REASONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE SPEAKING ANXIETY AMONG STUDENTS IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES OF BANGLADESH

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ABSTRACT

Anxiety, which is a troubled state of mind, stands out to be an important variable for its debilitating effect on the performance of learners. Second language anxiety can impede a learner's learning process and achievement. English language is widely used as a medium of instruction across educational institutes in Bangladesh. Since anxiety retards the learning process, therefore it has been widely researched in the world and seems under researched in Bangladeshi context. Thus, the prime aim of this research is to explore the factors that cause English language speaking anxiety among University Students of Bangladesh. This study attempts to investigate the sources of English Language Speaking Anxiety from Bangladeshi university students' perspectives who are using English as a second language. It makes an attempt to shed light on the elements that the students attribute to the development of English Language Speaking Anxiety. 20 university students were chosen randomly as a sample. The participants were male and female. Two tools were used in this study; Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS) to measure the anxiety levels of the students beside an interview with another 5 students. Questionnaires with a Likert scale ranging from agree to disagree were used to collect data. The data was analyzed and the results revealed that the students attributed the speaking anxiety to personal reasons and teaching procedure. The results from the study showed that students have English Language Speaking Anxiety to a certain level and that all of the factors presented in the questionnaire were responsible for creating learners' English speaking anxiety. The study also found that both teachers and learners can play significant role in reducing learners' English-speaking anxiety. Additionally, the findings of the study revealed that the factor fear of negative evaluation received the highest average followed by fear of perception of others, fear of communication, low self-esteem and language proficiency factors.

INTRODUCTION

Background

"Anxiety is a psychological construct, commonly described by psychologists as a state of apprehension, a vague fear that is only indirectly associated with an object" (Hilgard, Atkinson, & Atkinson, 1971 cited in Scovel, 1991: 18). According to Hashemi and Abbasi (2013), when anxiety is related to learners' second or foreign language learning process it is known as second/foreign language anxiety (p. 640). Horwitz (2001) added a psychological dimension to language anxiety saying that it is a factor that creates a negative effect on learners' psychology (p. 114). For example, a shy student may feel anxious when asked to give a short talk in front of the whole class. Anxious students might not be able to successfully pass oral tasks due to their anxiety impeding their ability to fare well (Yan & Horwitz, 2008). In contrast, relaxed students would perform better because they do not experience the language anxiety impedance (Woodrow, 2006).

What causes language anxiety is a central question of this research study and is of interest to all language teachers and learners, as well as SLA scholars who are interested in classroom anxiety. English is a compulsory subject in Bangladeshi mainstream schools and colleges. In spite of that, the majority of the students are not competent enough in English, especially in speaking. It is axiomatic that to most of the students taking an attempt to speak English is like facing the ghost in the dark. They have a tendency to think it as an impossible attempt to achieve the English-speaking proficiency. Moreover, most of the students think English as a 'Subject' to pass rather a language to speak which is one of the obvious reasons behind the inefficiency in this Oracy skill. Majority of Bangladeshi University students experience anxiety while speaking English language.

Problem Statement

Many teachers at tertiary level do not take learners' speaking anxiety in classroom into account though they are aware of this problem. When learners at various private universities enroll in different courses, they are offered only to develop their English but most of the times no systematic steps are taken to reduce their anxiety. As a result, learners who have English speaking anxiety face difficulties when they are required to speak even after learning the language for a long time. It is time that systematic attention be paid on this issue to tackle language anxiety and thereby improve students' speaking proficiency in English.

Rationale

Students in universities experience English language speaking anxiety which they do not wish to display. There is a significant relationship between the students' anxiety and their success levels. Therefore, it is really worthwhile thinking about the causes of this kind of anxiety and at the same time the ways to minimize the harmful effect so that the teaching and learning can be more effective and fruitful especially for those anxious students.

The purpose of this study is to identify factors responsible for students' speaking anxiety, and it is hoped that an extensive research of English language anxiety will help both university instructors and students to deflate it and make the learning process smooth, successful and effective.

The study is also significant with respect to its implication for English language pedagogy. The investigation of the anxiety sources that arise while learning to communicate in the target language will hopefully broaden the insight into the issue of English language speaking anxiety and will help teachers in making the classroom environment less stressful.

Past research studies on factors influencing anxiety of speaking English among students have all revealed almost similar findings. Nonetheless, this paper aims to look at the root causes of anxiety in Bangladeshi context and also unravel any unexplored area in this topic.

Research question

To explore learners' English Speaking Anxiety, the following research question has been formulated:

What are the reasons that learners believe contribute to their anxiety in speaking English in classroom?

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, literature review is done in accordance with the research questions of the study. It is, therefore, considered that only those research studies are reviewed which are relevant and deal with the question similar to those of this study.

Anxiety has been found as the alarming factor causing debilitating effects on learners' performance in classrooms. Moreover, researchers describe anxiety as one of the most prevalent phenomena which obstructs the language learning outcomes as "anxiety may affect the quality of an individual's communication or willingness to communicate," (Young, 1991, p. 58).

Pappamihiel (2002) divides anxiety into two types: state anxiety and trait anxiety. State anxiety is a type of anxiety which occurs because learners are exposed to particular conditions or situations. For example, there are learners who feel anxious if they are requested to speak in front of the class or if they do not understand many of the teacher's words during the class. Meanwhile, trait anxiety is a person's tendency to feel anxious regardless of the situations they are exposed to. In regard to this, Worde (1998) argues that trait anxiety is a part of a person's character and is a permanent disorder.

Possible Factors Contributing to Learners' Anxiety:

In the context of speaking English as a second language, to date, findings by Horwitz et al. (1986) have been the most influential. They identified three causes of language anxiety, that is, communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Based on these three components they also designed a Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) comprising thirty-three items. This scale was later used widely by researchers to measure foreign language learners' anxiety and examine the effect of anxiety on learning in different contexts.

Horwitz et al (1986) defines the first components of language anxiety, communication apprehension as "a type of shyness characterized by fear of or anxiety about communicating with people" (p. 127). The second component of FLA, according to Horwitz et al. (1986), was the students' fear of negative evaluation. Those students always have a fear of losing face in front of their teacher or their peers. For this reason, they do not usually participate in class discussions as they "do not consider language errors as a natural part of the learning process, but as a threat to their image " (Al Ansari, 2015, p. 39). The third component of language anxiety was Test-anxiety. It is defined as "a type of performance anxiety stemming from a fear of failure " (Gordon & Sarason (1955), as cited in Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986 p. 127). Test-anxious students do not usually deal with tests as a way of improving their language abilities but rather as a test situation where their anxiety level increases.

Most language learning anxiety research has focused on a one-dimensional domain anxiety. This conceptualization reflects the anxiety that occurs in classroom settings (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope 1986; Aida 1994). Language Anxiety has sparked a lot of interest in the literature (Subasi, 2010; Mak, 2011). The literature suggests that the speaking skill is extremely anxiety-provoking in many language students and that it is often seen to arouse more anxiety than the other skills. Indeed, Daly (1991) reported that in some individuals fear of giving a speech in public exceeded such phobias as fear of snakes, elevators and heights.

Empirical studies on foreign language speaking anxiety

Based on Foreign Language Anxiety concept proposed by Horwitz et al. (1986), many researchers have conducted various empirical studies on foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA), which is the most commonly experienced hurdle in language classes. Some of these studies seem to be overlapping results; whereas some present quite distinctive findings in relation to the key factors of FLSA.

Öztürk (2009) investigated the level, determining factors of foreign language speaking anxiety and students' perceptions of it in a Turkish EFL context. 383preparatory program students at a state university participated in the study. The data regarding the level of EFL speaking anxiety were collected through a questionnaire, next randomly selected participants (N=19) were interviewed to collect in-depth data on speaking anxiety. The results of the quantitative data showed that students experienced a low level of EFL speaking anxiety; however, interviews suggested that most of the students perceive speaking skill as a major cause of anxiety.

Pronunciation, immediate questions, fears of making mistakes and negative evaluation were also highlighted as other causes of EFL speaking anxiety.

The study conducted by Heng, Abdullah and Yosaf (2012) examined dimensions of language anxiety in alignment with the major sub-constructs proposed by Horwitz et al. (1986). Data for this study was obtained through a survey questionnaire administered to 700 students before an oral communication test. Findings revealed that most of the students experienced a moderate level of oral communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation.

Tsui (2001) has said that the ESL learners are the victim to be more vulnerable to criticism and negative evaluation while speaking (as cited in Gan, 2011, p. 54). Thus, the negative evaluation makes students' affective filter high and reduces the L2 production.

Speaking Anxiety in Bangladesh context:

However, the above findings are not beyond Bangladeshi context. The Bangladeshi learners also feel the similar challenges in learning, speaking and practicing English. Arju (2011) has said that "While commenting on the ESL learners' competence in speaking, language instructors frequently complain that the learners are lagging behind because of having an inadequate stock of vocabulary" (p. 52). However, a regular practice in the classroom may enhance the learners' vocabulary. But, it is unfortunate that the Bangladeshi students do not have that facility. The crowded and large classes are causing the constant challenge to practice speaking to these students.

Regarding the number of students in the language classroom, Sinha (2001) has said that "In a language classroom, we need a limited number of students' (p. 173). But, in reality, nearly all English classrooms in the public sectors in Bangladesh are overcrowded and often have as many as 200 students in them (Siddque, 2004, p.3).

Siddique (2004) has carried out a study in Bangladesh and pointed out that administrative set up, teacher-centered classrooms, large classes and cultural conflicts are the most common challenges prevailing among Bangladeshi students.

Basir and Ferdousy (2006) have conducted a study among a number of classrooms and found that the numbers of students in the language classroom vary from 45 to 91 where 60% language instructors believe that this is really a large classroom scenario. But a regular communication in English would resolve this problem. But, students have hardly a chance to use English in communication in class. Chowdhury and Shaila's (2011) study on the Bangladeshi SSS and HSC students have found that the students do not practice speaking skill in their classrooms. And as a result, they do not feel confident in speaking English, they add. This makes students stressed, nervous and reduces the production of English.

The environment created by the peers impacts the speaker deeply, believes Chowdhury and Shaila (2011). They also have added that in the large classes when a student speaks, his/ her peers make laugh at her/ him and do not encourage speaking.

In Bangladeshi classrooms, most of the teachers do not know or adapt the different style to teach language. For example, Sinha (2001) has conducted a study in the Bangladeshi context and found that in Bangladeshi classrooms, teachers do not use any energetic way to teach English. Thus, students get less energetic and lose their interest in learning the spoken English.

There is a huge scarcity of competent teachers in teaching English. In fact, "Bangladesh is one of the few countries of the world where teachers can start teaching without any formal training (Siddique, 2004, p. 2). Finding the unfriendly and non-supportive environment, the Bangladeshi students are losing their motivation in learning spoken English. As a result, the students who have a minimum interest to speak in English, lose it. "Most of the Bangladeshi students are very reluctant to speak in English irrespective of their proficiency in one or the other skill" (Ahmed, 2006, p. 4). Ahmed (2006) and Chowdhury & Shaila's (2011) researches have pointed out that the large classes, lack of confidence, lack of co-operative and less access of communicative environment, students' shyness are the main hindrances behind Bangladeshi students' learning and speaking English.

Gap in the Literature:

From the literature review, it can be concluded that few Bangladeshi researchers have investigated the causes of foreign language anxiety from the students' perspective. All past studies in Bangladesh linked speaking anxiety to factors like large classroom scenario, incompetent teachers, lack of vocabulary and practice. Since the present study aimed to investigate the main causes that raise anxiety during the language learning process, it was found that the Horwitz' theory of the three components of foreign language anxiety closely related to the research. In other words, Horwitz's theory had been mentioned in a considerable number of studies due to its importance. Horwitz et al. (1986: 127), considering language anxiety with relation to performance evaluation within academic and social contexts, drew parallels between it and three related performance anxieties: (1) communication apprehension (CA); (2) test anxiety; (3) fear of negative evaluation. The description of these components lay the foundations for the concept of second/foreign language anxiety, providing an insight to comprehend the sources or causes it can originate from. Hence, investigating speaking anxiety considering the components suggested by Horwitz et al. seems to be of particular pertinence to the Bangladeshi educational context to unveil the learners' classroom challenges in speaking English.

Therefore, the present study aimed to utilize both quantitative and qualitative methods with the help of Horwitz's theory in writing both the interview questions and the questionnaire items to investigate the main causes of English Language speaking anxiety among Bangladeshi University students from their perspective.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The aim of the research was to find out the factors responsible for students' anxiety in English speaking in the classroom. With a view to unearthing the sources of anxiety, a mixed-methods approach was followed, linking both qualitative (open-ended questions in the semi structured interviews) and quantitative (questionnaire). "Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale" (FLCAS), developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) was used in order to collect quantitative data.

"Mixed method research is a methodology for conducting research that involves collecting, analyzing, and integrating quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or a longitudinal program of inquiry (Creswell et al. 2003).

Sampling

Participants (N = 20) studying in a well-reputed University (names of participants and the University being kept anonymous) were selected in order to collect quantitative data and participants (N = 5) were selected to collect qualitative data. This survey is based on random sampling to make up the sample.

Instrumentation

Research tools were questionnaires and interviews. Data was collected while using Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz et al. (1986). The questionnaire is distributed to the all students involved in this study. It is a self-report tool used to elicit the participants' anxiety responses towards speaking a foreign language in oral classes. The questionnaire contains 12 items all related to the possible causes attributed to English language speaking anxiety. It is a modified version of the original Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) which is composed of 33 items. It is composed of a 5-point Likert scale with 33 statements, extending from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Strongly agree indicates the high level of foreign language anxiety and strongly disagree shows the low level of foreign language anxiety that learners feel in the classroom (Horwitz, 2008). Additionally, seven more open and close ended questions were attached to the questionnaire to seek deeper into the sources of English language anxiety.

To motivate the students to give reliable responses, they were informed that there were no right or wrong answers. Moreover, to maintain confidentiality, they were told that they do not have to write their names on the questionnaire sheet. This questionnaire takes about 10-12 minutes to complete.

For the study purpose, a qualitative semi-structured interview format was adopted to investigate the sources of foreign language anxiety from the students' perspectives. Robson (2000) debates that a semi-structured face-to face interview technique was preferred as it was essential to ensure that the researcher was "in a position of being able to access the degree of the interviewee's interest and involvement" (p. 90). Moreover, Gillham (2005) sees that it was also appropriate because of "its flexibility balanced by structure and the quality of the data so obtained" (p.70).

The rationale behind the use of interview as a data collection tool for this study is that it can provide access to things that cannot be directly observed, such as feelings, thoughts, intentions, or beliefs. It also provides participants with opportunities to select, reconstruct, and reflect upon details of their experience. The nature of the study was explained to the participants: that it was voluntary, and that all interviews would be conducted in English and would be tape-recorded for accuracy and transcription purposes. The participants were ensured that all the recordings would be deleted and the information gained through them would be kept strictly confidential. The volunteer students were scheduled for interviews. Afterwards, they were contacted through mobile text messages and phone calls. The total number of the respondents were 5 from a well reputed University. The semi-structured interviews with both open ended questions, extending 5 to 8 minutes, were conducted face to face with the participants. Interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Validity and reliability of questionnaires:

To ensure validity and reliability of the questionnaire all the items included in the questionnaires were based on the literature review of this study. The items basically asked for the participants' opinion about the factors responsible for English language speaking anxiety. A pilot survey was conducted with one University student and then necessary changes of the items were made in the questionnaire after consulting the supervisor.

FINDINGS

Data Analysis

Results drawn from Quantitative Data (Questionnaire):

The quantitative data were analyzed by calculating percentages. Having collected the required data based on the above methodology, the researcher conducted the analysis of data for the present study as follows:

Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS):

The students' responses to the statements in the questionnaire were classified into five categories: strongly agree, agree, don't know, disagree and strongly disagree. When the responses were transformed into numbers, they were tabulated and stored for analysis. The data analysis was conducted quantitatively. Microsoft Excel was used to analyze the data generated from the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were performed as percentages shown in Table 1 (Appendix 1).

The bar chart depicts the averages of the statements in the questionnaire (Appendix 2) under each factor of English Language Speaking Anxiety.
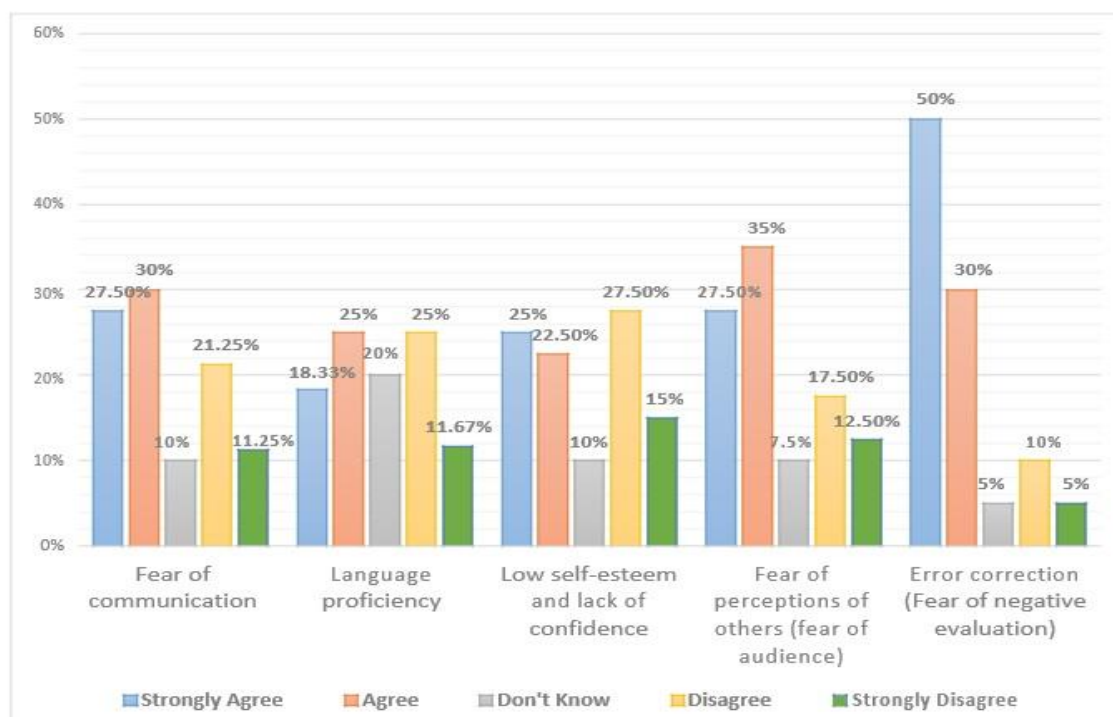
The major sources of speaking anxiety were extracted from the students' responses. These five anxiety-provoking sources were reported in Table 1 to help identify the causes which are the highest among the students. From the chart above, we see 57.5% (30% agree + 27.5% strongly agree) of the respondents agree that Fear of Communication disturbs them and stops their production of language whereas 32.5% (21.25% disagree+11.25% strongly disagree) of the students express disagreement. 43.33% (25% agree + 18.33% strongly agree) of the students strongly agree that language proficiency contribute negatively to their achievement. On the other hand, surprisingly (25%) of them oppose the idea and think that language proficiency doesn't develop speaking anxiety. A quarter of the participants strongly agree that low self-esteem and lack of confidence play an important role in engaging them into a mood of instability and tension. Contrastingly, (15% strongly disagree) of the students see that low self-esteem and lack of confidence are not one of the elements that provoke speaking anxiety. While (27.5%) of the participants strongly agree that fear of perceptions of others leads to make them anxious, (12.5%) of them show strong disagreement about the effect of fear of perceptions of others. 80% of the respondents (30% agree + 50 % strongly agree) that error correction and fear of negative evaluation hinder the flow of words and sentences while speaking in a foreign language, only 15% (10% disagree + 5% strongly disagree) of them have an opponent idea and they think that error correction and fear of negative evaluation have no effect on their performances.

Results drawn from the open and close ended questions in the questionnaire

The responses of the additional 7 questions in the questionnaire were analyzed by keeping in mind different themes from Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's theory; such as communicating apprehension, test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety.

Respondents agreed that language anxiety is a kind communicative apprehension where students face tension, stress, pressure, hesitation and nervousness. Quite a few students viewed that they feel test anxiety and become anxious about their grades in assessments. They revealed that they are given approximately three minutes in the speaking test in order to think and speak about a certain topic and this increases their anxiety.

Learners asserted that class participation and group discussion is better because it increases the confidence level of students and they can acquire good command in the English language.

More than half of the respondents stated that they compare themselves with others in class especially compare with their English level, fluency, vocabulary and sentences and if their weaknesses are exposed, other students will laugh at them.

Results drawn from qualitative data (Interview) are summarized below

Three questions were designed to obtain more information about English language speaking anxiety seeking how learners their experience of speaking English, what disturbs them most about speaking English and the reason, lastly do they find speaking English language difficult and what kind of difficulties or problems they face when speaking English.

Learners confided that they tremble when they confront the teacher and have to answer questions asked by the teacher. Some also said strict teachers who correct every mistake make them nervous. Fear of making mistakes in front of their peers also has a negative impact in their speech production and the feel it is better to remain silent than be laughed at. On the other hand, few students express positive views about English speaking classes. These learners say that they enjoy speaking English in classes and also leading discussions with their teachers and classmates.

Overall, these results indicate that the students attributed foreign language speaking anxiety to fear of communication, language proficiency, low self-esteem and lack of confidence, fear of perceptions of others, error correction and fear of negative evaluation. The findings of this study can be beneficial to the English language instructors to employ some strategies to alleviate the degree of anxiety among the students and encourage them to develop their speaking skills.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to examine the causes of English language speaking anxiety, with specific reference to speaking, among Bangladeshi University students.

Most of the research findings were in agreement with Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986)'s three components of foreign language anxiety by which this study was guided. They argued that there are three related performance anxieties: the first one was called communication apprehension; the second was students' fear of negative evaluation; while the third was test-anxiety.

To answer the research question of this study, both the semi-structured interviews (qualitative) and the questionnaire (quantitative) were used.
The current research revealed that students suffer from Communication apprehension for which they prefer to remain silent in class, they also experience the fear from the negative evaluation either from their teacher or their peers which prevent them from answering any questions without preparation. This finding is supported by Öztürk & Gürbüz (2014), who discussed some situations in which students feel stress while speaking inside the classroom and one of these situations was that they were sometimes exposed to questions immediately without preparation which leaded to their embarrassment while speaking in front of the class.

In fact, one of the consistent findings in both the interviews and the questionnaire was peer's evaluation that triggered anxiety in classrooms. Four participants, in the qualitative study, expressed their fear of the negative evaluation from their peers once they talk in English and from strict teachers who would correct every mistake. Likewise, the results of the questionnaire also revealed also that the fear of negative evaluation constituted the highest anxiety level (30% agree + 50% strongly agree = 80%) for the students.

In contrast, the quantitative results revealed that some participants (25%) did not have the fear of making mistakes in front of their teachers or classmates and considered making mistakes as a natural process necessary for their learning. This contradicting finding toward the fear of making mistakes in front of teachers and classmates was related to the students' feelings and since anxiety is a fluctuating emotion that differs from one person to another, so different perspectives could happen.

Response from open and close ended questions in the questionnaire uncovered that students have high levels of test anxiety and become blank while speaking in front of the class. This proves that evaluative situations in class are an obvious source of anxiety. Young (1991) noted that tests led to higher anxiety and a negative attitude towards instruction. According to Young (1991), task difficulty, the fear of getting bad grades and lack of preparation for a test are the most important factors that make learners worried. Another factor that increases test anxiety and decreases performance is time limit. For example, students revealed that they are

given approximately three minutes in the speaking test in order to think and speak about a certain topic and this may increase their anxiety. This finding is supported by Ohata (2005), who found that learners sometimes felt pressured to think that they had to organize their ideas in a short period of time. In Ohata's study (2005), most of the participants indicated that they feared taking tests, because test-taking situations would make them fearful about the negative consequences of getting a bad grade.

LIMITATIONS

The study has a number of limitations. First, it involved only a small number of students studying in a University. Due to time constraints a limited number of students from a few departments participated in the study. If more students from these departments had been included in the study, a broader perspective on the level and sources of speaking anxiety could have been obtained. So, the results do not necessarily reflect the context at other universities or other educational settings. However, there may be some parts of the findings which can be used as reference to deal with students' FL anxiety.

Second, the questionnaire contained predetermined factors causing FL anxiety and strategies learners use to cope with their anxiety. The nature of such a questionnaire limits learners' freedom to mention other factors or strategies that may not be covered in the questionnaire. Finally, this study was limited only to describing FL anxiety factors and anxiety coping strategies experienced by learners. It did not address the issues of the impact of FL anxiety and anxiety coping strategies on learners' performance. Thus, further investigation is necessary to provide better understanding within the issues surrounding FL anxiety.

Another limitation of the study was that only the participants from one Department were invited to the interviews due to time constraints. If a larger number of students (from the other departments) had been involved in the interviews, a much more detailed analysis could have been obtained. The interviews were also conducted in a limited amount of time, which resulted in only a limited amount of information about the sources of speaking anxiety.

Nevertheless, it is recommended that further research be carried out in order to investigate the causes of English-speaking anxiety among students involving different ages of learners, levels of study, achievements, degree of motivation etc. and including all the academic sectors in Bangladesh. Moreover, the pedagogics involved in the teaching and learning English can be interviewed for the further data.

CONCLUSION & IMPLICATIONS

Conclusion

To sum up, this article investigated some of the major causes of foreign language speaking anxiety among Bangladeshi University students. It explored the perceptions 25 students studying in a well reputed University. To fill the gap in the literature, a mixed-method approach was utilized to produce a more reliable and valid data. The study findings uncovered that the main causes of the students' speaking anxiety were communication apprehension, fear of peer evaluation, and fear from the test.

Fear of being mocked by class fellows, comparison to their classmates is also a dominant factor of English language speaking anxiety. Lack of confidence, over self-consciousness, speaking apprehension are also some of the major factors of English language speaking anxiety.
The present paper is expected to give meaning and understanding to teachers so that they can create and provide a learning environment that contributes to make their learners become less anxious when speaking in public by reflecting on the causes of FLA.

This study also calls much attention to the importance of continued research into how FLA influences language learning and how to deal with it. The present study may inspire other researchers to conduct further studies on language anxiety, particularly its sources. Aside from that, based on the findings of this study, other teachers/researchers can also work on developing strategies to deflate FLA which occur in the classrooms.

These issues surely will have significant implication for pedagogical improvement, especially in the area of foreign language learning. This research urges awareness of anxiety-provoking factors in the classroom as learners' ability to communicate satisfactorily is both the learners' goal of learning and the instructor's goal of teaching. The findings have pedagogic implications in terms of affective aspects of learning, for students when making an effort to overcome speaking-in-class anxiety and for instructors when attempting to create a low-anxiety classroom.

Implications

There are a number of implications which arise as the result of this study. Above all else, the study provides information to learners that FL anxiety is a common problem in classrooms. This feeling (FL anxiety), therefore, should not discourage them from taking part in language learning activities in the class.

Despite its common nature, this study, however, highlights the importance of understanding the factors or the causes of learners' foreign language anxiety. This kind of understanding is useful both for learners and instructors to identify the strategies that can be employed to overcome their anxiety problem.

Overall, this study has implications for learners and teachers:

Students should be aware of a worried feeling which may arise from related performance anxieties (i.e. fear of failing the test, fear of negative evaluation, and communication apprehension) and from being unable to produce oral utterances due to lack of basic elements, particularly having a limited repertoire of vocabulary. When the ability to communicate satisfactorily in English is a major challenge to learners, these factors of anxiety can contribute to their negative attitudes towards the language class, their overall levels of foreign language anxiety, their speaking-in-class anxiety, their oral performance and eventually their grades when meeting compulsory requirements to speak. Therefore, students should accept that speaking-in-class anxiety exists and have recourse to anxiety-coping strategies.

This study also brought to light a pedagogical implication to enable language instructors facilitate anxious students by developing positive instructor-students' interaction so that these students view instructors as being more tolerant towards their mistake. The findings of the study suggest three strategies that will help instructors deal with learners' speaking anxiety: a) coach students in managing any existing anxiety-evoking situation, b) students' English skill levels should also be considered when preparing the lessons and c) make the learning environment more relaxed.

Thus, this study will benefit the EFL teachers in Bangladesh in recognizing the factors which are responsible for causing anxiety among their students. Moreover, these findings could also assist Bangladeshi EFL teachers to devise possible solutions to help students cope with their anxiety. The findings of this research will also benefit those scholars who are currently working on anxiety and speaking anxiety in particular. Last but not the least, this research also contributes to the existing knowledge on speaking anxiety in the world in general and in Bangladesh in particular.

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