

Language Anxiety and Learner Performance at Examinations

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Learning a second language which could be identified as a dire need in this twenty first century, can be a very complex and a challenging experience for many. It can be a “profoundly unsettling psychological proposition” (Guiora, 1983 cited in Horwitz et al, 1986:127-128 cited in Tanveer, M 2007). Termed language anxiety, this fear and nervousness attached to language learning is conceptualized by Horwitz et al as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning processes”. Language anxiety which is a psychological construct is a complex multidimensional phenomenon. In the current literature it is often studied in three components: communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation.

This paper primarily aims to investigate whether language anxiety is an affective variable in learning English as a second language. It also seeks to explore this phenomenon and assess whether it has an impact upon the students’ performance at written tests on English. The methodology employed will be both quantitative and qualitative as it involves both a statistical analysis and a descriptive analysis. The sample consists of 100 grade eleven students of an urban school and the data collected through the questionnaire will be triangulated with the data collected from the semi structured interviews with the subjects.

Key words: *Second language, Affective variables, Language anxiety, Communication apprehension*