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PREFACE

The Book, “Contemporary Issues in ELT” aims to introduce the new trends of the last decade. The authors are all former classmates (I mean students) of mine, either at the graduate or post-graduate level. We had good interaction and communication during the those times and I supervised most of them in writing their M.A. theses or doctoral dissertations. For this reason, most of the chapters are based on research findings. They all are hard-working and open-minded in relation to new ideas and trends. I am proud of my classmates who dedicated themselves to introduce new ideas, trends, and implementations in the language learning and teaching process.

All the chapters are original papers and attempt to propose solutions to learning challenges in language teaching. The authors promote and concentrate on the CEFR, learner autonomy, nonverbal communication, learning anxiety, problem-based learning, constructivism, testing, vocabulary, and the teaching of reading. Each chapter starts with learning objectives to stimulate the learners and ends with discussion questions. We hope that this format will help the readers comprehend these new ideas and trends deeply and reflect upon them carefully.

I would like to thank all of the authors and contributors for making this ELT Book project a reality. My role was to assist them and compose a team of 11 young researchers in an attempt to contribute to the language learning and teaching process. My special thanks go to F. Özlem Saka for organizing the group and finalizing the group work in time.

As a final remark, I believe that all the authors will be very grateful and thankful if the book contributes to the field of ELT and is used as a reference book in ELT classrooms.



Prof. Dr. Özcan DEMİREL - Editor

Ankara – 2019

Chapters and Authors

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CHAPTER 1

ANXIETY AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING¹

Dr. Mine Aksoy - Ankara Social Sciences High School

Objectives:

After studying this section, you will be able to

- i) comprehend the factors that affect students' learning and individual differences
- ii) learn what language learning anxiety is
- iii) comprehend the components of anxiety and possible reasons of anxiety
- iv) comprehend the importance of anxiety in foreign language learning
- v) comprehend the relations between anxiety and achievement

1. INTRODUCTION

As learning languages has its significance recently, there is a great deal of research focusing on foreign language anxiety (FLA). The fact that some learners are more successful at acquiring a foreign language (FL) than others even though the circumstances of a foreign language learning are almost identical has led to investigations of individual characteristics as predictors of successful FL learning. In this section, foreign language learning anxiety will be studied in detail. In order to understand what foreign language learning anxiety is, it is necessary to examine the types of anxiety in language teaching first. Then, the theory behind language learning anxiety, and the relation with academic achievement, is dealt. Then, possible factors causing language anxiety is discussed. Finally, possible anxiety provoking factors leading to these findings are examined and discussed.

¹ Adapted from the doctoral thesis entitled "The Relationship Between Anxiety, Shyness, Strategy and Academic Achievement in Foreign Language Learning" supervised by Prof. Dr. Özcan Demirel

2. INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Foreign language learning is all about the competence in using any language other than native language for a specific purpose. Native language learning is a process in which human beings internalize and hear his language everywhere. It is easier for the individual to come to a sufficient level in his mother tongue. Learning a foreign language in a place where that language is not used is a difficult process to complete (Lado, 1964, p.4). To explain the difficulty of learning a foreign language, Brown (1994, p.1) stated that “second language learning is a complex process in which variables include infinite numbers”. In the process of learning a foreign language, being competent in the target language is already a very difficult process because of the complex nature of the language the fact that this process takes place outside of an environment where it is spoken and used makes this process more difficult. In recent years, it has been seen that the people who deal with language learning and teaching have adopted Humanistic approach initiated by Rogers. Student-centered teaching is prioritized along with the Humanistic Approach, which emphasizes the important role played by the individual in the learning process, the mental, affective qualities of the individual and the social, cultural variables that this brings to the educational environment so the learning programs in which student needs and experiences are taken into account (Brown, 2000; Celce-Murcia, 2001; Harmer, 2001).

With this change, a new approach, called individual differences in foreign language teaching, ability and learning pace (Demirel, 2003, p. 26). It has been found that there are some factors influencing people’s second language learning. In many studies on how language learning occurs (Dulay et al, 1982, p.46). These are external factors; (social environment, interaction rate, etc.) and internal factors; (language transfer, perception). In addition to all these factors, Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) investigated the fact that individual differences had a significant effect on language learning as in all subjects. Individual differences can be explained as; experience on language, age, gender, language learning ability, motivation, learning styles, learning strategies, anxiety and memory power are seen as individual differences and it affects language learning to a significant extent (Scovel, 1978, pp.129-132). One of these variables, “anxiety”, has a special place in foreign language education. It is suggested by many researchers that anxiety level is one of the most important predictors of foreign language achievement (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1994; Aida, 1994; Horwitz, 1986, Young 1986).

3. FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING ANXIETY

In recent years, psychologists and educators have studied the effects of anxiety on learning in detail. A lot of studies have been done on the effect of anxiety on both general learning and foreign language learning. As a result of these studies, there are findings that show that anxiety is significantly effective both in terms of general learning and foreign language learning, but there are also contradictory research findings (MacIntyre, 1999). Foreign language anxiety can be defined as “the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning” (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994, p. 283). According to many researchers such as Horwitz and Cope (1986, pp.125-132), foreign language anxiety should be considered separately from the lesson anxiety in other courses. Language teachers have been long aware of the discomfort and worry their students experience in class. Foreign Language Anxiety, or more precisely, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) is considered to be a situational anxiety experienced in the well-defined situation of the foreign language classroom (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Foreign language anxiety has three components: communication apprehension, test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), communication apprehension is ‘a type of shyness by fear of or anxiety about communicating with people’ (p. 127). In other words, it refers to an individual’s discomfort and tension when speaking or performing in public. Test anxiety has been defined by Sarason (1984) as ‘the tendency to become alarmed about the consequences of inadequate performance on a test or other evaluation’. Fear of negative evaluation is defined as ‘apprehension about others’ evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively’ (Horwitz et al., 1986, p.128).

4. EFFECTS OF ANXIETY ON FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Foreign language learning anxiety is generally defined based on two types of approaches. The first of these approaches addresses foreign language anxiety within the framework of state anxiety, trait anxiety, test anxiety, facilitating anxiety, and debilitating anxiety as a more generalized anxiety definition. Early studies on the effects of anxiety on L2 learning mostly adopted this approach. Measures of these more general types of anxiety were used to examine the relationship of anxiety to L2 achievement or performance. The other approach treats L2 anxiety as a particular category of anxiety experienced primarily in L2 classrooms (Horwitz & Young, 1991). The latter approach has been widely applied since the development of several L2-specific anxiety scales (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1988).

4.1 STATE AND TRAIT ANXIETY

According to Spielberger (1992) from time to time everyone is a little frightened and anxious. This type of anxiety, which is created by dangerous situations, is called state anxiety. Brown (1994) defines trait anxiety as a more permanent predisposition to be anxious. However, state anxiety is evoked whenever a person perceives stimulus or situation as harmful, dangerous or threatening to him (Spielberger, 1992). Trait anxiety is not directly manifested in behavior, but may be inferred from the frequency and the intensity of an individual's elevations in anxiety state over a time. Thus, trait anxiety refers to stable personality differences in anxiety proneness. However, state anxiety is momentary and it relates to some particular event or a situation. State anxiety refers to the apprehension experienced at a particular moment in time. For example, in test taking time a person may feel state anxiety and if someone has higher trait anxiety then they will show higher state anxiety in stressful situations. So, trait and state anxieties are associated with each other.

4.2 FACILITATING / DEBILITATING ANXIETIES

Although there are many findings confirming the relationship between success in foreign languages and the relationship between affective variables and especially anxiety, the existence of some contradictory research results has led Scovel (1991) to do more detailed research on anxiety. Then he proposed the distinction of facilitating and Debilitating anxiety,, thus expressing that the contradictions would be explained. Facilitating anxiety influences the learner in a positive, motivating way and is best described as enthusiasm before a challenging task. In contrast, debilitating anxiety includes the unpleasant feelings such as worry and dread that interfere with the learning process Scovel (1991, p.139) . According to Scovel, facilitating and debilitating anxieties can be seen in a normal individual, and warns or motivates the individual against each new case he / she encounters in the language learning process.

According to Horwitz (1986), the facilitating anxiety only helps in simple learning situations, but is not sufficient for learning a foreign language which is a more complex learning situation. Horwitz asserts that anxiety is a term with negative connotations, so it is not possible to talk about a kind of facilitating anxiety. Therefore, Horwitz only mentions the debilitating anxiety that causes the learner to escape the new learning situations.

4.3 TEST ANXIETY

Test anxiety, a type of anxiety related to evaluation or test taking, is one of the most researched topics in the field of psychology since Sarason and Mandler first developed their Test Anxiety Questionnaire in 1952. Individuals who suffer from test anxiety are characterized by worry and emotional arousal (Sarason & Sarason, 1990).

Most researchers regard test anxiety as a handicap and a source of interference with task performance (Sarason, 1958; Sarason & Sarason, 1990). Several qualitative studies have provided evidence to support this notion. Research by Bailey (1983) found that tests were one of the sources of anxiety in foreign language learning classroom. Similar negative effects of test anxiety were also reported in Phillips' (1992) study. For instance, Phillips described how a high-achieving student's performance was adversely influenced during an oral exam when she dwelled on her setbacks and fears.

However, there are findings from studies that showed otherwise. In a study of college students in beginning L2 classes, Chastain (1975) found a negative correlation between test anxiety and course grades for the audio-lingual French class, significantly positive for the Spanish class, slightly significant for the German class, and not significant for the conventional French class. Similarly complex findings were reported in Young's (1985) study as well: with language ability (i.e., self-rating of speaking ability) controlled, no significant correlation was found between test anxiety and performance on an oral proficiency interview, despite the fact that test anxiety was initially negatively correlated with the oral proficiency ratings.

4.4 SITUATION - SPECIFIC ANXIETY

There was a lack of consensus in the early foreign language learning research on how anxiety influenced learners' performance was attributed to the lack of adequate measures for second language anxiety. Since the 1980s, some scales have been developed specifically for measuring foreign language anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989; 1991b). With these scales, foreign language anxiety was conceptualized as a special case of anxiety.

Situation-specific anxiety, refers to the persistent and multi-faceted nature of some anxieties (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a) . It is aroused by a specific type of situation or event such as public speaking, examinations or class participations. Foreign Language Anxiety, or more precisely, Foreign Language Classroom