

A Study on the Second Language Anxiety of the Students of Class XI in Birbhum District

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Abstract. *Second Language Anxiety (SLA) has emerged as a critical affective factor influencing learners' performance and engagement in second language acquisition, particularly at the higher secondary level. The present study investigates the nature, extent, and dimensions of second language anxiety among Class XI students in the Birbhum District of West Bengal. Using a descriptive survey method, data were collected from a representative sample of students through a standardized Second Language Anxiety Scale covering communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. The findings reveal that a significant proportion of students experience moderate to high levels of anxiety while learning English as a second language, with communication apprehension identified as the most dominant factor. The study also highlights noticeable differences in anxiety levels across gender, academic streams, and medium of instruction. Furthermore, an inverse relationship was observed between students' language anxiety and their academic performance in English. The results underscore the urgent need for anxiety-reducing pedagogical strategies, learner-friendly classroom environments, and teacher sensitization programs at the higher secondary stage. This study contributes to the existing literature by providing region-specific insights into second language anxiety and offers practical implications for teachers, curriculum planners, and policymakers to enhance effective second language learning.*

Key words: *SLA, English Anxiety, Class room Environment.*

In the present day, English is regarded as the major international language, and the of bilingual users of English will far surpass the number of its native speakers(mckay,2002)1;that is to say, there will be more people who study English as a second or foreign language than English native speakers. English has played a dominant role in the fields of worldwide communication, cultural and academic activities, trading and technology for long decades. It is almost a prerequisite for people to be equipped with above-average English proficiency to be considered competitive for the application of a good job or to be able to absorb huge quantity of information in the academic field. Therefore; English has become one of the most important subjects in the educational system. Aside from the formal learning hours at school, quite a high proportion of parents send their children to cram schools.

➤ **Definition of Language Anxiety**

Anxiety is an emotion that affects every person. Many factors can cause a person to experience feelings of anxiety. Adults may experience anxiety caused by their jobs while students may experience heightened levels of anxiety as a result of peer pressure or an impending important test or project. English language learners, as well as those students learning a foreign language, experience anxiety when it comes to such classroom activities as speaking in front of a group of their fellow students, or taking a test in a language other than their first language (L1). English language learner students present a particular set of problems that native speakers of English do not (Synder, 2011, p. 1).

➤ **Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety**

Second and foreign language researchers and linguists have long been trying to associate anxiety with language learning, in general, as well as in a classroom situation. The anxiety experienced in a classroom is called Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) (Awan, Azher, Anwar & Naz, 2010, p. 34).

➤ **Causes for Anxiety in Second Language:**

i) Lack of Vocabulary

English learners often through vocabulary was a big obstacle for their English learning, lack of vocabulary was identified as a main cause for student anxiety in English classrooms by the students of Bengali medium. Students often became nervous in English class due to limited vocabulary.

ii) Low English Proficiency

Low English proficiency is another anxiety-provoker identified by the students. Language proficiency is the prime issue in language learning as well as second language anxiety.

iii) Lack of Preparation

The analysis of the reflective journals revealed that a couple of students did not feel nervous at all even when speaking English without any preparation. However, more students attribute their anxiety to lack of preparation and express that they would feel less anxious and more confident to speak English with preparation. It is clear that preparation could enhance student's confidence in speaking English thought it might not be able to get rid of anxiety.

iv) Lack of Practice

Although the students are enrolled in the regular courses where they have to learn English as a second language, they didn't have much practice of English in class due to the limited class time and big class size, nor did they have many choices to speak the language in their daily life. As a result, lack of practice provoked much anxiety in many students when speaking when speaking English to others in class.

➤ **Objective of the study**

Every investigation is investigated in the purpose to fulfill some objectives. Thus, this study also has some unique and genuine objectives to achieve. Specific objectives of this study were--

1. To measure the second language anxiety of the students of class XI of Birbhum District.
2. To explore the pattern of second language anxiety students of class XI between the total sample and sub samples.
3. To measure second language anxiety among rural and urban students of class XI in Birbhum districts.
4. To measure second language anxiety among rural boys & girl's students of class XI.
5. To measure second language anxiety among urban boys & girl's students of class XI

➤ **Hypothesis of the study:**

- ✓ **H_1** : There would be no significant difference between boys and girls in Second Language Anxiety.
- ✓ **H_2** : There would be no significance difference between rural and urban boys & girl's students in Second Language Anxiety.
- ✓ **H_3** : There would be no significant difference between urban boys and urban girls in Second Language Anxiety.
- ✓ **H_4** : There would be no significant of difference between rural girls & urban girls students in Second Language Anxiety.

✓ **H₅**: There would be no significant difference between rural boys & rural girls students in Second Language Anxiety.

➤ **Delamination of the study:** The present study suffers from some limitations. The study was confined to high school students. Moreover, the study was conducted by considering two rural and two urban schools of Birbhum district. A wider coverage was not possible due to shortage of time. The sample size was 80 which was not sufficient. A higher sample size may be taken to get a more accurate result. One drawback relates to the data collection technique. The only data collection technique was questionnaire. It is suggested that researchers employ other data collection techniques, e.g., observation, face to face interview in order to obtain a more comprehensive picture of such complex issues as language anxiety. Further studies might be needed to explore this issue using more instruments. Thus, there is an essential need for future research to cross-validate findings achieved from this study to some different and detailed findings using more than one instrument. Another drawback is that the participants' background information could not be gathered due to lack of access and students' cooperation. The present study is delimited to boys' and girls' students of class XI only.

➤ **Review of Related Literature**

✓ **Indian Studies:** Kumar Vinodh, Suresh (2021) in the study entitled secondary school

Chakrabarti & Sengupta (2012) in the study entitled second language learning anxiety and its effect on achievement in the language that examined to explore the level of anxiety of the Indian learners who learn English as a second language.

Saha and Mete (2017) in the study entitled relation between English language and achievement in English of Higher Secondary students in the district of Bankura.

✓ **Foreign Studies: Bailey, Onwuegbuzie, & Daley, (2015)** attempted to identify a combination of variables that might be correlated with language anxiety.

Liu (2020) explored the language anxiety of 100 EFL students at three different proficiencies

levels. The results showed that students with advanced English proficiency tended to be less anxious.

Mills and Pajares (2014) in the study entitled inter correlation between individual personality also found positive correlations between listening proficiency in both males and females.

Method Used: In the present study descriptive survey method of research was used. In Descriptive survey method, data are controlled from a relatively large number of cases at a particular time yielding statistics that are abstracted from particular cases. It is concern with the generalized statistics that result when data are abstracted from a number of selected individual cases to discover the relative incidence, distribution.

➤ **Sampling & population of the study**

➤ **Population**

The researcher selected some Higher Secondary School students in Birbhum district for his research population.

➤ **Population of the study**

All the XI school students and their second language anxiety in Birbhum district.

➤ **Sampling of the study**

For the selection of the sample in the present study, the investigator used the multistage random sampling technique. First of all, the investigator collected the list of higher secondary schools in Birbhum district, affiliated to West Bengal board of higher secondary education, from the official web-side of the Government of west Bengal school education department. With the help of that list, the schools were selected randomly. There were the researcher selected two hundred students in class

XI randomly selected from these schools of Birbhum districts. From these students, male and female students are listed separately. From that list, a total sample of 200 hundred students where 100 students from urban (male-50 & female- 50) and 100 students from rural (male-50 & female-50).

➤ **Sampling**

✓ The research selected the 4 schools on Bibhum district and gives 200 samples. School were-

✓ **Urban- a) Bolpur High School (H.S)**

b) Bolpur Girls High School. (H.S)

✓ **Rural- a) Bahiri Brajasundari High School. (H.S)**

b) Charkalgram High School. (H.S)

Table:1 Name of School, Nature of School, Total Sample Collected are given Below.

Name of school	Nature of school	Locality	No. of Sample collected		Total
			Male	Female	
Bolpur High School (H.S)	Urban boys	Bolpur	50	-	50
Bolpur Girls High School. (H.S)	Urban girls	Bolpur		50	50
Bahiri Brajasundari High School. (H.S)	Rural co-ed	Bahiri (Birbhum)	28	22	50
Charkalgram High School. (H.S)	Rural co-ed	Charkalgram (Birbhum)	23	27	50

➤ **Sample Size:** The sample size of present study was comprised of 200 Higher Secondary Students.

➤ **Sample Techniques:** The random Sampling Techniques sample was used for selection of the sample from the population of the present study.

➤ **Application of Data Gathering Tools**

The researcher social skills questioner was done first. Then the researcher scored to the norms of five-point scales and related data was gathered to organize statistical operations.

➤ **Tools**

The researcher further delimited his study in the construction of a standardized tool for measuring the second language anxiety of the students, as he collects a test from his supervisor to use it in his research.

➤ **Variables of study Second Language Anxiety Scale**

In this study, the second language anxiety of students was considered as the Dependent Variable.

➤ **Population of samples**

The investigator considered the population, in his study, the students studying at class XI in higher secondary level in all the higher secondary Schools affiliated to West Bengal Council oh Higher Secondary Education.

The total sample of the study was consisted of 200 students from six higher secondary schools among which two were from urban and the rest were from rural area.

➤ **Tool Used in the Study**

Second Language Anxiety Scale (SLAS)

Due to restricted and short period of time the investigator did not construct any second language anxiety scale. Therefore, he used a second language anxiety scale collected from his supervisor. The

scale was a five-point Likert type (Strongly, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree) scale.

She did not use any specific test for measuring the academic achievement of the students. She collected the scores obtained by the student samples in their MADHYAMIK PARIKSHA conducted by the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education, West Bengal.

- **Item Analysis:** Present five-point scale was entitled as second language anxiety scale with positive and negative item. In Table 2 it shows that there are 24 Positive items and 6 Negative items. A detail of distribution of positive and negative items were as below in table 2.
- **Analysis and Interpretation of the Data**
- ✓ **Statistical Operations:** The investigator analyzed his research data using Statistics in psychology and education –S.K. Mangal & Microsoft Excel. Hence, he presented the analysis in two sections
- Representation of Descriptive data.
- Representation of Inferential statistics.
- Representation of Inferential statistics

⁰H₁: There would be no significant difference between boys and girls in second language anxiety.

The calculate value $Z = 1.437$ and $df = 198$ which is in given problem. From table-c, the critical value at 0.05 levels is 1.97, similarly the 0.01 level is 2.60. Therefore, the calculate value is smaller than the critical value. So, the null hypothesis is accepted and the relation is no significant. Hence the boys' and girls' difference of Second Language Anxiety is proved.

⁰H₂: There would be no significant difference between Rural boys & girls and Urban boys & girl's students in Second Language Anxiety.

The calculate value $Z = 5.08$ and $df = 198$ which is in given problem. From table-c, the critical value at 0.05 level is 1.97, similarly the 0.01 level is 2.60, Therefore the calculate value is smaller than the critical value. So, the null hypothesis is rejected and the relation is significant.

Hence the rural boys & girls and urban boys & girls' relation was a significant difference about Second Language Anxiety is proved.

⁰H₃: There would be no significant difference between Urban boys and Urban girls in second language anxiety. The calculate value $Z = 0.50$ and $df = 98$ which is in given problem. From table-c, the critical value at 0.05 levels is 1.98, similarly the 0.01 level is 2.63. Therefore, the calculate value is smaller than the critical value. So, the null hypothesis is accepted and the relation is no significant.

Hence the Urban boys and girls Second Language anxiety is proved.

⁰H₄: There would be no significant of difference between Rural girls & Urban girl's students in Second Language Anxiety.

The calculate value $Z = 3.51$ and $df = 98$ which is in given problem. From table-c, the critical value at 0.05 level is 1.98, similarly the 0.01 level is 2.63, Therefore the calculate value is smaller than the critical value. So, the null hypothesis is rejected and the relation is significant.

Hence the rural girls and urban girls' relation was a significant difference about Second Language Anxiety is proved.

⁰H₅: There would be no significant difference between Rural boys & Rural girl's students in Second Language Anxiety.

The calculate value $Z = 1.61$ and $df = 98$ which is in given problem. From table-c, the critical value at 0.05 levels is 1.98, similarly the 0.01 level is 2.63. Therefore, the calculate value is smaller than the critical value. So, the null hypothesis is accepted and the relation is no significant.

Hence the rural boys and girls Second Language anxiety is proved.

✓ **Main Findings**

- The calculate value exists on the critical value in (Table-3) the null hypothesis is rejected and the relation is significant. In the study the rural boys & girls and urban boys & girls relation exists a significant difference in Second Language Anxiety.
- The calculate value exists on the critical value in (Table-5) the Null hypothesis is rejected and the relation is significant. In the study the rural girls & urban girls relation exists a significant difference in Second Language Anxiety.
- The calculate value exists on the critical value in (Table-7) the Null hypothesis is rejected and the relation is significant. In the study rural boys & urban boys' relation was a significant difference about Second Language Anxiety.
- The boy's students and girl's students calculate value is smaller than the critical value in (Table-2) the null hypothesis is accepted and the relation is insignificant. Hence the total boys and girls Second Language Anxiety exists an insignificant difference.
- The urban boys and urban girl's students calculate value is smaller than the critical value in (Table-4) the Null hypothesis is accepted and the relation is insignificant. Hence the urban boys and urban girls Second Language Anxiety exists an insignificant difference.
- The rural boys & rural girls students calculate value is smaller than the critical value in (Table-6) the Null hypothesis is accepted and the relation is insignificant. Hence the rural boys & rural girls Second Language Anxiety exists an insignificant difference.

✓ **Limitation of the study**

Researcher tried to follow the proper methodology strictly, but there were some limitations in the present investigation. These were as follows:

- × The sample of the study was only 200 students of class XI.
- × The researcher did not develop any standardized test or tool.
- × In case of analysis of data, researcher used some selected statistical methods.
- × District-The study was conducted in the Birbhum district only.

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