Effectiveness of a Training Module in Terms of Language Anxiety and Vocabulary for Class IX Students

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Abstract: This research is an attempt to identify the levels of English language anxiety among the students of Maharashtra State board, standard IX, semi-English medium, analyzing the effect of a designed training module, impacting their vocabulary levels and English language anxiety making use of experimental method for the intended analysis. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS, Horwitz and Horwitz, 1986) and a self-designed criterion-referenced test were the tools used. Findings revealed that the designed training module was more effective than the traditional method of teaching which increased the English language vocabulary level and reduced the English language anxiety of the sample.

Index Terms: English language anxiety, vocabulary, semi-English medium.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education of English as a second language had formulated its roots with the advent of British rule in India and has grown popular ever since. English is recognized not only as one of the official languages in the country but also considered as lingua franca at an international level. Thus, it becomes imperative for an Indian student to learn and master the language. Failing to do so may lead to many undesirable obstacles in the path of an individual's career. A number of Indian schools have adopted English as a medium of instruction, right from primary to advance levels. Many students of standard IX (who would be appearing for board examination in the near future) find it difficult to comprehend and employ English language skills. Also, various researches have been conducted to identify and establish a relationship between language anxiety and English language acquisition which indicate that language anxiety acts as a hindering factor for learning English. Language anxiety is a negative emotional state; therefore, it can have a negative impact on how to learn or acquire the target language (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1992).

Language anxiety is a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behavior related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process. (Horwitz, 1986). There are many reasons behind an individual displaying anxiety for a target language, one of which is the lack of vocabulary which in a way affects her/his confidence and hampers intrinsic motivation to master it. Intrinsic motivation is an individual's spontaneous tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacity, to explore, and to learn. (Ryan & Deci,2000). Anxiety when associated with leaning a second or foreign language is termed as second/foreign language anxiety. It is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon (Young, 1991) and can be defined as "a subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system" (McIntyre & Gardner, 1994: cited in 1999: 217). It has been found that the feelings of tension or nervousness center on the two basic task requirements of foreign language learning: listening and speaking (Horwitz et al., 1986: 29) because, in interaction, both the skills cannot be separated.

Vocabulary learning is an essential part in the second language learning process as the meanings of new words can be comprehended and articulated on the basis of it, whether in books or in classrooms. It is also central to language teaching and is of great importance to a language learner. Vocabulary, as one of the knowledge areas in language, plays a great role for learners in acquiring a language (Cameron, 2001, Harmon, Wood, & Keser, 2009). Learners' vocabulary development is an important aspect of their language development (Linse, 2005).

In India, the perspective regarding 'English' has various dimensions to it. It is not just a language to learn and acquire the proficiency of; it is looked upon and treated as a desirable skill! The present situation has led to an increase in the demand of open communication in the classroom which in turn, leads to a loop of exposing their weaknesses, thus, increasing their anxiety. Consideration of the learners' language anxiety has become a key element to help the learner develop impressive communication skills in the target language. Therefore, it becomes imperative and equally vital to identify the levels of language anxiety the students face while learning English language, the reasons behind it, and the possible solutions to help them overcome it.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Various researches have been conducted to identifying and drawing a relationship between English as a second language/ foreign language learning and anxiety experienced by the students. While reviewing the related literature, the researchers have come across studies proving a strong co-relation between anxiety and English language acquisition. Studies have been conducted in various non-English speaking countries of the world viz. China, Taiwan, Saudi Arabia, Philippines, Pakistan, Malaysia, Qatar, and many more. Related research literature conducted between the year 2021 to 2009 has been listed. Tabular description of the same is as follows:

Table 1. Review of Related Literature (International)

Sr.no.	Type	Research on Language anxiety	Research on Vocabulary level	Research on both
1	PhD	04		
2	M. Phil			
3	M. Ed	02		02
4	E-Journals	09	03	04

Table 2. Review of Related Literature (National)

Sr.no.	Type	Research on Language anxiety	Research on Vocabulary level	Research on both
1	PhD			
2	M. Phil			
3	M. Ed			
4	E-Journals	03	01	05

III. OBJECTIVES

In the current research, the researchers intend to measure the difference between the levels of English language anxieties of the students of standard IX, Maharashtra state (MS) board by implementing a designed training module on them. The researchers' purpose is to identify the effectiveness of the designed module on reducing students' English language anxiety with respect to vocabulary expansion technique. Therefore, on the basis of the intention, following are the objectives of the study:

1. To identify the levels of English language anxiety among standard IX, Maharashtra state board students.
2. To develop training program for English language vocabulary expansion and instructional material for control and experimental group.
3. To compare the means of pre and post-tests of experimental group with respect to English language anxiety and vocabulary levels of standard IX, semi-English medium, Maharashtra state board (MS board) students.
4. To compare the means of post-tests of control and experimental groups with respect to English language anxiety and vocabulary levels of standard IX, semi-English medium, Maharashtra state board students.

3.1 Hypotheses

H 1.1: There will be no significant difference between the means of post-tests of control and experimental groups with respect to vocabulary level of standard IX students.

H 1.2: There will be no significant difference between the means of pre and post-test of experimental group with respect to vocabulary level of standard IX students

H 2.1: There will be no significant difference between the means of post-tests of control and experimental groups with respect to English language anxiety of standard IX students.

H 2.1: There will be no significant difference between the means of pre and post-test of experimental group with respect to English language anxiety of standard IX students.

3.2 Variables

Australian Bureau of Statistics defines a 'variable' as any characteristics, number, or quantity that can be measured or counted. A variable may also be called a data item. Age, sex, business income and expenses, country of birth, capital expenditure, class grades, eye color and vehicle type are some of the examples of variables. It is called a variable because the value may vary between data units in a population, and may change in value over time. This research has dealt with the following independent and dependent variables:

Independent variable:
a. Lecture method
b. English songs and short films

Dependent variable:
a. Level of vocabulary
b. Level of language anxiety

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Experimental research method, pre-test, post-test method was used for the research study; two groups i.e., Control group and Experimental group were formed which were given separate and different treatment. The difference in treatment is as follows:

Control group: The trainees of the control group were taught English subject through traditional methods (lecture method, group discussion and test) without receiving any special treatment. Selected excerpt was taught in the previously mentioned methods for fifteen days. They were made to take 2 tests (Vocabulary and FLCAS- pre and post training implementation). Whereas on the other hand, the trainees of experimental group were taught English subject through music and video-assisted instructions. They were made to take 2 tests (Vocabulary and FLCAS- pre and post training implementation).

4.1 Population

Population is the entire mass of observation, which is the parent group from which a sample is to be formed. A population is any group of individuals who have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher (Best, W J). The population of the research was the students of IX standard of Maharashtra State Board of Nagpur region (urban).

4.2 Sample

The sample for this research is a purposive one. In order to select the sample, the researcher has made MS board, standard IX students to appear for FLCAS (Horwitz, 1986). The students with more than 50 % of language anxiety were taken into consideration for the research.

4.3 Research Design

For the present study, the researchers had opted for experimental design- Pre-test, Post-test. Two groups were taken for the study viz. control and experimental group. The learners of the control group were taught through traditional method whereas the experimental group was exposed to designed training module (which included exposure to English music and videos).
In the present study, the independent variables were reading strategy, English songs and short films and the dependent variables were levels of English vocabulary and English language anxiety.

4.4 Research Tool

The researchers have used Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz, 1986) to measure the students' levels of anxiety. It is a 33 itemed, 5-point Likert-Scale questionnaire which measures Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety of Language 2 learners.
The researchers have also made the students take a self-designed vocabulary test. The mean of pre and post-tests of the controlled and experimental group is the base for interpretation of the results.

4.5 Data Analysis

In the present study, the following statistical tools have been applied for data analysis. a. Mean, b. Standard Deviation, c. Student's t-test.
The analysis and interpretation of the data has been done in the following manner:
a) The means of pre and post-test of Experimental group, with respect to English language vocabulary are compared.
b) The means of post-tests of control and experimental groups, with respect to English language vocabulary are compared.
c) The means of pre and post-test results of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz, 1986) of experimental group were compared.
d) The means of post-tests of control and experimental groups, with respect to English language anxiety are compared.
e) Significant difference between the means of pre and post-tests of experimental group's English language anxiety and vocabulary levels has led to the interpretation in favour of the designed training module.
f) Significant difference between the means of post-test of control and experimental group's English language anxiety and vocabulary levels has led to the interpretation in favour of the designed training module.
g) Depending upon the inferences of the calculated 't' values in comparison to tabulated 't' values of experimental groups pre & post-test results and control and experimental groups post-tests (vocabulary and language anxiety), the hypotheses are rejected.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Results

5.1.1 There is a significant difference between the means of post-tests of control and experimental groups with respect to vocabulary level of standard IX students.

Table no.3. Comparison of the means of post-test of control and experimental group (English vocabulary level)

Group type	N	Mean of post-test	SD	t-value
Control group	20	3.93	2.20	2.94*
Experimental group	20	5.46	2.19	

*t-value significant at 0.01 level

Brief explanation:
a) The mean score of post-tests of control group is 3.93 whereas the mean score of post-tests of experimental group is 5.46.
b) The difference between the respective mean scores is 1.53 which indicates that the mode of teaching implemented on the experimental group is more effective than the traditional one.

c) The obtained t-value of 2.94, after it's comparison to tabulated t-value proved to be significant at 0.01 level of confidence, thus, there is a significant difference between the means of post-tests of control and experimental groups with respect to vocabulary levels of standard IX students.

5.1.2 There is a significant difference between the means of pre and post-test of experimental group with respect to vocabulary level of standard IX students.

Table no.4. Comparison of pre and post-test mean scores of experimental groups (English vocabulary levels)

Experimental group	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Pre-test	20	1.26	0.88	7*
Post-test	20	5.46	2.19	

*t-value significant at 0.01 level

Brief explanation:
a) The mean score of vocabulary pre-test of experimental group is 1.26 whereas post-test mean score is 5.46.
b) The difference between these scores is 4.2, thus, strengthening the impact of the designed training module
c) The t-value of 7, after comparison with tabulated value proved to be significant at 0.01 level of confidence. Hence, there is a significant difference between the means of pre and post-test of experimental group with respect to vocabulary level of standard IX students.

5.1.3 There is a significant difference between the means of post-tests of control and experimental groups with respect to English language anxiety of standard IX students.

Table no. 5. Comparison of the means of post-test of control and experimental group (FLCAS, English language anxiety)

Group type	N	Mean of post-test	SD	t-value
Control group	20	78.66	15.67	2.57*
Experimental group	20	86.46	7.91	

*t-value significant at 0.05 level

Brief explanation:
a) The mean score of post-tests of control group is 78.66 whereas the mean score of post-tests of experimental group is 84.46.
b) The difference between the respective mean scores is 5.8 which indicated that the mode of teaching implemented on the experimental group is more effective than the control group in reducing the levels of English language anxiety among MS board, standard IX, semi-English medium students.
c) The t-value of 2.57, after it's comparison to tabulated t-value proved to be significant at 0.05 level of confidence indicating that there is a significant difference between the means of post-tests of control and experimental groups with respect to English language anxiety levels of MS board, standard IX, semi-English medium students.

5.1.4 There is a significant difference between the means of pre and post-test of experimental group with respect to English language anxiety of standard IX students.

Table no. 6. Comparison of pre and post-test mean scores of experimental groups (FLCAS, English language anxiety)

Experimental group	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Pre-test	20	106.93	9.71	6.33*
Post-test	20	86.46	7.91	

*t-value significant at 0.01 level

Brief explanation:
a) The mean score of post-tests of control group is 106.93 whereas the mean score of post-tests of experimental group is 84.46.
b) There is a decrease of 22.47 in the English language anxiety parameter, thus, strengthening the impact of the designed training module (which included English songs and short films)

c) The module which is implemented on the experimental group is effective in reducing the levels of English language anxiety among MS board, standard IX, semi-English medium students.

d) The t-value of 6.33, after it's comparison to tabulated t-value proved to be significant at 0.01 level of confidence proving that there is a significant difference between the means of post-tests of control and experimental groups with respect to English language anxiety levels of MS board, standard IX, semi-English medium students.

5.2 Discussion

English, as compared to other languages of the world, is the easiest one to learn and master. One of the various reasons behind it is that it is a 'friendly language' i.e., it is a combination of many languages and Sanskrit is one of them. Indian students are familiar with either Sanskrit, Aryan or Dravidian families of the language (their mother tongue). This familiarity makes it easier to comprehend, learn and recall English words. But, given the social importance associated with English language in India, a student unintentionally, ends up experiencing pressure of learning it and thus, turning anxious about it. A small change in the teaching strategy will help the students to release this unseen and unspoken pressure (anxiety) and will be able to master it with great ease and speed.

The traditional mode of teaching English as a subject surely brings about an increase in the levels of English language vocabulary and anxiety but considering the demands of the ever-competitive world, the students need to overcome these barriers to learning and implementing English as a language at a greater pace. The research study highlighted the impact of audio-visual aids/ music-assisted instruction in creating a stress-free learning environment wherein an English as a second language learner would overcome the fear of the language and move a step ahead in mastering it. Considering the pre and post test results of both control and experimental groups, the designed training module proved to be more effective than the traditional one. The module, if implemented well, holds the potential to move a little closer to these expectations.

5.2.1 Limitations

Similar to all the elements of the universe, this research revolves around a certain degree of limitations. Given the fact that the research was conducted on and for standard IX Maharashtra state board students and was performed on both boys and girls, it displays the following limitations:

a) This research has measured the effectiveness of the designed training module only on the students of standard IX, MS board.

b) The research did not determine the difference of impact of the training module on boys and girls separately.

c) The research was restricted to Maharashtra state board, semi-English medium students.

d) The research did not differentiate and determine the impact of rural vs. urban schools offering Maharashtra State Board education.

CONCLUSION

The research findings have helped to reach the following conclusion:

a) The sample of the research (students of Maharashtra state board, semi-English medium) experienced high to very high levels of English language anxiety.

b) The designed training module statistically proved more effective in reducing the English language anxiety of the trainees as compared to the traditional mode of teaching the subject.

c) English language anxiety:
   i. Experimental group's pre and post-test mean scores comparison has proven that the designed training module is able to reduce English language anxiety of the trainees up to 20.47 (average).
   ii. Control group and experimental group's post-test mean scores comparison has proven that the designed training module, used on experimental group, has been more effective in reducing English language anxiety among the trainees.

d) English language vocabulary level:
   i. Experimental group's pre and post-test mean scores comparison has proven that the designed training module is more effective in increasing English language vocabulary levels of the trainees.
   ii. The difference between the post-test scores of controlled and experimental groups state is 23. Control group and experimental group's post-test mean scores comparison has proven that the designed training module, used on experimental group, has been more effective in increasing English language vocabulary levels of the trainees.

e) Significance level of the test results:
   i. English language anxiety: The calculated t-values in comparison to the tabulated one proves that the tests will produce 95 percentage of times (0.05 level of confidence- post-test mean scores comparison of control and experimental group) and 99 percentage of times (0.01 level of confidence- pre-test, post-test mean scores comparison of experimental group) the same result.
   ii. English language vocabulary: The calculated t-values in comparison to the tabulated one proves that the tests will produce 99 percentage of times (0.01 level of confidence- post-test mean scores comparison of control and experimental group; and pre-test, post-test mean scores comparison of experimental group) the same result.
   iii. Thus, the four hypotheses (H 1.1, H1.2, H 2.1 & H 2.2) are rejected.

FUTURE STUDIES

a) Applicability of music-assisted instruction could be extended to lowering other subjects' anxiety.
b) Analysis of the effectiveness of a music-assisted training module can be done on other boards and languages.
c) The effectiveness of such designed training module could be analysed by taking into account variables such as age, gender, socio-economic status, parents' educational background etc.
d) Factors such as scientific attitude, study habits, creativity, and other psychological levels could be used for broader understanding of the dimensions affecting English language acquisition and anxiety of the students belonging to regions where English is either a second or third language.
e) It would be interesting to conduct research on a large sample incorporating various levels of learners, urban vs. rural, English speaking vs. non-English speaking countries.
f) Research could also be made with respect to learners' mother tongue and its impact on English language acquisition.

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