

Role of English Language Anxiety in Self Efficacy, Fear of Negative Evaluation and Communication Competence Among Undergraduate Students of Kolkata

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ABSTRACT: English is a universally accepted language that serves as an important means of communication worldwide. In India, government schools have regional languages as their primary mode of instruction, making English a second language. The English language plays a pivotal role in shaping a student's overall psychological development. Thus, a lack of adequate exposure to English-language instruction may pose barriers later on in various spheres of life. The present study aimed at investigating the role of English language anxiety in self-efficacy, fear of negative evaluation, and communication competence among undergraduate students of Kolkata who had completed their schooling from Bengali medium schools. A quantitative research design was employed using correlation and regression analysis. Offline data were collected from various colleges in Kolkata. The sample consisted of 84 undergraduate students, both male and female, aged between 18 and 24 years. The tools used for data collection were translated in Bengali. The tools were English Language Anxiety Scale, Generalized Self Efficacy Scale, Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale, and Self Perceived Communication Competence Scale. The obtained results revealed that English language anxiety was significantly negatively correlated with self-efficacy and communication competence, whereas it was significantly positively correlated with fear of negative evaluation. Furthermore, regression analysis revealed that English language anxiety significantly predicted self-efficacy (11.5%), fear of negative evaluation (14.5%), and communication competence (21.6%). The study concludes with the need for effective English language training programs, social skills training, and counselling services to facilitate students' psychosocial development and future academic prospects.

KEYWORDS: English language anxiety, self-efficacy, fear of negative evaluation, communication competence, psychosocial development, undergraduate students

I. INTRODUCTION

English is a universally accepted language and holds its importance as a means of communication in the world (Tridinanti, 2018). In many foreign countries, it is taught as a second language. Similarly, in India, English is taught as a second language in many government schools having other regional languages as its first language. The English language plays a pivotal role in shaping a student's intellectual, social and emotional development. This throws light on the English language as a barrier for such students as they may find it difficult to understand terms and concepts of multiple subjects that they are expected to study. One of the reasons why they are unable to get access to quality education is due to financial problems. Lack of fluency in speaking English affects a student's self-esteem and that leads to multiple difficulties encountered by them. 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 process" (Horwitz et al., 1991, p. 31). A high level of language anxiety results in lack of concentration, palpitation, dry mouth, feelings of apprehension, crying during exams (Yilmaz & DeJoung, 2024). Foreign language anxiety can be defined as "the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning". In much research, it has been found that foreign language anxiety leads to negative experiences. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), foreign language anxiety comprises three components such as communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Fear of negative evaluation refers to one's concern regarding unfavourable evaluation by others. As it is one of the components of language anxiety, learners have experienced it the most while listening and speaking thereby choosing to stay silent in classrooms (Ran et al., 2022). Thus, disapproval or sensing negativity from others are leading causes behind the experience of fear of negative evaluation among individuals (Giray et al., 2022). Communication competence refers to the ability of an individual to interact effectively in the social world with the help of communication. Self-perceived communication competence is defined as an "adequate ability to pass along or give information; the ability to make known by

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talking or writing” (McCroskey, 1984, p.261). The term “self-efficacy” was coined by Albert Bandura. His approach is called observational learning which indicates the importance in the learning process of observing other people’s behaviour. Self-efficacy is “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Bandura, 1986: 391)

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There is a significant positive correlation between participants’ self-efficacy beliefs and English language anxiety (Tahsildar & Kabiri, 2019). EFL learners suffer from language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Fear of negative evaluation itself was found to be a strong source of language anxiety (Aydin, 2008). There is a significantly high positive relationship between language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation among secondary level of language teachers (Malini & Janakavalli, 2018). Students’ speaking anxiety had a negative relationship with speaking self-efficacy whereas a positive relationship was determined between fear of negative evaluation and speaking anxiety (Okyar, 2023). There is a significant correlation between fear of negative evaluation and foreign language anxiety (Shabani, 2012). There is a detrimental impact of language anxiety on nursing students’ communication performance in clinically relevant tasks (Putri et al., 2025). Self-perceived communication competence positively influences FREQ – frequency of use of English as L2 for oral communication (Ghani & Azhar, 2017).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Statement of the Problem.

Role of English language anxiety in self-efficacy, fear of negative evaluation and communication competence among undergraduate students of Kolkata.

B. Objectives of the Study.

- 1) To understand if there exists any relationship between English language anxiety and self-efficacy
- 2) To understand if there exists any relationship between English language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation
- 3) To understand if there exists any relationship between English language anxiety and communication competence
- 4) To understand if English language anxiety predicts self-efficacy
- 5) To understand if English language anxiety predicts fear of negative evaluation
- 6) To understand if English language anxiety predicts communication competence

C. Research Hypotheses.

- H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between English language anxiety and self-efficacy
H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between English language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation
H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between English language anxiety and communication competence
H₀₄: English language anxiety does not significantly predict self-efficacy
H₀₅: English language anxiety does not significantly predict fear of negative evaluation
H₀₆: English language anxiety does not significantly predict communication competence

D. Research Design.

A correlational study was conducted.

- 1) Predictor variable: English language anxiety
- 2) Criterion variables: Self-efficacy, Fear of negative evaluation, Communication competence
- 3) Control variables: control variables are as follows -
 - a. Age- the age range being 18-24 years
 - b. Education- presently in UG level
 - c. Stream- BA / B.Sc. / B.Com Honours under NEP 2020
 - d. Institution-consistently studied from West Bengal board non-English medium government (Bengali medium) school in Kolkata having English as second language.
 - e. Minimum qualifying marks in HS- 60% in West Bengal HS Board exam.
 - f. Psychiatric and physical illness- should not be present
- 4) Sample size: N = 84
- 5) Sampling technique: purposive sampling
- 6) Mode of Data Collection: offline mode of data collection.
- 7) Inclusion criteria: inclusion criteria are as follows -
 - a. Students pursuing UG under NEP 2020
 - b. Studied previously from a non-English medium school having WB Board

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- c. In between 18 to 24 years
 - d. Residents of Kolkata
 - e. Students from all caste and religious groups
 - f. Who have scored a minimum of 60% in WB Higher Secondary board exam.
 - g. Who do not have any psychiatric or physical illness
- 8) Exclusion criteria: exclusion criteria are as follows -
- a. Students not pursuing UG or pursuing under CBCS system.
 - b. Studied previously from an English medium school from either CBSE, ICSE or WB
 - c. Below 18 or above 24 years
 - d. Not residents of Kolkata
 - e. Who have scored below 60% in WB Higher Secondary board exam
 - f. Who have any psychiatric or physical illness

E. Tools Used.

- 1) Consent form
- 2) Information schedule
- 3) Socio-economic status scale by Kuppuswamy
- 4) English language anxiety scale by Mustafa Ali Khalaf Ali
- 5) Generalized Self efficacy by Schwarzer, R., & Jerusalem
- 6) Self-perceived communication competence scale by C.J. McCroskey & L.L. McCroskey
- 7) Brief fear of negative evaluation scale by Mark. R. Leary

F. Description of the Tools.

- 1) Consent form- Content form will be prepared so that the participant can voluntarily agree to participate in the present study. Information schedule- The Information Schedule is prepared to gather basic information about the participants such as Age, Gender, City, Type of Family, Number of Family members, Family Structure, Caste, medium of instruction in school, studied from a West Bengal board government school of Kolkata, student of undergraduate level, socio-economic status, psychiatric or medical illnesses and more.
- 2) Socio Economic Status Scale: The scale was invented by Kuppuswamy in 1976. The scale is updated every year and thus, it is ideal to measure SES in the Indian population. In the present study, Modified Kuppuswamy Socio-economic Scale's updated version will be used. Based upon the total score of an individual, they are put in one of the categories- Upper (I) 26-29, Upper Middle (II) 16-25, Lower Middle (III) 11-15, Upper Lower (IV) 5-10 and Lower (V) <5. The scale is standardized on the urban Indian population and hence, it helps to segregate the participants in three groups- Upper, Middle and Lower Class. The scale is revised each year based on the consumer price index of industry workers for each base year (Sood & Bindra, 2002)
- 3) English Language Anxiety Scale- was developed by Mustafa Ali Khalaf Ali. The scale has 4 domains- speaking anxiety, listening anxiety, reading anxiety and writing anxiety. There are 32 items measuring the four factors of English language learning anxiety. Speaking anxiety (item 1 to 8), listening anxiety (9 to 16), reading anxiety (17 to 24) and writing anxiety (25 to 32). It is a 5-point Likert scale. The Cronbach Alpha of this scale is 0.90 on the total score (Ali, 2017)
- 4) Generalized Self Efficacy Scale- was given by Schwarzer, R., & Jerusalem, M. (1995). The scale is designed for the general adult population, including adolescents. The scale has a total of 10 items. Responses are made on a four-point Likert scale. There is no reverse scoring. High score indicates high self-efficacy. In samples from 23 nations, Cronbach's alphas ranged from .76 to .90. The scale is parsimonious as well as reliable. It has also proven valid in terms of convergent and discriminant validity.
- 5) Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale- (BFNE) is an abbreviated version of the 30-item Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale put forth by Watson & Friend in 1969. It was developed by Mark. R. Leary. It consists of 12 items that are rated on a five-point Likert scale. Items 2,4,7 and 10 are reverse scored. The Cronbach alpha was found to be 0.90 and test-retest reliability was found to be 0.75 (Carleton et al., 2006)
- 6) Self-Perceived Communication Competence Scale- was developed by C.J. McCroskey & L.L. McCroskey in 1988. The scale consists of 12 items and has 7 domains- Public, Meeting, Group, Dyad, Stranger, Acquaintance, Friend. In order to compute the total score, the sub scores for stranger, acquaintance and friend are added and then divided by 3. The reliability value is 0.92 Higher SPCC scores indicate higher self-perceived communication competence (McCroskey & McCroskey, 1988)

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G. Procedure.

A quantitative method of data collection was used in the present study. In total, 5 scales were used along with consent form and information schedule. Scales were translated in Bengali language. As all scales are to be self-administered, participants were told to read the instructions carefully. There is no time limit on any of the scales. However, participants were instructed to not take a lot of time in thinking. In the information schedule, important details were noted by the researcher. Special care was taken to ensure that no time is omitted as that will result in incomplete scoring. The data were collected by visiting colleges in Kolkata. The sample size was 84, including both male and female. Based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, participants some participants were screened out so that further statistical analysis can be carried out. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation for each variable was calculated. To test the hypotheses, Pearson's product moment and simple linear regression were carried out. Conclusion was drawn.

IV. RESULT

The result obtained by implementing the necessary statistical tools for the present study are as follows:

TABLE I: MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
English language anxiety	87.23	23.4
Self efficacy	31.07	3.49
Fear of negative evaluation	33.74	7.26
Communication competence	67.90	20.66

From table I, the descriptive statistics i.e. the mean and standard deviation of each variable was calculated.

TABLE II: PEARSON'S PRODUCT MOMENT CORRELATION

Pearson's Product Moment Correlation	English Language Anxiety	Sig.
Self-Efficacy	-.355**	.001
Fear of Negative Evaluation	.394**	.000
Communication Competence	-.474**	.000

****Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)**

Table II showing Pearson product moment correlation between:

- English language anxiety and self-efficacy
- English language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation
- English language anxiety and communication competence

The correlation coefficient between English language anxiety and self-efficacy is -.355. The significance value (two tailed) is .001. Hence, the correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed). Moreover, the correlation coefficient suggests that there is a negative correlation between English language anxiety and self-efficacy. This indicates that as English language anxiety increases, self-efficacy decreases. Thus, Null Hypothesis, H_{01} has been rejected.

The correlation coefficient between English language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation is .394. The significance value (two tailed) is .000. Hence, the correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed). Moreover, the correlation coefficient suggests that there is a positive correlation between English language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. This indicates that as English language anxiety increases, fear of negative evaluation also increases. Thus, Null Hypothesis, H_{02} has been rejected.

The correlation coefficient between English language anxiety and communication competence is -.474. The significance value (two tailed) is .000. Hence, the correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed). Moreover, the correlation coefficient suggests that there is a negative correlation between English language anxiety and communication competence. This indicates that as English language anxiety increases, communication competence decreases. Thus, Null Hypothesis, H_{03} has been rejected.

TABLE III: SIMPLE LINEAR REGRESSION

R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	F	Df	Sig.
.355a	.126	.115		11.800	1	.001**

***Indicates significance at 0.01 level.**

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From table III, results reveal that the predicted variable (self-efficacy) can be predicted successfully from the predictor variable (English language anxiety). As significance value is 0.001 which is less than 0.01, 11.5% of the predicted variable i.e., self-efficacy can be predicted from English language anxiety. Hence, the null hypothesis H_{04} is rejected.

TABLE IV: SIMPLE LINEAR REGRESSION

<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted Square</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
.394a	.155	.145		15.041	1	.000**

*Indicates significance at 0.01 level.

From table IV, results reveal that the predicted variable (fear of negative evaluation) can be predicted successfully from the predictor variable (English language anxiety). As significance value is 0.000 which is less than 0.01, 14.5% of the predicted variable i.e., fear of negative evaluation can be predicted from English language anxiety. Hence, the null hypothesis H_{05} is rejected.

TABLE V: SIMPLE LINEAR REGRESSION

<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted Square</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
.474a	.225	.216		23.807	1	.000**

*Indicates significance at 0.01 level.

From table V, results reveal that the predicted variable (communication competence) can be predicted successfully from the predictor variable (English language anxiety). As significance value is 0.000 which is less than 0.01, 21.6% of the predicted variable i.e., communication competence can be predicted from English language anxiety. Hence, the null hypothesis H_{06} is rejected

V. DISCUSSION

From the quantitative analysis, all the research hypotheses from H_{01} to H_{06} were rejected. English language anxiety has a significantly negative relationship with self-efficacy and communication competence at 0.01 level of significance (two-tailed test). English language anxiety has a significantly positive relationship with fear of negative evaluation at 0.01 level of significance (two tailed test). English language anxiety significantly predicts all the three criterion variables, namely, self-efficacy (11.5%), fear of negative evaluation (14.5%) and communication competence (21.6%) at 0.01 level of significance.

Some research findings that corroborate with the present study's results are as follows, a study by Gabel et al (2001) revealed that adolescents who stuttered had poor perception of communication competence and felt apprehensive while communicating with others. Aling (2016) stated that high levels of anxiety does impact the competency of language usage among the learners and their communication skills. Liu & Zhang (2008) found that respondents felt anxious in English classes, however they considered themselves to be worthy whereas Young (1991) stated that individuals having low self-esteem tend to have high levels of language anxiety. A significant positive correlation was found between the two variables. Aydin (2008) found fear of negative evaluation to be a source of language anxiety among Turkish learners. Thus, this throws light on the purpose of the study that English is widely used and its impact on various psychological variables.

VI. CONCLUSION

English language anxiety does predict self-efficacy, fear of negative evaluation and communication competence among undergraduate students of Kolkata. The future prospect of this study is to emphasize on the importance of English language training or programs at school level along with counselling services and social support from teachers. This shall ensure that their psycho-social development and future academic growth will not get hampered by the anxiety that gradually develops in school and then gets reflected in higher education or job sectors. The limitations of this study is that the sample size could have been larger, a comparative analysis could have been drawn between students who have completed their school from English medium and Bengali medium. More robust means of statistical analysis could have been utilized.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank my supervisor for his esteemed suggestion and guidance throughout this study and the participants who took out time to participate in my study.

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