

A Study of Language Anxiety among English Language Learners in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract:

Classroom anxiety is a recurrent phenomenon for language learners. There are various factors that cause language anxiety, the most common of which include learners' excessive self-consciousness and self-awareness concerning their oral reproduction and performance and their peculiar, and quite often misplaced and mistaken, views and beliefs regarding different approaches. Other potential reasons for this problem could include the fear, and the consequent deterrence occasioned thereof, of encountering difficulties in language learning, specifically learners' individual problems regarding the culture of the target language and the varying social statuses of speakers. The most important fear is, perhaps, the deterrent fear of causing damage to one's self-identity. Therefore, while needing to paying special attention to language learners' anxiety reactions, language teachers have a crucial role in helping their students achieve the expected performance goals in the target language. Another factor that could potentially lead to language anxiety is simply the poor command of the target language. This problem could be attributed to linguistic barriers and obstacles language learners encounter in learning and using the target language. In the current study, using a qualitative, semi-structured interview and the focus-group discussion technique, the researcher aims to investigate the factors that contribute to language anxiety among Arab language learners. It focuses on learners both within the classroom setting and without, i.e. in the social context, and recommends a number of approaches to manage and overcome this problem.

Keywords: language anxiety, language learners, classroom anxiety, anxiety reaction, situation-specific anxiety

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