THE EFFECT OF ANXIETY ON SPEAKING PERFORMANCE OF L2 LEARNERS

Ilhom Dilmurodovich NISHONOV
Teacher
Department of Theoretical Aspects of English
Philology Faculty
Uzbekistan State World Languages University
Tashkent, Uzbekistan

CHET TILI OʻRGANAYOTGAN OʻQUVCHILARNING SUHBAT QILISHIGA HAYAJONNING TA'SIRI

Ilhom Dilmurodovich NISHONOV
Oʻqituvchi
Ingliz tili kafedrasi
Filologiya fakulteti,
Oʻzbekiston davlat jahon tillari universiteti
Toshkent, Oʻzbekiston

ВЛИЯНИЕ ТРЕВОГИ НА РАЗГОВОРНУЮ СПОСОБНОСТЬ УЧАЩИХСЯ НА ИНОСТРАННЫХ ЯЗЫКАХ

Илхом Дилмуродович НИШОНОВ
Преподаватель
Кафедра теоретических аспектов английского языка
Филологический факультет
Узбекский государственный университет мировых языков
Ташкент, Узбекистан ilhomnishonov898@gmail.com

Abstract. The given article underlined the existence of anxiety in learning a foreign language**.** The destructive effect of language anxiety on the speaking performance who scrutinize this language as second. It is known that small stresses can be useful for a person, as they help people to concentrate and therefore make their work more efficient. Light excitement promotes greater concentration, and absolute calmness deprives a person of concentration. This idea is also true in the context of learning a second/foreign language. In short, by understanding the phenomenon of speaking anxiety, by becoming acquainted with students' language learning experiences and beliefs, this research aid learner to comprehend the core meaning of anxiety and they will be ready to struggle with this problem. Aside from this, it will be useful for teachers to observe the ways of identifying speaking anxiety.
Keywords: Anxiety; L2; speaking anxiety; destabilization; communication; interaction.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada chet tilini oʻrganishda tashvish mavjudligi ta'kidlangan. Til tashvishining sozlashuv qobiliyatiga halokatli ta'siri bu tilni ikkinchisi sifatida tekshiradi. Ma'lumki, kichik stresslar inson uchun foydali boʻlishi mumkin, chunki ular odamlarga diqqatni jamlashga yordam beradi va shuning uchun ularning ishini

samaraliroq qiladi. Engil hayajon ko'proq konsentratsiyaga yordam beradi va mutlaq xotirjamlik odamni konsentratsiyadan mahrum qiladi. Bu fikr ikkinchi/chet tilini o'rganish kontekstida ham to'g'ri keladi. Muxtasar qilib aytganda, nutq tashvishi fenomenini tushunish, talabalarning til o'rganish tajribasi va e'tiqodlari bilan tanishish orqali ushbu tadqiqot o'quvchiga tashvishning asosiy ma'nosini tushunishga yordam beradi va ular bu muammo bilan kurashishga tayyor bo'ladilar. Bundan tashqari, o'qituvchilar uchun nutq tashvishini aniqlash usullarini kuzatish foydali bo'ladi

Kalit so'zlar: tashvish; L2; nutq tashvish; beqarorlik; aloqa; o'zaro ta'sir.

Аннотация. В статье подчеркивается наличие тревожности при изучении иностранного языка. Деструктивное влияние языковой тревожности на речевую деятельность тех, кто изучает этот язык как второй. Известно, что небольшие стрессы могут быть полезны для человека, так как помогают людям сконцентрироваться и, следовательно, делают их работу более эффективной. Легкое возбуждение способствует большей концентрации, а абсолютное спокойствие лишает человека концентрации. Эта идея также верна в контексте изучения второго/иностранного языка. Благодаря пониманию феномена речевой тревожности, знакомству с опытом и убеждениями учащихся в изучении языка, это исследование поможет учащимся понять основное значение тревожности, и они будут готовы бороться с этой проблемой. Кроме того, учителям будет полезно наблюдать за способами выявления речевой тревожности.

Ключевые слова: тревога; L2; речевая тревога; дестабилизация; общение; взаимодействие.

Introduction. The given article underlined the existence of anxiety in learning a foreign language. The destructive effect of language anxiety on the speaking performance scrutinizes this language as a second. It is known that small stresses can be useful for a person, as they help people concentrate and make their work more efficient. Light excitement promotes greater concentration, and absolute calmness deprives a person of concentration. This idea is also true in the context of learning a second/foreign language.

The explanation is the concept of the "affective filter" by S. Krashen (1981). Krashen (1982) pointed out that "the emotions are a filter that controls the information access to the brain". At the time of increased anxiety, the filter blocks brain activity and incoming information cannot be processed by the brain's operating system. When this level decreases, the brain's operating system can analyze information. Hence, the problem of language anxiety (second/foreign language anxiety) becomes particularly acute. The following study claims that the term "foreign language anxiety" is more appropriate, which can be defined in General terms as psychological anxiety associated with learning and using a second/foreign language. Horwitz E.K (1991) noted that the majority of students who start learning a second/foreign language experience a "debilitating" level of foreign language anxiety, which is characterized by a noticeable decrease in mental abilities.

The article's is aimed at investigating the phenomenon of anxiety and to clarify the nature of speaking anxiety based on observing a learner who studies at the 4th course. Investigating language anxiety has profound importance in figuring out detrimental effect of this phenomenon on learners' learning experience and outcome. Especially in learning

language, the presence of anxiety can be one of the biggest hinders for students. With the aim of embodying the process of investigations, the tools such as an interview, questionnaire and test were chosen by myself. The results of this article will aid to delineate how to analyze and identify the existence of language anxiety.

Literature Review. Acquiring foreign languages demands an intense concentration on the learning process to attain higher enhancement. Anxiety is a crucial factor that impedes learners from making adequate progress. The function of anxiety experienced by a person concerning a particular situation is to ensure their safety on a personal level. A high level of anxiety indicates a lack of emotional adaptation of the subject to certain social situations. Currently, a large number of studies are devoted to the study of the state of anxiety. For their analysis, it is important to clearly distinguish the concepts of anxiety as a state and anxiety as a personality trait or property. Anxiety cannot be analyzed easily due to its emotional and psychological characteristics. However, researchers tried to find out suitable explanation for this phenomenon. Leibert and Morris (1967) asserted that anxiety is linked with the destabilization of learners' emotions. This kind of misbalance can be negatively reflected in the perception of students. Zeidner (1998) mentioned that one of the main traits of anxiety is worry. He claimed that worry as a feeling is debilitative, and from the cognitive perspective, it deals with irrelevant thoughts. In foreign psycholinguistics, E. Horwitz et al. (1986) were among the first to address the phenomenon of language anxiety in their research. According to E. Horwitz et al. (1986) definition, language anxiety is "a certain set of self-esteem, beliefs, feelings and behavioral principles associated with learning a foreign language, which, in turn, is caused by the uniqueness of this process" (p. 128). By accumulating empirical data, they identified the following main components of this phenomenon, namely: tension in the process of interpersonal communication, anxiety in test situations, and fear of negative evaluation from others. As one of the manifestations of the psychological barrier in cognitive terms, language anxiety is a big obstacle to the effective development of a foreign language. According to scientists, the ability to overcome psychological barriers in interpersonal communication in the native language helps relieve anxiety in a similar situation and the language being studied. Negative assessment of speech in a foreign language can be shown both by the teacher and by the surrounding students, as well as in socially-oriented situations, for example, during interviews, presentations at international conferences, and business meetings. Language anxiety can be expressed in the speaker's secretive behavior, taciturnity, shyness, fear and even panic. Anxiety is often considered in close connection with fear, since it is a basic reaction, and fear expresses the same quality but in an objective form.

The interpretation of anxiety as a mental disorder is one of the main ones. Most often, anxiety is considered a mental condition that is associated with other affects and feelings. Kanar (2011) argued mental symptoms label students who collide with anxiety in speaking:

- Disorganized thoughts.
- Forgetting what they had planned to say.
- The feeling of inadequacy and negative self-talk.

She claims that students experience physical and mental symptoms before speaking or when they begin to speak. She also stated that the first case of learners, who experience the psychological symptoms before

speaking, become "tongue-tied". Similarly, according to Gkonou (2011), a previous investigation illustrated that low self-esteem and fear of negative comments lead to anxiety. Especially, learners who stayed on the elementary level of language tend to speak anxiety. They are afraid of saying wrong words or sentences. These kinds of learners strive to avoid social feedback on their learning. Tsui (1996) noted that learners in the primary stage of language learning think that frequent mistakes put them in vulnerable position. Pekrun (1992) maintained that a person who has already experienced anxiety situations likely to encounter them in the future. Studies of anxiety distinguish such types as situational and personal. The latter is a stable property of a person's personality. At the same time, a certain level of anxiety is a stable property of any person. Increased anxiety due to a complex interaction of cognitive, affective and behavioral responses provoked when a person is exposed to stressful factors, most often socio-psychological. Macintyre (1999) mentioned two kinds of anxiety (Trait and State anxiety) in an attempt to identify individual distinctions regarding anxiety. Trait anxiety is a natural bias to anxiety despite any situation (Spielberg, 1983). Generally, people with a high level of trait anxiety have a tendency to panic and hesitation. These kinds of people have a low level of confidence, and their anxiety has permanent character. Therefore, people with trait anxiety have emotional imbalance. Meanwhile, according to Mostafa Amiri (2015), state anxiety is referred to particular situations. It does not have frequent nature, and it appeared according to a concrete situation. For instance, this type of anxiety may arise during exams or competitions.

Materials and Methods. To implement the given experiment, the 4th course student of WLU was taken as a volunteer. The participant was chosen to identify his anxiety in language learning. In order to determine the level of speaking anxiety effectively, an oral interview, questionnaire, and test were utilized.

Firstly, I decided to create interview questions and conduct them with a participant of the research. The interview was taken from the participant so as to be aware of his competence in English. The answers of the interview were recorded. The interview was consisted of 13 questions, including four questions about his personal life and family, four questions about his education, five questions about the ways of learning and purpose of learning English. The interview was continued for approximately 10 minutes.

Secondly, I have prepared a questionnaire to understand the scale of anxiety that exist or not in the participant's mind. The form of items was quite comprehensible for reader and there were different situations when a person can encounter with an anxiety in the speaking process. This questionnaire comprises 13 questions, and it is given in table form. The participant has four options to answer the items like, not me, a bit like me, somewhat like me, very much like me. I gave the participant 15 minutes to complete this questionnaire
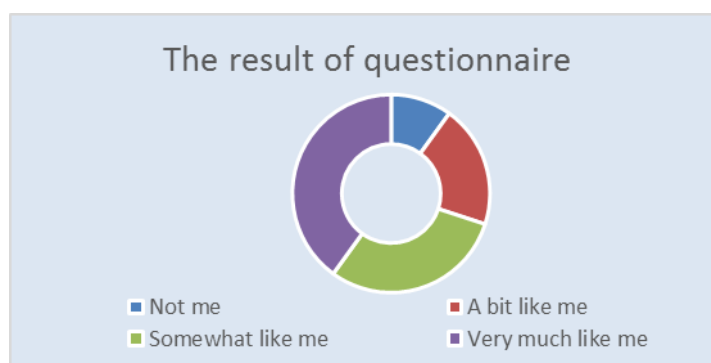
Thirdly, I would like to select speech anxiety tests, as they give the opportunity to clarify participant's public speaking anxiety. Most learners cannot emancipate their potential in front of the audience. In most cases, this kind of anxiety emerged during the presentation of some topic. The test consists of 11 questions with the following answers: true, partly true, false. Ten minutes was given to complete the test.

Finally, collected data were analyzed in order to come to final inference. Analysis was based on the results of the interview, questionnaire

and test. The questionnaire and anxiety test part immensely helped to explore the level of participant's anxiety.

Results and Discussions. The interview, which was taken from the participant, helped us a lot in identifying his basic abilities on acquiring a second language as well as his level of anxiety. It gave a chance to be aware of his personality, interests and purposes. His attitude towards English was very solemn. The first four questions were about his personal life, and Russel introduced himself. Then we moved to his study life. He emphasized that he studies and works at the same time. Further questions were essential to finding out his experience in scrutinizing the English language. He mentioned that he only concentrated on the grammar of English rather than other aspects. From the answers, Russel presented, it was clear that he is going to work in the IT sector and he needs to know English to enter university. In addition, knowing languages is one of the main requirements in his profession. Meanwhile, despite that, we were only two people in the room; Russel had a problem emancipating his thoughts. It did not seem to me that he has lack of grammar or vocabulary knowledge. He was just afraid of saying incorrect words or sentences. He had a lot of pauses, and I felt that this fellow had feelings of hesitation when he tried to use communicative skills in English. However, when we commenced speaking in the Uzbek language, he was hesitant, and low confidence evaporated in the air.
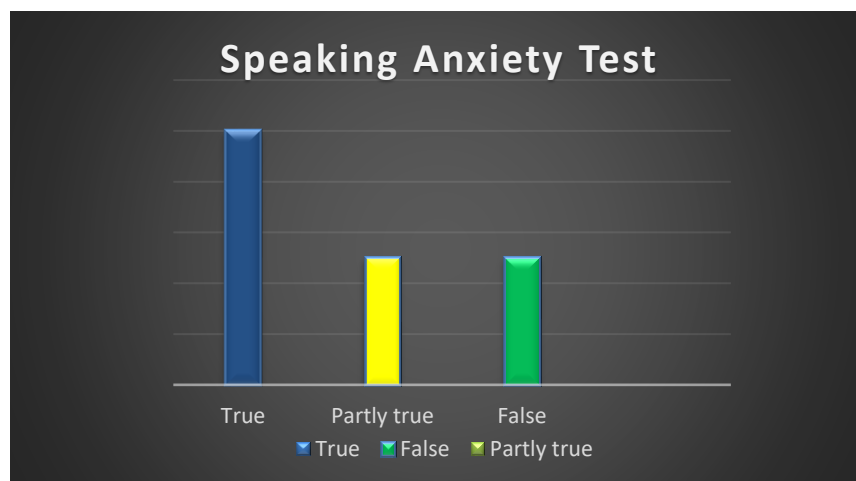
After the interview, the questionnaire was conducted to check out his speaking anxiety in the English language. The items of the questionnaire were taken from different situations where anxiety moments might happen in the English communication process, and Russel's answers are fixed in Appendix 2. According to his answers, I understood that he had a high level of anxiety when he strived to speak with people in English.

For the 1 item of the questionnaire, *I worry because I am not confident on my accent,* he answered that it is close to him. It means that he still cannot make the appropriate English accent during his speech, and he pays too much attention to this factor. He feels nervous when he cannot show the ideal accent which interferes him to communicate with others. The following item of the questionnaire, *I am feeling afraid of being badly criticized by people who speak the English language better,* showed that Russel is scared when somebody tries to give him negative feedback. It demonstrated that criticism had an unfavorable effect on him, reflecting his speaking performances. According to his answer for the item 9*, I feel uncomfortable being with people who speak the English language better,* I noticed that when he encountered with people who know English better than him, he had also an anxiety, and it's illustrated that he confidently

interact with high-level learners. For the next item, *I feel uneasy when someone try to correct the grammar of my speeches,* he also responded that it is very close to him. He exactly knows that he has sufficient knowledge in grammar but when somebody correct him this kind of action destabilases his speech. Obviously, that it can be the reason for increasing the level of anxiety in his speech. Overall, the result of the questionnaire delineates that he frequently faced with anxiety in the communication process.

The result of the Speech Anxiety test was given in Appendix 3 described that Russel has a high level of anxiety when he speaks in the audience. His main duty in this task was to select appropriate answers for him, and he answered true for the majority of questions.

Most of Russel's answers indicate his trouble during public English speaking. It will not be an exaggeration to say that he is feeling even panic when he elucidates something in English class. He ultimately fears of utilizing English in front of the public, and this process led him to emotional instability. He attempts to speak in a rapid way; thereby, he often forgets important things. One of the things that surprised me in Russel's answer is that he prefers to evade any social situation where he may come across with the English language despite the fact that he is a very gregarious person. Data analysis depicted that the participant of research cannot illustrate his strong skills in language communication process although he is very dynamic when he uses his mother tongue.

Conclusion. Since we have looked at the entire data meticulously, one can infer that the participant of the research deeply suffered from speaking anxiety. According to Krashen's (1981) hypothesis about "affective filters," the complexity of emotions make it difficult to learn a foreign language successfully. Any student has an "affective filter" simply because learners cannot feel only certain emotions. However, this is a matter of degree or level. If the affective filter is low, a person has no barriers to learning a foreign language; he is generally more successful in learning because he does not spend energy on negative emotions, evaluating how he looks from the outside. In other words, nothing hinders access to information, and it quietly reaches the student's brain without restrictions. On the contrary, if the affective filter is high, a certain "blockade" is built in a person, information is not absorbed properly, and the path is blocked. It goes to the brain, but a person can't use it. This explains a common situation: The student "knows" a lot, he/she can tell you a rule learn a huge amount of vocabulary, but when it comes to

conversation, they cannot apply their knowledge, and it will be difficult for them to make conversations with people. That is why it is so important to consciously reduce the influence of the affective filter during the learning process. The classroom environment should be as conducive to learning the language. The teacher's task is not only to explain the new material but also to ensure its assimilation and application, to create an atmosphere in which theory can flow freely into practice. Of course, many experienced teachers know this very well (or, at least, feel it). However, Krashen's hypothesis (1981) provides a scientific basis for such teaching experience and explains why many students experience difficulties when working with the material, even well and easily explained.

In my case study, I figured out that the participant of my research is a very active and competitive person who even has an adequate level of knowledge. Still, the result of my investigation illustrated that this person has a high level of anxiety, which is one of the elements of the affective filter. He has definitely a problem with the communication process in the English language, and notably, it appeared in his English public speech. Personally, I believe that the result of my research will be actual for future investigation, and it will help the readers to comprehend the authentic nature of speaking anxiety.

Further implications

Notwithstanding the fact that most of the previous research made a great contribution to analyze the main features of speaking anxiety, several areas of this issue need to be investigated. Future studies can increase their exploration of socio-cultural aspects of anxiety. Besides that, they can deeply explore and analyze the gender role in speaking anxiety. For instance, I have chosen a male for my research, but I do not know exactly what would happen if I chose a female one. So, identifying the level of speaking anxiety in both genders can be interesting issue for future surveys. Apart from this, I recommend specifying the following question: Is speaking anxiety genetically pathology or it is formed within our life. There were already done scientific works on this issue, but in my point of view, we still need to elaborate this aspect.

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Appendix 1
Interview Questions
1. What is your full name?
2. How old are you?
3. Can you tell me about your family?
4. Can you describe your personality?
5. What kind of learner are you?
6. What kind of languages do you know?
7. Where do you study?
8. What are you interested in?
9. How long have you been learning English so far?
10. Can you tell me your future plans?
11. What profession are you going to choose?
12. Why are you learning English?
13. How are you working on yourself? What kind of strategies do you use to improve your skills?

Transcript
Interviewer: Nishonov Ilkhom (NI)
Interviwee: Karimov Rasul (KR)

I: Good afternoon my dear friend. Today, I'm going to ask you some questions for my case study from the subject Second language acquisition at Webster university. Shall we begin?

R: Good afternoon. Yes of course, with great pleasure I am ready

I: What is your full name?

R: My full name is Karimov Rasul and I'm very glad to see you right here.

I: Thank you I'm also glad to see you. How old are you?

R: Honesty speaking I am 19 years old but somebody saw me just think that I am older according to my appearance.

I: okay and I can you tell me about your family?

R: Yeah of course it's no secret that. My mother and father are working as teachers in education sphere and my brother is studying for gain his master degree. My family members are always very grateful or is your thankful for me and support me when I have any problems

I: That's great and I can you describe your personality?

R: Honestly speaking I do not like speaking about myself but I have to speak right now I am a very punctual person and I prefer to finish my tasks on time. I am a great hardworking person.

I: What kind of learner are you?

R: I'm a very hardworking person and at the same time hardworking learner. I have not been a lazy person in my life. However, it maybe depends on my mood also.

I: okay what are you interested in?

R: That's a great question for me yeah I can tell that I was interested in a lot of things. Learning some kind of books which are related to my future profession. I like watching movies and listening songs which are interesting for me.

I: What kind of languages do you know?

R: Frankly, I know English and Russian languages in intermediate level.

I: How long have you been learning English?

R: Okay, well I have been learning English for 2 years. In this period of time I mostly focus on grammar of English

I: Why are you learning English?

R: Initial aim was to pass entrance exam to my university but nowadays I understood that knowing English help me in career path

I: okay very good and where do you study?

R: Actually, I combine two activities job and education

I: How are you working on yourself? What kind of strategies do you use to improve your skills?

R: These days I mean nowadays I have lots of styles, strategies for learning English. I am trying to use the most useful among them. I cannot say that I am working on my English speaking skills. I try to watch movies and listen songs in original format.

I: what profession are you going to choose?

R: Setting on my knowledge, I will be a programmer

I: Can you tell me your future plans?

R: I can say that I want to devote my life to IT sector and I am sure that I will contribute my own part to development of this sphere in our country

I: Thank you your time and agreeing for this interview it was amazing and enjoyable. Good bye.

R: Thanks, goodbye.

Appendix 2

Questionnaire: SECOND LANGUAGE (L2) SPEAKING ANXIETY

Whenever I speak using the second language (English), I…	1	2	3	4
1. Worry because I am not confident on my accent.				✓
2. Would often stutter whenever I am assessed.		✓		
3. Get sweaty palms after speaking the language.			✓	
4. Feeling afraid of being badly criticized by people who speak the English language better.				✓
5. Feel uneasy from the sound of the second language.			✓	
6. Feel scared that someone would try to correct my pronunciation				✓
7. Perspire a lot when asked to speak English in front of group.		✓		
8. Get shaky hands when forced to speak English in front of group.			✓	
9. Feel uncomfortable being with people who speak the English language better.				✓
10. fail to share my ideas verbally to other people.			✓	
11. am not confident that the word that I use matches the meaning of what I would really like to say		✓		
12. would speak very low for people not to hear my voice.	✓			
13. feel uneasy when someone try to correct the grammar of my speeches				✓

Direction: For each statement, check the box that would indicate how much the statement is true of you: 1 - not me; 2 - a bit like me; 3 - somewhat like me; 4 - very much like me.

*https://www.academia.edu/44211922/Second_Language_L2_Speaking_and_Writing_Anxiety_Scale_L2SWAS_*

Appendix 3

Speech-anxiety test

1. When thinking about English speaking in public, I freeze up.
a) True
b) Partly true ☑
c) False

2. My mouth becomes dry and my voice feels weak, just at the thought of English speaking in public.
a) True
b) Partly true
c) False ☑

3. I have experienced panic or anxiety attacks, just at the thought of English speaking in public.
a) True
b) Partly true ☑
c) False

4. I feel embarrassed or extremely fearful while English speaking in public or at the thought of English speaking in public.
a) True ☑
b) Partly true