunciation	4. Improve the students' pronunciation of words.	Giving tongue twisters and drills on pronunciation.	Teachers in English and students	Students who are self-assured and eloquent	Second Semester	Improved students' pronunciation of words
Structure	5. Enhance the correct grammar in both oral and written discourse.	Conducts discussions, drills and quizzes on different aspects of grammar reflected in the year curriculum	Teachers in English and students	Members of the community who are proficient conversationalist	Second Semester	Enhanced students' oral performance in English.

students were much affected when they were asked to speak in the second language.

Relationship between Language Anxiety and Oral Performance of Grade 11 Students

The relationship between the language anxiety and oral performance of the grade 11 students.

D. Proposed action plan

An action plan was proposed to minimize language anxiety among the grade 11 students.



Objective: To reduce second language anxiety of students and enhance their oral communication performance.

6. Conclusions

Based on the highlights of the findings, the following conclusions were drawn.

1. All categories of second language anxiety were experienced by the grade 11 students. Communication apprehension was the most highly experienced among the four categories.
2. Majority of the grade 11 students had similar assessment in the effects of second language anxiety in their oral performance. There were different types

of English language anxiety, and the type of anxiety seemed to be dependent upon the context of interaction and how anxiety in English class, fears of negative evaluation, test anxiety, and communication apprehension affect the oral performance of the students involved. The affective environment of classroom can affect learning to such a degree that teachers must take an active role in reducing the English language anxiety that grade 11 students often experience in classroom.

3. There was no significant relationship that existed between the language anxiety and oral communication among the grade 11 students.
4. An action plan was proposed to minimize the second language anxiety of the students and to remedy the problems encountered by students in terms of their oral communication performance.

7. Recommendations

In the light of the findings and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations were offered by the researcher.

1. First and foremost, English teachers should acknowledge the existence of the feeling of anxiety in learning particularly in speaking English language and then should take initiatives for its reduction. They should identify individuals with signs of stress and anxiety and should apply appropriate strategies to help them counteract their feelings.

2. For active participation in the classroom discussion, it should be ensured that students are provided with friendly, informal and learning supportive environment. This can also reduce, although not eliminate altogether, the effect of social and status difference between students and teachers to a considerable extent.
3. The students appeared to be acutely sensitive to fear of making mistakes; hence, teachers should encourage students to have the confidence in order to acquire the needed communication skills. Furthermore, as a positive response to students' concern over the manner of teachers' correction, teachers' selection of error correction techniques should be based upon instructional philosophy and on reducing defensive reactions among the students.
4. The administrators and teachers should work hand and hand in giving solutions to the problems encountered by the students as regards with English language anxiety and oral performance.
5. The proposed action plan should be carefully studied by the administrators and teachers to effect modification before its implementation.
6. A follow – up study should be conducted to determine if there is marked improvement in this area.

8. Dissemination and advocacy plan

After the researcher has found out the result of the study, the next step is planning for dissemination and advocacy on how to utilize the proposed action plan. It will be used by the English teachers in Santa Teresita National High School to minimize the second language anxiety and improve the oral communication performance of the students.

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