

# **ENGLISH LANGUAGE ANXIETY IN RELATION TO ENGLISH ACHIEVEMENT AMONG THE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

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*In the present study an attempt has been made to find the relationship between English Language Anxiety and the English Achievement of High School Students of Ramanagaram city. The sample was selected through Stratified Random Sampling Technique. The study was descriptive in nature and the data were collected using a self prepared English Language Anxiety Scale through survey method. A significant negative relationship was found between the English Language Anxiety and English achievement of high school students. The study reveals that very high anxiety is the cause for low English achievement among the high school students.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The use of English language in our country has been a unifying factor. From educational point of view, English language plays a prominent role. Good quality higher education and advanced studies in many areas in science like medicine, engineering, technology etc, are not possible without English language. All correspondence of industrial and commercial life of our country is done mainly in English language. At present, in India, English language is the widely taught second language, practically a all levels of education. All the Indian universities, graduate colleges and junior colleges have separate departments for the teaching of English language. But unfortunately in these departments, a majority of students got no serious exposure to English as a language. The teachers are not trained at all in the basic methodology of teaching language or in teaching the structure of Englishlanguage. This has created a serious pedagogical and educational problem. Teaching of English language in India faces many problems. There are many good teachers of this subject in the schools, but it is sad to note that there is something wrong with the teaching of English language in Indian schools. Pupils are taught English language for about six periods a week for six years. But they hardly have the ability to speak and write in English language with minimum errors. They do not know how to use the most common structures of English language. The conditions under which English language is being taught in schools are far from satisfactory. It is true to say that in many situations of language use, there is some degree of mismatch between the knowledge possessed by someone and the demands of the situation. But, if the degree of mismatch is too great, one cannot progress further in language learning. In order to avoid this type of problems, care should be taken to teach them the language from the beginning stages. It is very difficult to say which teaching behavior might improve English language learning. This issue depends on the degree to which second language is acquired through natural development and exposure to it in a meaningful social environment which can contribute to effective learning. It is known that an average second language learner is seldom able to engage naturally and extensively in a target language environment because, the learner either lives in the midst of English language speakers or is isolated from full participation with other second language learners. Thus, almost every student feels nervous when he/she learns a new language. Particularly, the students are more anxious while learning English language. Anxiety is the most crucial factor which affects the English language learning. The principal concern in child guidance is not the abolition of all anxiety producing circumstances, but the elimination of needless anxiety is the need of the hour.

## **NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

A school going child faces many problems in learning particularly, in learning a second language. English language being a foreign language and introduced as a second language in India, poses many problems to the learners in the process of learning it. As it is new and peculiar language, the children face difficulties in learning

the pronunciation, sentence structure, grammar, vocabulary and other aspects of English language. Regional tongue interference is the main problem for the children and it becomes very difficult for them to acquire the four skills of language i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. Researchers of foreign language education have investigated the effects of language anxiety on learning. Anxiety has been recognised as an important factor that influences the process of learning English language (Mirjam & Stella 2005; Onwuegbuzie & Anthony 1998). These studies shed some light on the role of anxiety in foreign language learning. They found that the college students, who were more anxious, received significantly lower final grades than less anxious students. They also give some useful suggestions to reduce anxiety in the language classrooms. The teachers of English or the enthusiastic researchers should take initiative to take some remarkable work in this field and should introduce innovative practices in teaching English language in an effective manner. In this fast changing age of science and technology, research on the part of teachers and researchers is very much essential. It is in this background, that study of English language anxiety in relation to achievement was undertaken

### **OBJECTIVES**

- 1.To know the extent of English language anxiety among the high school students of Ramanagaram city;
- 2.To know the relationship between English language anxiety and the level of English achievement among the high school students of Ramanagaram city.

### **HYPOTHESIS**

There is no significant relationship between the extent of English language anxiety and the level of Achievement.

### **PARTICIPANTS**

Sample was selected through multi-stage sampling technique. At

the first stage, 8 schools representing government, aided and un-aided high schools located in the Ramanagaram City were selected through stratified random sampling technique and in the second stage, a total number of 150 students representing both boys and girls were selected through random sampling technique.

### **Tools**

English Language Anxiety Scale and the School records.

### **Construction of the English Language Anxiety Scale**

Some of the anxiety scales were referred and some theories related to language acquisition were analysed to select the items. The test items were written with suitable instructions to the students to make it easier to answer and to facilitate scoring. While constructing the scale, the directions to respond to each item were clearly given. All the items chosen were appropriate to the age level of the students, and all the items were specific and unambiguous. The items, thus pooled were scrutinised by the investigator in consultation with the subject experts and experienced teachers to see that whether the content validity is ensured. There were total 25 draft items. English Language Anxiety Scale was subjected to try out on the total number of 30 students, selected randomly from two government and two private aided schools of Ramnagaram city, which follow the state syllabus. The answer sheets of all 30 students were scored. The items were scrutinized in consultation with the guide, subject experts and teacher educators. The test items were modified according to the suggestions given by the subject experts. Most difficult items, which were not attempted by most of the students, were modified to ensure simplicity and clarity and some, repeated and unnecessary items were deleted. Total 5 items were deleted out of 25 items, 20 items

were retained and the scale was finalised. English Language Anxiety Scale consisted of 20 items, with three alternatives to respond as 'Always', 'Sometimes' and 'Never' and 3,2 and 1 mark was given accordingly. The maximum score could be 60 as the total number of items were 20 and the minimum score could be 20. Mean and S.D. were calculated and the students were divided into three groups as High Anxiety ( $\text{Mean} + 1 \sigma$ ) Moderate Anxiety ( $\text{Mean} \pm 1 \sigma$ ) and Low Anxiety ( $\text{Mean} - 1 \sigma$ ) groups.

### DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A self prepared English Language Anxiety Scale was used, which was not standardized. The study was confined to the students of the two government and two government aided and four unaided high schools of Ramanagaram city only.

### ANALYSIS AND MAJOR FINDINGS

With respect to the objective number 1 a research question was formulated and the answers were found out as given in the following table.

**Table 1**  
**Details of the extent of English Language Anxiety among High school students**

Sl. No.	Extent of Anxiety	N	Percentage
1	High	36	24
2	Moderate	84	56
3	Low	30	20
	Total	150	100

As it is indicated in the table 1, as high as 56 per cent of the students have moderate English language anxiety and 24 per cent of the students have High anxiety and only 20 percent of them have low extent of Anxiety. The 'r' test was used to test the significant relationship between the extent of English Language Anxiety and English Achievement among the high school students and the details are given in the table 2.

**Table 2**  
**Details of the 'r' test for H<sub>1</sub>**

Variables	'r' value	Result
English Achievement	-.316	Significant at 0.01 Level

As indicated in the table 2, the obtained 'r' value -.316 is significant at 0.01 level. So the null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that there is significant relationship between Anxiety and English Achievement among the high school students of Ramnagaram city. The negative value (-.316) indicates the negative relationship.

### CONCLUSION

The findings of the present study have the following implications on the present context of India in which English language is treated as a second language. The anxiety should be reduced to improve the level of English achievement among the High school students. English should be taught in a stress free atmosphere. There should not be any fear for the learners in English language classrooms. Remedial treatment is very much necessary to improve achievement level of students in English. Bridge courses should be taken in schools to make them learn the second language effectively. Teachers should be sensitive to the levels and needs of the second language learners. Teacher should help the children to develop good attitude towards language learning. Some of the innovative programmes of teaching English language should be adopted at the elementary level of education.

### REFERENCES

Mirjam, H. & Stella, H. (2005) Exploring the Link between language anxiety and learner self-management in open language learning contexts

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