

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ANXIETY AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING AMONG 2nd SECONDARY STUDENTS IN SECOND AMMAN DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate the language anxiety experienced by 2nd secondary students in second Amman Directorate of Education, and to find out which aspect of language learning (listening, speaking, reading, writing or Grammar) causes the greatest amount of anxiety for student, and to examine the relationship between language anxiety and students performance, from English language teachers' point of view and in addition to learners' point of view. To achieve the above mentioned objectives, the researcher developed a questionnaire. The study concludes that, the degree of language anxiety experienced by second secondary students in learning listening skills, speaking, reading and grammar is moderate, while the degree of language students' anxiety while learning writing is high. There are statistical significant differences between male and female student in their anxiety in learning English while learning reading and writing favors female students. There are no statistical significant differences between male and female students in their anxiety in learning English in learning listening, speaking, grammar, and in learning all English language skills. However, there are significant differences between male and female students ascribed to the students' achievement level. In the light of the results of the study, the researcher recommends that teachers should be trained to be warmer and more supportive of their students and to exhibit positive attitudes towards them. Different assessment methods should be considered in order to reduce test anxiety and the students should be encouraged to express their feelings openly. Learning material should be meaningful, lively, and of personal interest to the learner. Less threatening learning environment could be helpful in lowering student's anxiety and worries.

مستوى قلق الطلبة في الصف الثاني الثانوي في مديرية تعليم عمان الثانية في تعلم اللغة الانجليزية

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المخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقصي درجة القلق لدى طلبة الصف الثاني الثانوي في مديرية تعليم عمان الثانية، وتحديد مهارات اللغة الانجليزية الأكثر إثارة للقلق بالنسبة للطلبة " الاستماع والمحادثة والقراءة والكتابة وقواعد اللغة الانجليزية، ودراسة العلاقة بين القلق وأداء الطلبة من وجهة نظر معلمي اللغة الانجليزية، وكذلك من وجهة نظر المتعلمين أنفسهم.

ولتحقيق الأهداف المذكورة أعلاه طور الباحثان وتوصلت الدراسة إلى أن درجة قلق طلبة الصف الثاني الثانوي أثناء تعلم الاستماع والمحادثة والقراءة وقواعد اللغة الانجليزية كانت متوسطة، بينما كانت درجة قلق الطلبة أثناء تعلم الكتابة باللغة الانجليزية مرتفعة. كما توصلت الدراسة إلى وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين الطلبة الذكور والإناث بالنسبة لدرجة القلق أثناء تعلم القراءة والكتابة لصالح الإناث، في حين أنه لا يوجد فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين الطلبة الذكور والإناث أثناء تعلم الاستماع والمحادثة وقواعد اللغة الانجليزية. كذلك توصلت الدراسة إلى وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في درجة قلق الطلبة أثناء تعلم المحادثة والقراءة والكتابة وقواعد اللغة الانجليزية تعزى إلى مستوى تحصيل الطلبة في اللغة الإنجليزية.

وفي ضوء نتائج هذه الدراسة، أوصى الباحثان بضرورة تدريب معلمي اللغة الانجليزية ليكونوا أكثر دعماً للطلبة، وأن يتحلوا باتجاهات ومواقف ايجابية نحو الطلبة، كذلك ترى الباحثة أن تأخذ وسائل التقييم المخفضة لتوتر الطلبة بعين الاعتبار عند تقييمهم. وينبغي أن يقوم معلمي اللغة الانجليزية بتشجيع الطلبة على التعبير عن أنفسهم، وأن تكون المناهج التعليمية المستخدمة أكثر مرونة وذات معنى بالنسبة للطلبة، وتحاكي اهتماماتهم. كما ينبغي الحرص على توفير بيئة تعليمية أكثر تحفيزاً للطلبة.

Background

English as a foreign language (EFL) or English as a second language (ESL) learning is more complex than excelling at new information and knowledge (Dornyei, 1994). Learning English as a second (L2) or foreign language is a complicated task that one should consider many factors (e.g. affective domain) that play prominent roles during the process of language learning. According to Brown (2001), studies in second language learning theories should comprise more than the cognitive domain. In particular, Krashen (1985) proposed the affective filter hypothesis to illuminate that language acquisition occurs only in the presence of certain affective conditions such as positive attitudes, high motivation, low anxiety, and the like. The strength of affective filter is likely to be strong when learners have low motivation, low self-confidence, and high affective filter comes to a “mental block” that prevents comprehensible input from being obtained for acquisition (Krashen, 1988).

A variety of research studies in the area of L2 acquisition claim that affective factors such as motivation and anxiety have influence on the success of language learning (Dornyei, 2003; Ely, 1986; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1992; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Krashen, 1982). According to previous empirical research, there is a relationship between learning motivation and learning anxiety (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1992; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Hsu, 2004; Shen, 2001; Wu, 1998). Learning motivation and language anxiety are, therefore, considered to be important components in the EFL learning process.

Second language acquisition is generally assumed to be influenced by affective factors and may prove to be crucial in deciding whether a student acquires a language or not (Bailey, 1983). One such variable, which is anxiety, has long been recognized by educators as a potential problem in the language classroom (Price, 1991).

From a cognitive psychology perspective, anxiety causes cognitive interference in performing specific tasks. Since anxiety-arousal is associated with distracting, self-related cognition, such as self-evaluation, worry over potential failure, concern over the opinions of others, an anxious person has his/her attention divided between task-related cognition and self-related cognition, making performance less efficient (Eysenck, 1979, pp. 363-385).

Foreign language anxiety is “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning arising process” (Horowitz, Horowitz, & Cope, 1986, P. 128). Volumes of foreign language anxiety research have investigated the effect of language anxiety in English as a foreign /second language (EFL/ESL) learning (Aida, 1994; Chen, 2001; Chen, 2004; Chen 2002; Cheng; Horowitz, & Schallert, 1999; Hsieh, 1999; Krashen, 1988; Onwuegbuzie, Bailey & Daley, 1997). According to Horowitz, Horowitz, & Cope (1991), foreign language anxiety is caused by the apprehension of communicating with others in second language context. Rather, foreign language anxiety, which hinders language learners’ oral expression, is most commonly associated with speaking. In addition, a variety of researchers consistently indicate that speaking is the most language anxiety provoking among foreign language learners (Horowitz, et al., & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Phillips, 1992; Price, 1991; Young, 1990; 1992). According to Young’s (1992) interview, Krashen and Terrell, all claimed that speaking is a considerable anxiety provoking experience. Likewise, Price (1991) found that oral skill is the most frustrating experience among foreign language learners; speaking, namely, is the greatest source of anxiety in her study.

The relationship between anxiety and education has been well established throughout the research world for years. Topics like test-anxiety are common place in today’s classrooms. While for many years society has recognized anxiety in certain fields of study like science and mathematics, the relationship between foreign language study and anxiety only started gaining significant attention a few years ago. The process of moving from English as a foreign language (EFL) class to a mainstream class with no supplementary English support can be very difficult for many EFL students. Even though, many have good English skills in terms of social proficiency, many are still struggling with the type of cognitive academic language necessary for success in the mainstream classroom, (Cummins, 1978, 2000).

In addition, situation pressure associated with interactions with native speakers/ Nativelike of English and one can easily see where the process of moving from the EFL class to the mainstream environment would be anxiety provoking. Yet, little research has been done on the effective stress of moving from one environment to the other, especially in terms of gender differences, (Cummins, 1978, 2000).

Foreign Language Learning Anxiety

Anxiety is “the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system” (Horowitz, Horowitz, & Cope, 1986, P. 125). Foreign Language anxiety is defined here as a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feeling, and behaviors related to using a foreign language communication beyond the classroom language. Possible symptoms used by foreign language anxiety include avoidance of speaking the language, less interaction with people, forgetfulness, lack of confidence, negative self-image and feeling unsure of one’s ability. Possible physical symptoms are sweaty palms, nervous stomachs, increased heartbeat, and pulse rates, distortion of sounds, inability to reduce the intonation and rhythm of the language, and avoiding eye contact. As teachers, it is important to anticipate the symptoms we may experience to know how to cope with them, and how to help our students to cope with these symptoms in EFL classes.

Anxiety is also defined as fear, panic and worry. There are three types of anxiety: Trait anxiety characterizes a specific type of person (Scovel, 1978). State anxiety is when people experience a specific temporary anxiety in reaction to a specific event (Spielberger, 1983). The type of anxiety related to FL learning is situation specific anxiety. It addresses the emotional state of the learner. The FL learner characterized as having anxiety is usually worried, physically insecure, and unable to engage in situational learning. Its effect on the FL learner is a function of its intensity and the complexity of the learner’s specific learning situation (Ellis, 1994).

Anxiety is usually perceived as exerting a negative effect on the learner. However, researchers such as Alport & Haber, 1980; Scovel, 1978 distinguish two types of anxiety: debilitating anxiety, which negatively affects the learner’s engagement in the learning situation, and facilitating anxiety, which motivates the learner to cope with the new assignment.

Oral communication skills are more likely to be affected by language anxiety where the learner is afraid of spontaneous communication in the FL (Horowitz, Horowitz, & Cope, 1986). Horowitz and Young (cited in Abu-Rabia 2004), argue that anxiety is perceived as state anxiety that arises in a situation or event: public speaking, exams, and class participation. FL anxiety may negatively influence motivation, level of performance, and attitude to learning a specific topic.

Tobias (1979) suggested a three-stage model of FL anxiety: input, processing, and output. Anxiety may arise at the stage of input when speech in the FL is fast for the listener, or when the written text is composed of complicated sentence above the level of the reader. The second stage, processing, demands, organization, storage and elaboration of the learning material. Anxiety at this stage may affect the cognitive learning process of earlier assignments, which may lead the learner to rely on recall and unorganized material. According to (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). The output stage depends on the quality of the previous two stages. Its success is measured by the organization of the output and the speed of the retrieval of concepts from memory. FL learners are affected by their negative experiences. Situation anxiety develops if learners develop negative expectations based on bad learning experiences. Poor performance and bad learning performance result in increased anxiety (MacIntyre & Gardner (Cited in Ellis, 1994).

Communication is the ultimate objective for many students, but communication is not limited to oral production. Listening, reading, and writing are also forms of communication and no less important than speaking. Listening skills in fact are as essential as, if not more so than, speaking skills (in that one can choose which words one will use, but not which words one's interlocutor will use). Emphasizing listening in large introductory classes may be one way to reduce fear of negative evaluation, and the debilitating anxiety that prevents many students from participating and learning.

Factors Affecting FL Anxiety

According to Horowitz et al. (1986), FL anxiety has three facets: apprehension of verbal communication, test anxiety, and apprehension of negative evaluation.

The learners' metacognitive awareness of his/ her inability to speak fluently and understand the full message given in the FL may lead him/her to despair, hesitation and fierce rejection of any communication activity (Spolsky, 1989). This situation can be reflected in test anxiety, where learners may not say or write anything unless they can be certain of its accuracy (Horowitz, Horowitz, & Cope, 1986). Their fear of negative evaluation affects their ability and wish to participate, read and or write (MacIntyre & Gardner (in Abu-Rabia, 2004).

Ganshchow and Sparks (1996) argued that first language skills should be considered when testing FL anxiety. According to McLaughlin (1978), since research findings favor the assumption that the linguistic skills of the first and the second language are interrelated (Cummins, 1989), it is highly recommended to consider first language skills when testing FL anxiety. According to Ganschow, Sparks, Anderson, Javorsky, Skinner and Patton (1994) good FL learners showed better first language ability in oral and written skills, phonology, orthography, syntax and semantics than poor FL learner. Thus, difficulties in first language learning were transferred to second /foreign language.

Gender of FL learners to anxiety, is another factor that may affect FL anxiety. Bacon, (1992) claims that males prefer to rely heavily on bottom-up reading strategies more than female learners. They are likely to be more interested in challenge, while for females the feeling of achievement is the most important aspect (Story & Sullivan, 1986) (cited in Abu-Rabia; 2004). Further, males ascribe less importance to FL than females.

Teachers' characteristics are very important factor in promoting or hindering success in learning situations. According to Lam, (1973), successful teaching depends on the teacher's optimal involvement in the learning material and interest in the learner. Lam (1973) focused on several characteristics that characterize the good teacher.

1. Relaxation
2. Openness
3. Originality

According to Lam (1973), the learner seeks an "adult friend" in the teacher's behavior, who may support and assist his/her students when needed. However, minimum tension is desirable, so as to motivate learners to engage in the learning process (Robens, 1977).

A teacher's decent attitude to his/her students raises the level of readiness for the learning process and helps to improve the student's self-esteem, (Sparks and Lipka, 1992).

Statement of the problem

Research has shown that significant foreign language anxiety is experienced by many students with respect to some aspects of foreign language learning (Horowitz, Horowitz, & Cope, 1986). Yet, teachers attribute poor students' performance to the lack of ability, or poor motivation. The question of poor performance in English is an important issue in Jordan in light of the fact that the minimum criterion for admission into secondary and post-secondary institutions (colleges or universities) is dependent on a pass grade in English, without which students, who have performed well in the other subjects, may lose a chance to continue their studies in these institutions. Furthermore, teachers of English language feel that students' competence of English as a foreign language seems generally to be weak. They noticed the difference in performance, activities, interaction in the four skills they learn "Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing". Students show various anxiety reactions in the classroom with their teachers and their peers.

Jordanian teachers notice symptoms of worries and anxiety during English language exams. They wish to find appropriate methods to help their students to cope with such symptoms as avoiding eye contact, worries, distortion of sound and nervousness.

Purpose of the Study

This study sets out to investigate the language anxiety experienced by 2nd secondary students in second Amman Directorate of Education, while learning English, and to find out which aspect of language learning (listening, speaking, reading, writing and Grammar), causes the greatest amount of anxiety for student.

Another aim of this study is to examine the relationship between language anxiety and students performance, from English language teachers' point of view and from the learners' point of view.

Since language anxiety has been shown to be related to performance, achievement, success and final test scores, effort to raise performance and final test scores may not just be attempting numerous practice papers for remedial, but also through lowering language learning anxiety. The study also aims to investigate the effect of language learning anxiety on male and female students while learning English as a second language.

Significance of the Study

Studies of foreign language anxiety consistently show that anxiety can impair language learning and production, and learners judgment of their own competence, can have an effect on their feelings of anxiety (Rosenberg, 1965). While some studies have looked at the relationship between anxiety and other affective variables, particularly self-esteem, which is an individuals' sense of his value or worth (Rosenberg, 1965), none have looked specifically at learners' sense of self –efficacy, which is defined as individuals' judgment of his capability to perform a task (Bandura, 1986), and its relationship with the level of anxiety they have while learning English and with their feeling of anxiety. This study may be important for students and teachers of EFL in order to provide appropriate methods to cope with the level of students' anxiety, and with symptoms of learning language anxiety in classroom instruction, and may point out the sources of students' worries and nervousness. Teachers of EFL may get the benefit of this study to help their students to cope with these symptoms, and to develop techniques and methods that enable them to decrease the feeling of students' worries in the learning process.

Insight can be gained for pedagogical implications to help students, teachers, supervisors, and curriculum designers of English language to make learning experience more interesting and more effective.

Operational Terms

The following are the definitions terms that appeared in this study:

Anxiety: Worries that students experience while learning English as a foreign language.

Debilitating anxiety: The anxiety that motivates the learner to 'flee' the new learning task, it stimulates the individual emotionally to adopt avoidance behavior i.e. negative anxiety.

Facilitating anxiety: The anxiety that motivates the learner to 'fight' the new learning task; it gears the learner emotionally for approval behavior i.e., positive anxiety.

Language Skills: The four skills of English language "listening, speaking, reading, writing and grammar".

Stage anxiety: Is when people experience a specific temporary anxiety in reaction to a specific event.

Students Achievement level: With regard to second secondary students grades at the final exam of the first semester.

Trait anxiety: Is inherent in a person's personality and is active in disregards to situations (Permanent).

Population and Sample of the Study

The population of the study includes two main categories, as the second secondary students' at the Second Amman Directorate of Education, and English language teachers.

The sample of the study consists of three categories, as (450) student's of which (250) males and (250) females, (20) student's (10) males and (10) females for in-depth interview, and (10) second secondary (5) males and (5) females Jordanian English language teachers for in-depth interview.

Study Instrument

The study instrument has been used in this study to achieve its objectives and answer its questions:

The questionnaire

To answer the first question, a questionnaire has been developed to collect the required data. The questionnaire measures language anxiety experienced by the students while learning English.

Validity of the Questionnaire

In addition to testing the internal reliability of the questionnaire, the pilot study was used to verify whether the statements in the questionnaire were comprehended by the students. Feedback was sought from the students regarding the wording of the questionnaire. Their comments and suggestions were taken into consideration during the revision of the questionnaire. The researcher invited three English language Jordanian teachers randomly selected to review the items of the questionnaire. After completing the items of the questionnaire, the researcher gave the questionnaire to (14) professors from different universities from the same field of study to examine all the items and to assess whether they were suitable for the purpose of the study.

Reliability of the Questionnaire

In order to evaluate the reliability of the developed questionnaire, it was piloted on a group of 30 students out of the study sample before it was administered on the sample group in this study. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated as (89.6%) which fitted the purpose of the study.

Implementation of the survey

The actual questionnaire survey was conducted before the end-of-year examination. It was conducted on four days while care had been taken to ensure that the statements in the questionnaire were clear and easily understood. Before the questionnaire was given out, the students were briefed about the purpose of the survey. Students were reminded that they had to answer according to their own experience. To address any possible queries that the students would have, the researchers themselves administered the questionnaire survey.

Statistical Analysis:

In order to achieve the objectives of the study and answer its questions, the researchers used several statistical techniques as follow:

1. Frequency tables to describe the sample characteristics.
2. Arithmetic means and standard deviations to answer questions one.
3. Independent Sample t-test to answer question four.
4. ANOVA , Post-hock test and Independent Sample T-test to answer question fifth and sixth.

Results of the study

This study investigated the language anxiety experienced by second secondary students in second Amman Directorate of Education, while learning English. The study analyzed which skill of language learning (listening, speaking, reading, writing or Grammar), causes anxiety for students, and examined the relationship between language anxiety and students performance from English language teachers' point of view and from the learners' point of view. The study investigated the effect of language learning anxiety on male and female students while learning English as a second language.

What are the aspects of the effect of anxiety on language learning?

To answer the first question, means and standard deviations were used to probe the language learning anxiety experienced by second secondary students in second Amman Directorate of Education. Items were arranged descending according to the degree of language anxiety, by using the following criteria:

- If the degree between (1.0 - 2.33), the degree of language anxiety is low.
- If the degree between (2.34 – 3.67), the degree of language anxiety is moderate.
- If the degree between (3.67 – 5.0), the degree of language anxiety is high.

The language anxiety experienced by second secondary students during learning Listening skills

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations of Language Anxiety in Learning Listening Skills

No.	Paragraph	Mean	Std. Deviation
5	I am worried when I do not understand what the teacher is saying in English class.	3.43	1.14
8	I am worried when I do not understand every word I hear.	3.34	1.24
3	I feel anxious when I do not understand English spoken with an unfamiliar accent.	3.29	1.16
2	I feel anxious when someone speaks to me quickly.	3.27	1.37
9	I feel anxious about listening tasks.	3.27	1.39
10	I feel anxious when listening to intricate topics.	3.07	1.42
6	I feel anxious when I listen to a long conversation.	2.90	1.27
1	I feel anxious when someone speaks to me about a topic I am not familiar with.	2.84	1.25
4	I feel anxious when I have to listen to a speech without any visual aids (e.g. drawings, pictures, notes... etc).	2.71	1.35
7	Listening to short dialogues/ conversations enables me to remember what I hear easily.	2.60	1.12
Total		3.07	0.73

Table (1) above shows that the degree of language anxiety experienced by second secondary students in learning Listening skills was (3.07) out of (5.0), which reveals that the degree of language anxiety is moderate. This table shows also that the highest item of the above mentioned dimension is "I am worried when I do not understand what the teacher is saying in English class" which has arithmetic mean (3.43) out of (5.0). While the lowest item of the aforementioned dimension is " Listening to short dialogues/ conversations enables me to remember what I hear easily." which has an arithmetic mean (2.60) out of (5.0).

Language anxiety experienced by 2nd secondary students in learning speaking skills

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations of Language Anxiety in Learning Speaking Skills

No.	Paragraph	Mean	Std. Deviation
3	I feel worried when I have to speak to others in English.	3.72	1.08
2	I am worried about expressing myself clearly when I am talking in English.	3.55	1.19
1	I feel anxious when I have to make a presentation in English.	3.54	1.30
12	I do not care if my classmates laugh at my English language when I speak in class.	3.29	1.30
5	I feel anxious about oral tests.	3.16	1.09
4	I feel anxious when I have to speak to my teacher in English.	3.14	1.13
9	I am worried that others will laugh at my English.	2.91	1.45
14	I feel bashful when I speak in English in front of the class.	2.76	1.21
11	Oral tasks make me anxious more than other tasks.	2.75	1.43
10	I do not like to be corrected by my teacher in front of my classmates.	2.70	1.38
7	I feel worried a bout the possibility that the teacher may ask me a question.	2.68	1.29
6	I get embarrassed when I have to answer my teacher's questions orally.	2.62	1.13
8	I do not feel anxious when I speak to my classmates in English.	2.58	1.22
13	I feel better about speaking in English in a small – sized class.	2.55	1.27
Total		3.00	0.68

Table (2) shows that the degree of language anxiety experienced by second secondary students during learning speaking skills was (3.00) out of (5.0), which reveals that the degree of language anxiety is moderate. It shows also that the highest item of the above mentioned dimension is "I feel worried when I have to speak to others in English" which has arithmetic mean (3.72) out of (5.0). While the lowest item of the this dimension is "I feel better about speaking in English in a small – sized class" which has arithmetic mean (2.55) out of (5.0).

The language Anxiety Experienced by Second Secondary Students in Learning Reading Skills

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations of Language Anxiety in Learning Reading Skills

No.	Paragraph	Mean	Std. Deviation
12	I feel comfortable when reading short texts activities.	4.17	1.12
11	I feel comfortable when reading about interesting topics.	3.99	1.13
3	I feel anxious about misinterpreting a written text.	3.50	1.07
2	I get frustrated when I do not understand the main idea of what I read.	3.42	1.18
5	I feel anxious about un familiar grammatical structures when reading something in English.	3.40	1.25
4	I feel anxious about not understanding the meaning of every word.	3.25	1.30
7	I become anxious when I have to read English loud in class.	3.23	1.28
8	I become anxious when I have to answer questions in class about what I read.	3.04	1.46
1	I feel worried to see a whole page of English words in front of my eyes.	3.00	1.16
13	I feel worried about the teacher asking me questions after skimming reading tasks.	2.88	1.19
10	I become anxious when I have to answer multiple choice questions about what I read in English.	2.73	1.18
9	I get scared when I have to read lengthy texts in English as a home work.	2.45	1.28
6	I feel anxious when I have to read about un familiar topics.	2.28	1.19
Total		3.18	0.63

Table (3) shows that the degree of language anxiety experienced by second secondary students while learning reading skills was (3.18) out of (5.0), which reveals that the degree of language anxiety is moderate. The same table shows also that the highest item of the above mentioned dimension is "I feel comfortable when reading short texts activities." which has arithmetic mean (4.17) out of (5.0). While the lowest item of the this dimension is "I feel anxious when I have to read about un familiar topics" which has arithmetic mean (2.28) out of (5.0).

The Language Anxiety Experienced by Second Secondary Students in Learning Writing Skills

Table 4. Means and Standard Deviations of Language Anxiety in Learning Writing Skills

No.	Paragraph	Mean	Std. Deviation
9	I feel better if I have prepared for the writing topic before class.	4.42	0.88
12	Interesting topics make me feel better in writing tasks.	4.11	1.14
5	I do not care about what others my think about my writing.	3.89	1.07
8	I feel comfortable when I am asked to write about topics that I am familiar with.	3.84	1.14
6	I start to worry when I know I will be graded in writing.	3.70	0.93
13	I feel frustrated if I fail to organize my ideas coherently.	3.67	1.15
3	I worry about how to organize my thoughts and ideas in an English composition.	3.63	1.15
4	I worry about writing even if my writing will not be graded.	3.56	1.17
7	I worry about finding the appropriate expression to write a composition.	3.54	1.46
1	I am worried about being asked to write a composition.	3.52	1.43
2	I am worried about what others may think about my writing.	3.50	1.30
10	I am afraid to ask my teacher for help in writing.	3.48	1.13
11	I feel bashful to ask my classmate for help.	3.20	1.19
Total		3.70	0.42

Table (4) shows that the degree of language anxiety experienced by second secondary students during learning writing skills was (3.70) out of (5.0), which reveals that the degree of language anxiety is high.

The same table shows also that the highest item of the above mentioned dimension is "I feel better if I have prepared for the writing topic before the class" which has arithmetic mean (4.42) out of (5.0). While the lowest item number 11 of the said dimension is "I feel bashful to ask my classmate for help" which has arithmetic mean (3.20) out of (5.0).

Language Anxiety Experienced by Second Secondary Students in Learning Grammar:

Table 5. Means and Standard Deviations of Language Anxiety in Learning Grammar

No.	Paragraph	Mean	Std. Deviation
3	I get anxious when I am not sure of the correct grammar I use.	3.72	1.29
8	I worry about English grammar tests	3.58	1.21
2	I am worried because my grammar makes me score less in my final exam.	3.53	1.56
10	I am intimidated by grammar tests.	3.52	1.44
11	My weakness in English grammar affects my level of performance in writing a composition.	3.49	1.28
4	I feel anxious when I think about the quantity of English grammar rules I have to learn.	3.46	1.26
1	English grammar lessons are a frightening experience.	3.39	1.25
9	I feel anxious when I have to perform grammatical tasks in class.	3.36	1.30
5	I am worried about not understanding what is being taught during English grammar classes.	3.34	1.40
6	English grammar lessons make me nervous.	3.23	1.38
7	The more I study grammar, the more I get confused.	2.82	1.28
Total		3.40	0.99

Table (5) shows that the degree of language anxiety experienced by 2nd secondary students during learning reading skills was (3.40) out of (5.0), which reveals that the degree of language anxiety is moderate. The same table shows also that the highest item no. 3 of the above mentioned dimension is "I get anxious when I am not sure of the correct grammar I use" which has arithmetic mean (3.72) out of (5.0). While the lowest item of the said dimension is "The more I study grammar, the more I get confused." which has arithmetic mean (2.82) out of (5.0).

Table 6. Means and Standard Deviations of Language Anxiety in Learning Language Skills

No.	Paragraph	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Anxiety during learning Writing	3.70	0.42
2	Anxiety during learning Grammar	3.40	0.99
3	Anxiety during learning Reading	3.18	0.63
4	Anxiety during learning Listening	3.07	0.73
5	Anxiety during learning Speaking	3.00	0.68
Total		3.25	0.56

Table (6) demonstrates that the degree of language anxiety experienced by 2nd secondary students during learning skills was (3.25) out of (5.0), which reveals that the degree of language anxiety is moderate. The same table shows also that the highest anxiety is "Anxiety during learning Writing" which has arithmetic mean (3.70) out of (5.0). While the lowest anxiety is "Anxiety during learning speaking", which has arithmetic mean (3.00) out of (5.0).

Are there any differences between male/female students regarding their anxiety in learning English?

To answer the above mentioned question, the researcher used an Independent sample t-test, and the result as follow:

Table 7. Results of T-test of the Relationship between Student's Anxiety in Learning English and their Gender

Dependent Variable	Gender	n	Mean	St. Dev	t-value	DF	Sig. Level
Listening	Male	204	3.08	0.67	0.14	426	0.888
	Female	224	3.07	0.78			
Speaking	Male	204	3.02	0.63	0.70	426	0.482
	Female	224	2.97	0.72			
Reading	Male	204	3.11	0.65	2.29	426	0.022
	Female	224	3.25	0.61			
Writing	Male	204	3.61	0.36	2.00	426	0.046
	Female	224	3.79	0.47			
Grammar	Male	204	3.39	0.78	0.39	426	0.699
	Female	224	3.42	1.15			
Total	Male	204	3.17	0.50	0.76	426	0.446
	Female	224	3.21	0.61			

Table (7) shows that there are statistical significant differences at ($\alpha=0.05$) between male and female students on their anxiety in learning English during learning reading and writing because of the significance level of the tests are lower than (0.05). This table shows also the differences were in favor of females. Whereas there are no statistical significant differences at ($\alpha=0.05$) between male and female students on their anxiety in learning English during learning listening, speaking, grammar, and during learning all English language skills, because of the significance level of the tests are higher than (0.05).

Are there any significant differences in the students' anxiety ascribed to the students' achievement level?

To answer the above question, the researcher used One-Way ANOVA with result as displayed below:

Table 7. Results of One-Way ANOVA of the Student's Anxiety in Learning English in Relation to their Achievement

		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F-value	Sig. level
Listening	Between groups	11.80	2	5.90	11.70**	0.001
	Within groups	214.35	425	0.50		
	Total	226.16	427			
Speaking	Between groups	17.76	2	8.88	21.22**	0.001
	Within groups	178.75	425	0.42		
	Total	196.51	427			
Reading	Between groups	41.39	2	20.69	68.44**	0.001
	Within groups	128.50	425	0.30		
	Total	169.89	427			
Writing	Between groups	8.51	2	4.26	26.95**	0.001
	Within groups	67.10	425	0.160		
	Total	75.61	427			
Grammar	Between groups	76.57	2	38.29	47.80**	0.001
	Within groups	340.44	425	0.80		
	Total	417.01	427			
Total	Between groups	25.34	2	12.67	49.59**	0.001
	Within groups	108.60	425	0.26		
	Total	133.94	427			

** Significant at less than 0.01 relating to high achievers students.

Table (8) shows that there are statistical significant differences at ($\alpha < 0.05$) in the student's anxiety in learning English: speaking, reading, writing, grammar and total skills ascribed to the students' achievement level because of the significance level of the tests are (0.001) which are lower than (0.05).

Scheffe Post-hoc test was conducted to detect the differences between students' achievement levels in English language learning as follow: the differences concentrate on students who have low level of achievement from one side, and the students who have high and moderate levels of achievement from the other side, because of the significant level of the Scheffe tests between these categories are (0.001) which are less than (0.05). According to the means of these categories, these differences in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and grammar were in favor of high level achievement students.

Discussions of the results

The degree of language anxiety experienced by second secondary students during learning listening skills is moderate. The highest item of the above mentioned dimension is "I am worried when I do not understand what the teacher is saying in English class". On the other hand, the lowest item of the above dimension is "Listening to short dialogues/ conversations enables me to remember what I hear easily." What the students are mostly concerned with is to understand what the teacher says. This might be because students usually consider the teacher as the main source of knowledge and the source of the language itself. Although listening is considered more anxiety arousing than speaking, it is ranked fourth among the five skills, after writing, grammar, and reading. One reason why students do not find it as a source of anxiety – arousing could be for example, the low priority given to the teaching of listening in the language classroom. Moreover, listening has often been taken for granted and perceived as a passive skill that comes naturally during other classroom activities. Vogely (1998) found out that students are assumed to have acquired adequate listening ability. Thus, listening is sometimes not taught at all in class. This low priority given to listening may give students the impression that they are doing well in this area and do not need further teaching or training, which may be the reason why students feel less anxious about listening. Similarly, Geng (1985) found that students felt that listening was their best skill and were happy about their listening ability. In her study, 40% of the students felt that they were either good or very good at listening. Brantmeier (2005), students reported being most anxious about speaking then writing and equally anxious (low) about listening and reading. Moreover, students' interview revealed that students ranked listening as the fourth aspect of language anxiety arousal which means that students do not feel worried about listening tasks relative to other tasks. It is not difficult for them as they can understand what they have listened to and grasp the main idea easily, but they do not like to be examined or evaluated in listening classes.

As for speaking, the degree of language anxiety experienced by second secondary students in learning speaking skills is also moderate. For instance, the highest item of the above dimension is "I feel worried when I have to speak to others in English". While the lowest item of the above dimension is "I feel better about speaking in English in a small – sized class". This can be justified on the ground that students are concerned about their language production in front of peers and become more anxious when they have to speak in formal classroom contexts. They also feel worried about their language because they are afraid not to be able to convey their message meaningfully. Students are concerned about giving oral presentations in English and expressing themselves clearly when speaking. For most students, standing in front of a class and giving an oral presentation is in itself an anxiety – arousing activity as it exposes them to judgment and criticism from their teacher and peers. It may be worse when they have to deliver their presentation in English which they feel they are not fully competent. Young's (1990) study is relevant to the present findings, as he found that students experience highest levels of anxiety while speaking foreign language in the class. He explained that the students were concerned about their performance in front of their peers and become more anxious when they had to speak in formal classroom contexts. Students' interview reveals that the lowest English language aspect anxiety arousal is speaking followed by grammar then listening and lastly writing.

As far as reading skill is concerned, the degree of language anxiety experienced by 2nd secondary students during learning reading skills is moderate according to the analysis of the findings of the study; the highest item of the above mentioned dimension is "I feel comfortable when I am reading short texts activities". While the lowest item of this dimension is "I feel anxious when I have to read about unfamiliar topics".

The researcher can explain and justify the mentioned results, although "Reading" is considered more anxiety – arousing than listening (3.07) and speaking (3.00), it is ranked the third among the five skills.

Also, there are statistical significant differences between male and female students in their anxiety in learning English during learning reading and writing in favor of females. There are no statistical significant differences between male and female students in their anxiety in learning English during learning listening, speaking, grammar, and during learning all English language skills. The researcher can explain and justify the mentioned results, in that there are statistical significant differences between male and female students in their anxiety in learning English while learning reading (3.25) and writing (3.79) in favor of females, while male students were (3.11) at reading and (3.61) at writing, which means female students show higher anxiety than male students. On the other hand, there are no statistical significant differences between male and female students in their anxiety in learning listening, speaking and grammar.

There are no important statistical differences between male and female students in their anxiety at listening, speaking and grammar classes. Clarck and Trafford (1996) found similar anxiety results among male and female students and explained these differences as due to female students being more sincere and frank than male students. They reported that females were more likely to report openly their feelings of anxiety, especially in a female environment. Females tend to have closer interpersonal relationships with teachers that help alleviate anxiety in the ESL classroom. The anxiety results of the present study accord with Clarck and Trafford's (1996) results, and their explanation for them may be applicable here. Interviews with male students show high anxiety while having speaking and grammar class, while female students reported that they feel anxious while learning writing and reading more than in speaking and reading classes and exams. Moreover, female students assured their personal interaction and relationships with their teachers and their peer which may alleviate female students' anxiety at speaking and listening.

Also, there are statistical significant differences in the students' anxiety in learning English during learning speaking, reading, writing, grammar and total skills ascribed to the students' achievement level. The differences concentrate on students who have low level of achievement from one side, and the students who have high and moderate levels of achievement from another side. This can be explained on the ground that high achievement level students experience high learning anxiety as they care a lot about the grades they have and they concern also of the evaluation they receive from their teachers, parents and peers. They study many hours to satisfy their ambitions on having high marks.

Furthermore, high achieving students have inner motivation to cope with the challenges they have while they learn English as a foreign language to protect their position in the class. Moreover, they usually look forward to improving their grades as they need high marks to join the university which requires high marks and evokes competition for academic purposes.

Contrary to the results of the present study Samimy and Tabus (1992), found that the less anxious students are in their classrooms, the more they are willing to take risks. Ganschow and Sparks (1996), investigated the effects of anxiety on FL performance. They found that low anxiety students performed better than did moderate or high anxiety students. Students' interviews showed that high achievers indicate that they feel worried and uncomfortable when they know they have to be evaluated or examined in English in the four skills because they care a lot about the grades they have. Moreover they expressed their worries according to having high average at the end of the year that can help for academic purposes such as joining universities which need high rates.

Conclusion

Following are concluded remarks based on the finding of this study:

- The degree of language anxiety experienced by second secondary students in learning listening is moderate.
- The degree of language anxiety experienced by second secondary students in learning speaking is moderate.
- The degree of language anxiety experienced by second secondary students in learning reading is moderate.
- The degree of language anxiety experienced by second secondary students in learning writing is high.
- The degree of language anxiety experienced by second secondary students in learning grammar is moderate.
- There are statistical significant differences between male and female students on their anxiety in learning English in learning reading and writing in favor of females.
- There are no statistical significant differences between male and female students on their anxiety in learning English in learning listening, speaking, grammar, and during learning all English language skills.
- There are statistical significant differences on the students' anxiety in learning English in learning speaking, reading, writing, grammar and total skills ascribed to the students' achievement level.

Recommendations

In the light of the results of the present study, the following recommendations are provided.

- Since teacher personality and attitudes to learners are important, teachers should be trained to be warmer and more supportive of their students and to exhibit positive belief in them. This can be done through more teacher-student open discussions.
- Different assessment methods should be considered in order to lower test anxiety.
- Students should be encouraged to express their feelings openly.
- Strong relationships between teachers and students should be initiated which may help in reducing students anxiety during learning class.
- A relaxed teacher reflects his quality onto the class learning climate, which ultimately yields desirable learning communication between teacher and students and among students.
- Learning material should be meaningful, lively, and of personal interest to the learner.
- Teachers should be carefully attuned to students' behavior in class so they can differentiate between students who are trying to get help and those who are truly off-task.
- Less threatening learning environment could be helpful in lowering students' anxiety and worries.
- Teachers should be trained on how to enable learners overcome their anxiety in language learning.

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