



Identifying the Well-Defined L2 Anxiety Factors amongst BS Undergraduate ESL Learners at a Public Sector University in Pakistan: Application of Exploratory Factor Analysis

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Abstract- The main purpose of this study is to identify the well defined factors of the various but loosely connected underlying L2 Anxiety variables of the L2 learners. For this purpose, the closed ended five Lickert modified questionnaire was developed on the basis of the well tested questionnaires of the experts in the field of L2 Anxiety and also included local contextual items related to the learners' L2 Anxiety. The questionnaire was piloted twice and the data was collected from 350 (140 females and 190 males) BS Undergraduate English learners of the Department of English of remote and under-researched Kohat University of Science and Technology, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The data was analyzed with rarely but much recommended inferential statistical measuring exploratory factor analysis instrument in the field of L2 Anxiety. Total 08 well-defined L2 Anxiety Factors were identified which are L2 test Anxiety, L2 communication apprehension, Fear of negative evaluation, fear of making mistakes, L2 teacher related L2 Anxiety, group Anxiety and lack of confidence L2 Anxiety and rarely noted gender related L2 Anxiety. Moreover, the well constructed questionnaire of this study with name as Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale for Pakistan (FLCASP) can be exploited in field of L2 Anxiety and especially in the Pakistan for further research in the field of L2 Anxiety. Pedagogical implications especially for L2 teacher to devise proper methods for reducing L2 Anxiety among factors are recommended. Similarly, this study also highlights the need of focusing on learners' concerns such as L2 Anxiety and L2 De-motivation so their various issues can be addressed while learning English.

Keywords: Anxiety, language anxiety, factor analysis, fear of negative evaluation, Pakistan

I. INTRODUCTION

L2 Anxiety in simple terms can be defined here as *"the learners' subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system"* related to L2 (English) learning and its use in classroom setting as per (Spielberger, 1983:01). There is an agreement among scholars (Horwitz et al. 1986, Aida, 1994, Fatima et al. 2020) that L2 Anxiety has a significant debilitating impact not only on L2 (English) learners' cognitive, input but also outcome learning processes of learning English. Resultantly, researchers such as Horwitz (1986) in the USA, Mak (2011) in China, Tayoma and Yamazaki (2018) in Japan, Ahmad et al. (2017) in Pakistan investigated L2 learners' Anxiety. However, there is no agreed definition of L2 Anxiety which may be due to the reason that L2 Anxiety is a complex construct, rooted in the language itself, learners, classroom dynamics, psychological/psychological and contextual factors (Zheng, 2008) and Abu-Rabia et al. (2014). Similarly, once imagined by Horwitz et al. (1986) in their fundamental study now covers many and also closely related variables and their relation and impact such as on L2 learners' motivation, de-motivation and achievement (Teimouri et al. 2019). However, very few studies such as Aida (1994), Cheng et al. (1999), Matsuda and Gobel (2004), Park (2014) adopted much recommended factor analysis for determining the various underlying scattered L2 Anxiety causing factors. In other words, most of the studies in the field of L2 Anxiety adopted simple descriptive statistical methods for investigating L2 Anxiety sources of L2 learners.

This becomes more crucial in the context of Pakistan. Studies such as Waseem and Jibeen (2013), Samad (2015), Gopang et al. (2015, 2018) and Fatima et al. (2020) are commendable for introducing L2 Anxiety. These studies highlighted that L2 learners in Pakistani have numerous anxiety sources especially speaking anxiety which obstruct their successful language learning. However, these studies have adopted the simple such as descriptive statistics as lamented by Park (2014) which we believe can't determine the various underlying variables into a well defined clusters of L2 Anxiety. So, to the best of our knowledge, no study has so far adopted the factor analysis for identifying various L2 Anxiety factors in Pakistan. Moreover, these studies have adopted the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) of Horwitz et al. (1986) which needs to be adjusted with local contextual L2 Anxiety variables as suggested by Park (2014) and Horwitz (2016) and Tayoma and Yamazaki (2018). Last but not the least, most of the studies targeted other Provinces like Waseem and Jibeen (2013) in Punjab, and Gopang et al. (2015) Baluchistan in Pakistan.

In the backdrop of such situation, this study investigates the BS Undergraduate English learners of the Department of English of a newly but under researched Kohat University of Science and Technology, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan as lamented by Ali et al. (2015). We believe our study is significant in the field of L2 Anxiety in general and especially in the Pakistan due to two main reasons. First, unlike other studies, factor analysis is applied for identifying L2 Anxiety factors as recommended by Park (2014), Horwitz (2016) in the field of L2 Anxiety. Second, the questionnaire tested through application of factor analysis can be an impressive measuring tool for further researching L2 Anxiety in general and especially in Pakistan for further research in the field of Anxiety (Dornyei, 2007, Field, 2013). So, in order to identify various underlying L2 Anxiety factors, this study has set the following research question:

Q1. What are the sources of L2 Anxiety of the BS Undergraduate English learners of the Department of English of Kohat University of Science and Technology?

In order to measure the research question, first the critical literature review of L2 Anxiety shall be presented which shall be followed by introducing the research design of the study.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The European and American based studies in 1970s like Kleinmann, (1977) and especially in 1990s can be said to have introduced the L2 Anxiety and its retarding impact on L2 learner's language performance. Studies of Horwitz (1986, 2017), Horwitz et al. (1986), Mclantyre and Gardner (1991, 1994a, 1994b) can be termed as the foregrounding in the field of L2 Anxiety. These studies, especially Horwitz et al. (1986) not only well-defined Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) but also constructed well tested Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The L2 test anxiety, L2 communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation anxieties among the L2 learners were as noted by Horwitz et al. (1986) and confirmed by subsequent studies across the world such as (Zhao, 2007) in China, Park (2014) in Korea and Yashima et al. (2009) in Japan and Malik et al. (2020) in Pakistan, especially the L2 communication apprehension anxiety.

The L2 Communication Apprehension includes as defined by Horwitz et al. (1986:127) as *"a type of shyness characterized by fear or anxiety about communicating with people"*. This kind of L2 Anxiety has features like being scared in various situations/events in classroom communication. In simple terms, L2 Communication includes speaking/listening, comprehension, vocabulary/articulation, participants apprehension while using English with people (Young, 1990, Horwitz, 2001). While L2 Test Anxiety is performance based which generates from the worry of not facing or having the tension of failing in various exams such as tests, quizzes and mid/final semester examinations. It also includes the little chances of getting the required and maximum grades in English language exams (Abu-Rabia et al. 2014, Gopang et al. 2018). The third most frequent L2 Anxiety is called as Fear of Negative Evaluation which can be interpreted as the L2 learners' feeling of fear of being negatively judged like correcting their mistakes by the teacher and classmates in the classroom (Park, 2014 and Cheng et al. 1999).

Expanding the scope of L2 Anxiety, some key studies are also conducted across the world such as the Middle East and well as in the Asian countries. For example, in the context of Middle East, studies such as, Abu-

Ghararah (1999), Al-Saraj (2013) and Alrabai (2014) in Saudi Arabia, Bensalem (2017) in Tunisia, and Sadighi and Dastpak (2017) in Iran and Abu-Rabia et al.(2014) in Israel. All these studies confirmed that Middle Eastern L2 learners have L2 Anxiety due to numerous factors including teacher related L2 Anxiety. These studies overall highlighted that L2 learners themselves have anxiety factors such as lack of confidence which generates feelings of L2 Anxiety among the Arabian L2 learners. The interesting finding in many studies in this context is that L2 learners are in tension about L2 due to their negative attitudes towards L2 and its culture. It may be noted that Middle Eastern countries are more conservative in their cultures. However, most of the studies, except Alrabai (2014) adopted simple descriptive method for investigating L2 learners' sources of Anxiety.

The context of Asia is also targeted in many L2 Anxiety studies. In Japan studies such as Kitano (2001), William and Andrade (2008), Matsuda and Gobel (2014) and Yashima et al. (2009) and Tayoma and Yamazaki (2018). The last three studies adopted factor analysis and found that L2 learners are feeling uneasy and worried due to numerous factors such as classroom performance anxiety, feeling of low confidence in speaking English, negative attitudes towards English, apprehension of understanding what is taught to them in classroom. Another interesting L2 Anxiety sources was due to the classmates' attitudes/behaviour in classroom as noted by Kondo and Yang (2003).

Similarly, studies such as Cheng et al. (1999), Wang (2005), Liu and Jackson (2008) and Mak (2011) targeted various locations in China. Interesting all such studies except Wang (2005) adopted factor analysis for identifying L2 Anxiety sources among the L2 learners. These sources include like feeling the fear of having low self confidence in speaking English classroom and also those identified by Horwitz et al. (1986) three main L2 Anxiety sources. In the context of Korean, the study of Park (2014) is note worthy as this study applied factor analysis and identified two factors of L2 Anxiety which are L2 communication and comprehension and lack of confidence among the Korean L2 learners.

In the context of Pakistan some studies such as Awan et al. (2010), Waseem and Jibeen (2013), Gopang et al. (2015, 2018), Iqbal and Yongbing (2018), Malik et al. (2020) and Fatima et al. (2020) targeted L2 learners' sources of L2 learners' Anxiety. These studies also concluded that L2 learners have tension from teacher, examinations, teacher bad attitudes and grammar issues in the classroom. However, all these studies except Iqbal and Yongbing (2018) targeted other Provinces and also adopted simple descriptive statistical methods. Thus, it can be argued that there is a need to investigate L2 learners' anxiety in the under researched KP province of Pakistan and also adopt the much needed and equally recommended exploratory factor analysis (Park, 2014, Horwitz, 2016) for identifying the various loosely connected L2 Anxiety sources among the L2 learners. Keeping in view such limitations, this study has been conducted for which the following research design has been adopted.

III. RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA COLLECTING/ANALYZING PROCEDURES

The quantitative research method was adopted in the study. Drawing upon well referenced studies of Horwitz et al. (1986), Aida (1994), Mclantyre and Gardner (1991, 1994a, 1994b), Cheng et al. (1999), Matsuda and Gobel (2004), Park (2014), Waseem and Jibeen (2013) and Gopang et al. (2015, 2018), Nazir et al. (2014), Iqbal and Yongbing (2018), Fatima et al. (2020) and Malik et al. (2020), total 38 items related to the learners' sources of anxiety included in the modified questionnaire. The closed ended questionnaire was five Lickert based (Dornyei, 2007). The questionnaire was piloted twice and minor changes such as replacing difficult words and making some items construction in simple and short sentences. The overall Cronbach Alpha of the questionnaire was .81 which is considered satisfactory (Field, 2013).

Exploratory Factor analysis was applied and followed the four fundamental recommended procedures (Dornyei, 2007, Pallant, 2007, Tabchnick and Fidell (2013). First, the chances of emerging L2 Anxiety Factors were checked through KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) of sample adequacy (.84) and Bartlett Test of Sphericity (.000) which were quite satisfactory (Field, 2013). Second, factors with eigenvalues above 01 were retained. Third, for the clustering of L2 Anxiety factors, Varimax was opted in the Rotation of the factor analysis as per Dornyei (2007). Finally, for the purpose of obtaining well explanatory factors, the value of

each loading factor was fixed as .50 as per Field (2013) and Tayoma and Yamazaki (2018). The total variance of the final output of the factor analysis on L2 Anxiety Factor was .51 which is believed good in social science (Pallant, 2007). Total 08 L2 Anxiety factor emerged as shown in the below table-01 which shall be labeled.

Table:01 Final Outcome of the Application of Factor Analysis of L2 Anxiety Factors

Items: Loaded Values	
Factor 1	
03. I start to panic when I have to speak in English without preparation.	.861
10. I feel nervous while speaking English in classroom.	.853
15. I get self-conscious about speaking English in front of my classmates.	.845
18. I feel anxious when I can't understand what my teacher says in English.	.839
22. It frightens me when I can't speak like the native speakers.	.831
26. The difficult nature of English speaking worries me.	.818
34. I get uncomfortable while speaking English in front of my teacher.	.807
31. The feelings of making mistakes in speaking English frighten me.	.801
Factor 2	
07. The feeling of failing in English exam worries me.	.872
11. I feel uncomfortable during exam in my classroom.	.864
17. Tough Exam in English makes me nervous.	.845
28. Strict marking by teacher in English papers makes me tense.	.835
33. Not getting the expected marks in the exam worries me.	.830
Factor 3	
02. I am worried about my grammatical mistakes in English.	.788
09. The difficult nature of grammar makes me frightened.	.767
20. Lack of ability to apply grammar rules makes me anxious in using English.	.765
36. I am afraid of making grammatical mistakes in Speaking.	.753
Factor 4	
01. I get nervous when teacher asks questions which I have not prepared.	.640
08. I am nervous that students will laugh at my English.	.631
24. I am afraid that teacher will correct my mistakes in my English.	.626
27. My bad image due to my weak English in class, stresses me.	.621
Factor 5	
06. The negative attitudes of teacher towards students worries me.	.678
19. I am afraid due to the non-cooperation of teacher in classroom.	.670
25. I am tensed due to not being allowed by teacher to ask questions.	.641
35. The boring teaching method creates tension fome.	.622
Factor 6	
05. The lack of cooperation among my class fellows, makes me worried.	.693
13. I am afraid that my class fellows would laugh at my weak English.	.681

30. I am anxious that I will get lesser grades than my other class fellows.	.868
Factor 7	
04. I feel shy while speaking to opposite gender in class.	.565
14. I become tense when interacting with opposite gender in class.	.562
21. I am scared due to the laughing of opposite gender at my English.	.557
23. The lack of cooperation among the opposite gender worries me in class.	.553
Factor 8	
12. I am afraid because I can't learn English.	.530
16. I am worried as my English is not good.	.514
29. I am anxious as I can't compete in learning English like other class fellows.	.519
32. I am stressed as my class fellows are better than me in English.	.501

Naming and Explanation of L2 Anxiety Factors

Factor 01-L2 Communication Anxiety

The factor 01 received loading from items (03, 10, 15, 18, 22, 26, 34, 31). All these items clearly reflect that the L2 learners are having communication worry which includes variables related to teacher, classmates and classroom environment. Therefore, the factor 01 is labeled as "L2 Communication Anxiety" which is also noted by Horwitz et al. (1986), Young (1991), Cheng et al. (1999), Wang (2005), Park (2014), Gopang et al. (2015, 2018), Fatima et al. (2020) and Malik et al. (2020).

Factor 02-L2 Test Anxiety

Items (07, 11, 17, 28, 33) are loaded on factor 02. These items indicate that the L2 learners are anxious due to text related variables. Thus, the factor 02 is named as "L2 Test Anxiety" which is also emerged in studies such as Horwitz et al. (1986), Aida (1994), Mak (2011), Waseem and Jibeen (2013), Samad (2015) and Ahmad et al. (2017).

Factor 03-L2 Inter-Language Anxiety

The factor 03 received loadings from items (02, 09, 20, 36). All these items are focused on the learners' apprehension about the lack of grammatical competency in using especially speaking English. So, the factor 03 can be labeled as "L2 Inter-Language Anxiety" which means that the L2 learners have L2 related anxiety. L2 Inter-Language Anxiety was also noted by Waseem and Jibeen (2013), Gopang et al. (2015, 2018) in the context of Pakistan and also other contexts such as in China by Mak (2011).

Factor 04-L2 Classroom Environment Anxiety

Total four items (01, 08, 24, 27) are loaded on the factor 04. Though these items reflect teacher, learners own bad image, yet focused on guiding us towards the classroom environment. So, the factor 04 is labeled as "L2 Classroom Environment Anxiety". Such anxiety factor was also found by Samad (2015) in the Pakistan and also other contexts such as Matsuda and Gobel (2004), Kondo and Yang (2003) in Japan and Khalaf (2016) in Saudi Arabia. The L2 Classroom Environment as a source of learners' Anxiety covers many variables such as L2 learners' themselves, other class mates and also teacher, so need to be further investigated.

Factor 05- L2 Teacher's Related Anxiety

There are total four items (06, 19, 25, 35) loaded on factor 05. All these items represent that the L2 learners are facing anxiety due to the teacher. Therefore, the factor 05 is given the name as "L2 Teacher's Related Anxiety" as noted by Alrabia (2014) in Saudi Arabia and Sadighi and Dastpak (2017) in Iran and Samad (2014) in Pakistan. Keeping in view the dominant position of Teacher in general and also Language Education System in Pakistan as reported by Ali (2016) and Islam (2013), it is quite understandable that the L2 learners have developed L2 Teacher Anxiety.

Factor 06- L2 Group Related Anxiety

The factor 06 received loading from the items (05, 13, 30). These items represent that the L2 learners are feeling worried specially due to their class mates bad attitudes and lack of cooperation. So, the factor 06 is labeled as "L2 Group Related Anxiety" among the L2 learners. This factor is also found by Kondo and Yang (2003) in Japan and also Gopang et al. (2015, 2018) in Pakistan.

Factor 07- L2 Gender Related Anxiety

The items (04, 14, 21, 23) are loaded on the factor 07. As reflected from these items, the L2 learners are having L2 Anxiety due to the opposite gender. So, the factor is given the name of " L2 Gender Related Anxiety". This kind of L2 Anxiety is rarely noted in the field of L2 Anxiety as emerged in the study, which needs to be further explored. However, keeping in view, the conservative nature of the KP province, these items were included in the solution which are clustered together in the shape of the factor 07.

Factor 08- L2 Lack of Confidence Anxiety

The factor received loading from the items (12, 16, 29, 32) which clearly reflects that the L2 learners have L2 Anxiety due to their lack of confidence. Thus, the factor 08 is labeled as "L2 Lack of Anxiety" which is also emerged in studies such as Park (2014) in Korea, Yashima et al. (2009) and Tayoma and Yamazaki (2018) in Japan and Wang (2005) and Liu and Jackson (2008) in China and Abu-Rabia et al. (2014) in Israel.

IV. DISCUSSION

This study highlighted that L2 learners have anxiety due to various factors. These are L2 test, L2 communication apprehension anxiety, fear of negative evaluation anxiety, fear of making L2 mistakes anxiety, teacher related L2 anxiety, group anxiety and classroom environment L2 anxiety. These findings are in line with other European and Asian oriented studies of Horwitz (1986, 2001, 2017), Horwitz et al. (1986), Aida (1994), Cheng et al. (1999), Mak (2011), Waseem and Jibeen (2013), Gopang et al. (2015) and Malik et al. (2020). Interesting, all the identified L2 Anxiety in this study are related to the language, its and classroom setting anxiety creating factors (Horwitz et al. 1986) and Luo (2018) L2 Anxiety as L2 learners' trait for example learners' self perceived language ability also emerged. This may be due to the reason that many L2 Anxiety sources contributed towards creating L2 Anxiety among the L2 learners in Pakistan which are also confirmed by Pakistani based studies such as Waseem and Jibeen (2013), Gopang et al. (2015, 2018) and Iqbal and Youngbing (2018).

Another interesting features of the findings of this study is that unlike studies such as Horwitz et al. (1986), Fatima et al. (2020), and other factor analytic studies in the field of L2 Anxiety like Park (2014) Teacher related L2 Anxiety factor identified. Though this factor is contesting which needs to be further investigated, yet it highlights the dominant position as well the bad attitudes of the L2 Teacher which may have considerably in creating such anxiety among the L2 learners. This also complex nature of L2 Anxiety also guides that more sophisticated inferential statistical measuring tools like factor and correlation may be adopted for digging out various underlying L2 Anxiety factors in field of L2 Anxiety, and in Pakistan in particular. Similarly, the L2 learners in the study unlike Alrabai (2014) are not feeling anxious to the negative attitudes towards English and its learning. The possible explanation can be that the L2 learners are motivated towards English and its learning as noted by recent studies such as Ali et al. (2015) in the same university L2 learners and also Islam et al. (2020) in a Public Sector University of Punjab, Pakistan. However, this finding of the study needs to be further investigated in various provinces in Pakistan.

In contrast to studies in Pakistan such as Waseem and Jibeen (2013), Gopang et al. (2015), Ahmad et al. (2017), Malik et al. (2020) and Fatima et al. (2020), more well defined L2 Anxiety factors identified in this study. These identified L2 Anxiety Factors came out of the result of the successful application of much relevant and recommended sophisticated factor analysis which can be exploited for easy understanding and especially further researching in the field of L2 Anxiety in general and especially in Pakistan (Dornyei, 2007,

Field, 2013, Robson, 2011). In other words, the questionnaire of the study can be exploited potentially as a valid measuring instrument to further investigating L2 Anxiety in Pakistan.

This study suggests that the L2 learners have L2 Anxiety which needs to be reduced and measures such as enhancing their L2 motivations and removing situation and learners' specific L2 Anxiety factors as identified in the study be considered seriously in English language system in the Pakistani Universities as recommended by Samad (2015) and Ali (2016). The importance of the L2 Anxiety as situation-specific and not inclusive as trait is also echoed in McLantyre and Gardner (1991, 1994a, 1994b), Horwitz (2010), Gopang et al. (2015, 2018). However, this study has certain key limitations which may also provide further opportunities of researching L2 Anxiety in Pakistan. First, this study is limited to a public sector university and also to a department of this university. Secondly, more qualitative, combined with the quantitative approaches may be exploited in investigating L2 Anxiety. Third, these identified L2 Anxiety factors may further have been explored with references to the learners' motivation and achievement in learning outcome.

V. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to identify the BS Undergraduate English learners of the Department of English of a public sector university in less developed and also under-researched province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Applying factor analysis for the first time in contrast to the earlier studies in Pakistan, total 07 well defined L2 Anxiety factors are identified. These are L2 Test, L2 Communication Apprehension, Fear of negative evaluation, fear of making mistakes, teacher related L2 Anxiety, group Anxiety and classroom environment L2 Anxiety. However, there is a need to further these identified L2 Anxiety factors especially with references to the learners' L2 achievement and also may be extended to the school/colleges levels in Pakistan.

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