

Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety: A Psycholinguistic Barrier Affecting Speaking Achievement of Saudi EFL Learners

Hussein Hammodeh Ahmad Al-Khotaba

Department of English Language Skills
Northern Border University, Saudi Arabia

Eid Hamoudeh Ahmed Alkhataba

Centre for Fundamental and Liberal Education Universiti Malaysia Terengganu
Terengganu, Malaysia

Samsiah Abdul-Hamid

Centre for Fundamental and Liberal Education
Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, Terengganu, Malaysia

Ibrahim Bashir

The English Language Institute, Jubail Industrial College, Saudi Arabia

Abstract

This study is oriented towards the analysis of the speaking achievement of the learners of English as Foreign Language (EFL) in Saudi Arabia. It aims to examine the influence of foreign language speaking anxiety as a psycholinguistic barrier affecting speaking achievement of Saudi EFL learners. It primarily attempts to answer the research question, '*is there a correlation between foreign language speaking anxiety and the speaking achievement of Saudi Arabian EFL learners?*' The data of the study were collected using questionnaires and speaking achievement tests. Samples of the study were 100 (50 male and 50 female) Preparatory Year Students studying English at Northern Border University, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Descriptive statistics and Spearman's correlation coefficient were used to analyze data in *Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS)* version 25. The results of the study revealed that there is a weak correlation between the speaking language anxiety and achievement of Saudi EFL learners in speaking, the effect size of the value of r is -0.242. Based on this result, the EFL learners with high language anxiety have less achievement in speaking test while EFL learners with low language speaking anxiety have high achievement in speaking test. The value $P = 0.000$ (sig. 2-tailed), which is smaller than 0.05%, indicating that language anxiety has significant negative effect on the respondents' achievement in speaking. In other words, this indicated that 1% increase in anxiety would lead to a 88.8% decrease in EFL learner's performance in speaking at 0.000 level of significance. In conclusion, the study suggested different language anxieties such as personal and interpersonal anxiety, classroom anxiety, and learners' perceptions about foreign language anxiety need to be decreased.

Keywords: EFL learners, foreign language anxiety, psycholinguistic barriers, Saudi university students, speaking skills, speaking anxiety

Cite as: Al-Khotaba, H.H.A., Alkhataba, E. H. A., Abdul-Hamid, S., & Bashir, I. (2019). Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety: A Psycholinguistic Barrier Affecting Speaking Achievement of Saudi EFL Learners. *Arab World English Journal*, 10 (4)313- 329.

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol10no4.23>