

THE IMPACT OF ANXIETY AND STRESS ON LEARNING LANGUAGE PROCESS

Pirmatova Jamilya Xolmamatovna

1st-year master's student at Termiz University of Economics and Service

Scientific supervisor: Salomova Gavhar Abdinazarovna

Abstract

This study examines the effect of anxiety and stress on learning activity in language learning. It explores how emotional factors influence learners' participation, motivation, and performance. The findings indicate that high grades of anxiety and stress negatively affect language acquisition by reducing confidence, limiting interaction, and impairing cognitive processes. However, moderate stress may have a motivating effect when properly managed. The study highlights the importance of supportive teaching strategies to reduce negative emotional barriers.

Keywords: anxiety, stress, language learning, learning activity, motivation, learner performance, emotional factors, language acquisition, confidence, cognitive processes, teaching strategies, classroom environment.

Introduction

Language learning is a complex process influenced by cognitive, social, and emotional factors. Among these, anxiety and stress are considered key affective variables that can significantly shape learners' experiences. Language anxiety is a normal position in human body when it is constrained and, often referred to as foreign language anxiety, arises from fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension, and test-related pressure.

Previous research suggests that anxious learners tend to participate less in classroom activities and demonstrate lower performance levels. Stress, similarly, can interfere with concentration and memory, making it more difficult for learners to process and retain new information. Therefore, understanding how anxiety and stress affect learning activity is essential for improving educational outcomes.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the effects of anxiety and stress on learners' engagement and performance in language learning contexts.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative and descriptive approach. Data were collected through classroom observations, learner feedback, and analysis of existing literature on affective factors in language learning.

Participants included language learners at intermediate level. Observations focused on learners' personal traits during speaking activities, tests, and group discussions. Additionally, learners' self-reported feelings of anxiety and stress were considered.

The data were analyzed thematically to identify patterns related to participation, confidence, and academic performance.

The research focuses on:

Identifying types of anxiety in language learning (e.g., communication apprehension, test anxiety)

Examining the relationship between stress levels and learning performance
Analyzing strategies used by educators to reduce anxiety
Data were collected from existing literature and synthesized to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Results

The research reveal that anxiety and stress have a noticeable impact on learning activity: Learners experiencing high anxiety showed reduced participation in speaking tasks. Stress negatively affected concentration and memory retention. Many individuals avoided interaction due to fear of making mistakes. Confidence levels were significantly lower among anxious students. However, it was also observed that a moderate level of stress encouraged some learners to prepare better and remain focused on tasks.

Anxiety and stress consume cognitive resources, limiting attention and memory capacity. This results in lower retention of vocabulary and grammar structures.

Reduced Motivation

Prolonged stress can decrease intrinsic motivation, making learners less engaged in classroom activities.

Facilitative Anxiety

In some cases, a moderate level of anxiety may encourage learners to prepare better and stay focused.

Discussion

The results support previous studies indicating that anxiety acts as a barrier to effective language learning. Fear of negative evaluation limits students' willingness to communicate, which is essential for language development.

Stress, particularly when excessive, disrupts cognitive processes such as attention and memory. This explains why learners under pressure often struggle with recalling vocabulary or applying grammar rules.

Horwitz identified foreign language anxiety as a distinct psychological construct that negatively affects performance.

To address these issues, educators should:

Create a supportive and non-threatening classroom environment

Encourage communication without fear of mistakes

Use interactive and student-centered teaching methods

Provide positive feedback and reduce excessive correction

At the same time, the findings suggest that not all stress is harmful. Controlled levels of stress can enhance motivation and engagement. Therefore, educators should aim to reduce harmful anxiety while maintaining a level of challenge that promotes learning.

Building a supportive classroom environment, encouraging positive feedback, and normalizing errors can significantly reduce anxiety levels.

Additionally, learners can benefit from self-regulation strategies such as relaxation techniques, time management, and positive thinking.

Conclusion

Anxiety and stress play a critical role in shaping learning activity in language learning. High levels of these factors negatively impact participation, confidence, and performance. However, when managed effectively, stress can serve as a motivational tool.



Educators should focus on implementing strategies that reduce emotional barriers and foster a positive learning environment. Future research may explore quantitative approaches to further examine the relationship between affective factors and academic achievement.

Anxiety and stress have a significant effect on learning activity in language acquisition. While excessive anxiety hinders performance, controlled levels may enhance motivation. Teachers and learners must work together to create a balanced emotional environment that supports effective language learning.

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