

The Anxiety of Speaking English as a Second Language Among Students of Karakoram International University, Hunza Campus

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Abstract

The key objectives of this study revolve around comprehending the anxiety experienced by students at Karakoram International University, Hunza Campus, when speaking English as a second language. To achieve this aim, the primary research instrument employed was a questionnaire meticulously adapted from literature. The questionnaire featured five carefully crafted statements that captured the overarching concerns of the participants. By utilizing a 4-point Likert scale, spanning responses from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree', the study meticulously examined and quantified these apprehensions. The data collection encompassed 260 students from all academic semesters at Karakoram International University Hunza Campus, ensuring a diverse representation of each department and semester by means of purposive sample technique. Based on the study's findings, it is essential for educators to discern and employ effective pedagogical methods that can bolster motivation and elevate self-confidence among students, particularly those who grapple with English learning anxiety.

Keyword: Students, Language, pedagogy, KIU

Introduction

English, as a global language, is widely practiced across the globe, and its widespread use has a significant impact on smaller languages worldwide. In developing countries, English serves as the official language and is used as the medium of instruction in educational institutions. However, for many speakers, English becomes a source of fear, when performing certain tasks in their second language, a phenomenon known as second language anxiety (Zhiping, and Paramasivam 2012). The anxiety and fear can adversely affect students' achievements and learning goals. The anxiety affects English speakers, both beginners and advanced level learners. It is indicated that university level students, who study English as a second language approximately half of the students' experience language anxiety, which hinders their academic performance and achievements (Campbell & Shaw 1994).

As English continues to spread globally, questions regarding English language learning anxiety persist in the minds of second language learners everywhere. Further, foreign language anxiety is the cause of students' discomfort in the class (Horwitz E.2001). According to (Mohammadi & Shamsavari, 2013), the anxiety student feel might have a negative impact on their learning outcomes. However, this language related anxiety and emotional scales, lack of subject knowledge contributes to the learning upshots of the learners. Consequently, students feel less independent and responsible in learning a foreign language. To overcome this anxiety, the motivation of educators and self-determinations of the learners have been recognized and accepted positive apparatuses in a foreign language learning (Liu & Huang, 2011).

According to (Hoodbhoy, 1998), the English language learning students are weak in Pakistan because of their poor background knowledge, lack of effective teaching materials, and trained teachers. As a result, the students fall prey to the anxiety of learning English as second language. Pakistan is a multilingual society, every region has its own language and dialects. Moreover, each

province has one or more than one major language, which they understand and conversed. While, the Urdu as a national and the English as an official language practiced widely in every region of Pakistani society (Rahman. T 2002, 2010). Besides, the government of Pakistan with the help of NGOs trying to provide affective teaching resource, materials and teaching training programs. Unfortunately, the efforts of the government and its auxiliary departments failed to provide the affecting teaching tools and skilled teachers to teach English as a second language, yet. Thus, the anxiety of learning English has remained the core issue in majority of government institutions in Pakistan (Shamim, 2008).

Most of the teachers and educators of English language do know the anxiety of the students, when they speak English in their class rooms, but they do not give attention to this very problem. Therefore, students face difficulties, when they are required to perform in English. This study aims to explore and understand the anxiety experienced by students. Also, it will analyze the reasons of the anxiety, which affect the learning outcome of the students at university level. By investigating the experiences of students at Karakoram International University, Hunza Campus, we hope to develop effective strategies to cope with the anxiety of learning English as a second language. The purpose of this study is to investigate the levels of English language fear experienced by students of Karakoram International University, Hunza campus. Likewise, the anxiety of the students will be analyzed with respect to the semesters carefully chosen for the undertaken study. The study tries to answer the following research questions:

- i. What reasons do students of Karakoram International University, Hunza campus give about the anxiety of speaking English as a second language?
- ii. Is there any relationship between the students' educational background via semesters and the level of anxiety?

Literature Review**What is anxiety?**

According to (Horwitz,1986), “anxiety is the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system”. Sometime anxiety halts performances of many people in many subjects like science and mathematics, similarly many people find such stress in foreign language classes. (Scovel, 1978) states anxiety as "the transient emotional state of feeling nervous that can fluctuate over time and vary in intensity.” It means that anxiety is not a permanent disability or a disease, which can affect the performance of the people for a long period of time. I think it can be overcome and improved through different trainings and rehearsal.

Moreover, anxiety in language education is observed as a mental subject on the part of the learners. Sometimes, someone’s overthinking about their own abilities and inability to do something cause fear. Consequently, they become more over-conscious and challenge their own abilities of speaking a foreign language. The very idea of self-perception about the FL threatens their communication skills for long run of life (Adams, 2006). If someone does not have English as their mother tongue, still he/she has mixed type of feelings about it. You may learn this language to keep pace with the changing trends of the world. It can give you more power and status in professional life. On the other side, you did not give that much attention to English language, because it may harm your own mother tongue language or the fear of seeking it (Crystal, 2003). Similarly, second language anxiety is associated with the feeling of tension, pressure and emotional unbalancing during its learning (MacIntyre, 1999).

A well-known definition is proposed by (Horwitz,1986) a unique and complex obsession, feeling and attitudes related to foreign language anxiety directly or indirectly belong to uniqueness of the learning environment. It means that the background and learning atmosphere of the foreign language learners

have deep relations with their language speaking success. Additionally, a country like Pakistan, where the fear of speaking English is very high because of Urdu medium system of learning. According to (Wang, 2009), foreign language anxiety is a sign of identity conflict which is depend on contextual aspects, and they are varying from person to person and situation to situation. The students, who have been given maximum opportunity to interact with native speakers they feel confident in L2 as compare to those who have no opportunities to interact with foreign speakers. Moreover, (Krashen, 1982) of the view that the exposure to target language helps to get competence in target language. From the above discussion we can make a point that the anxiety of foreign language like English can be lessened through interaction with the speakers of that very language.

English as a foreign language in Pakistan

The United Kingdom has ruled over major parts of the world during colonial period. The parts they have ruled over still have the influence of their culture and languages like Pakistan. Now, English is used as official language in all institutions of Pakistan (Siagian, 2017). Currently, the use of English language not only became source of good career, but also sign of high status. In Pakistan, many languages are spoken and every region has its own dialect with a litter variation. Every province has one or more main languages, which are practiced by majority of the people. On the other hand, the educated class try to maintain English in most of their life activities (Rehman, 2002). It shows that the impact of English as official language is obvious on regional languages of Pakistan. To get a good opportunity and status in society people try to become proficient in target language. For example, the speakers of small language especially the new generation are shifting to the dominant languages such as Urdu and English. The young generation gives preference to use the words of dominant languages. Since British rule English has remained the significant language in subcontinent (Rehman,2020).

Even after getting independence from British rule, English has remained source of communication throughout the country (Haque, 1982). Furthermore, (Shamim, 2008), explains that English is the source of educations in ‘elitist schools’, private and expensive English medium schools, and indirectly state-run cadet colleges. Moreover, such factors give more power to one language as compare to other languages. It has become benchmark of good background, sophistications, which ultimately give advantage to those, who got fluency in English. It is also seen that not only the upper class but also the urban feudal lords and tribal heads educate their children in modern English school system. As a result, English the language of the power can be used to empower and educate the uneducated, it is used to disempower the people of Pakistan (Hoodbhoy,1998).

Phobia of learning English as a second language among university students

In Pakistan English is practiced as a second language and used in most of the domains of life and its importance is increasing day by day. According to (Shahzadi & Janjua 2016), majority of the students in Pakistan want to learn English and its grammar, and they think, being communicative in English language ascertain a good career. Students at Taiwan show positive response to English language, they think that English language not only need of the world, but also its significance to developed their country according to the demands of the globe (Huang, 2005). The view of (Cheng, 1998) is that fear of making mistakes and shyness in front of other students hinder their participation in English language class. The students mostly fear of speaking English due to two reasons. Firstly, they lack confidence and secondly most of the English learners lack proper knowledge and rules of grammar. Moreover, the students mostly fear in speaking English as compare to other skills of English language. They love to write, read and listen in English and feel comfortable (Alwis, 2020).

According to (Latif, 2014), the students who study English as a second language Malaysian Universities' feel comfortable about speaking English as a second language. It is because of their attachment and learning motivation about English. The learners are communicating with others and they do not feel that much anxiety and fear in this language. The adult learners are matured enough as compare to young learners and they have more optimistic approach in learning this language. Likewise, the university seekers of English language know about the importance of English, which help them to overcome the anxiety and fear of speaking English as a second language. They became habitual of their own mother tongue and official languages most of the domains of life activities. Secondly, they feel embarrassment in making mistakes in English language (Putra, 2018).

Research Methodology

Data Collection

The primary approach used for collecting data in this study involved a thoughtfully designed questionnaire. The questionnaires were adapted from (Horwitz E.1983) Likert scale and the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which depict general apprehensions of the participants by examining in a 4-point Likert scale that ranges from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". The questionnaire consisted of five considerably selected statements that effectively apprehended the main concerns of the undertaken study. This systematic approach allowed for a detailed and quantifiable analysis of these concerns. This methodology facilitated an organized exploration of participants' viewpoints, lending a comprehensive and quantitative dimension to the subsequent analysis.

The participants in this research were students from various academic semesters at Karakoram International University, Hunza Campus. The study focused on students from various departments, namely Tourism and Hospitality

Management, Development Studies, Business Management, and Education Department. This inclusive approach aimed to represent a diverse range of experiences. Purposive sample technique is utilized to make assure the equal representation of each department and semester. The total pool of sample is 260 students enrolled in different semesters and departments. The collected data was subjected to analysis using the statistical software SPSS version, and the findings were presented using descriptive statistics along with percentages. By considering data from the six different semesters, the study assessed the level of English language anxiety among students.

Data Analysis

The collected data analyzed by taking frequencies and percentages. Having collected the data by the above said methodology. The reactions of the students transformed into numbers and then tabulated for calculating percentages. The given data signify various results or responses related to five semesters and four departments of Karakoram International University, Hunza Campus. Each row represents a different semester, while the columns indicate the level of agreement about the asked statement, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. In each semester, respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the given statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of respondents falling into each agreement category. Descriptive analysis of each table and, figure is given (see table and figure 1,3,4,5,6 and 7).

Table1: I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on in English language class.

Semester	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Chi-Square
1.00	2.17	80.43	8.70	8.70	100	21.128
3.00	17.50	55.00	27.50	0.00	100	
4.00	0.00	66.67	33.33	0.00	100	
5.00	11.76	58.82	26.47	2.94	100	
6.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	100	
7.00	15.38	57.69	26.92	0.00	100	

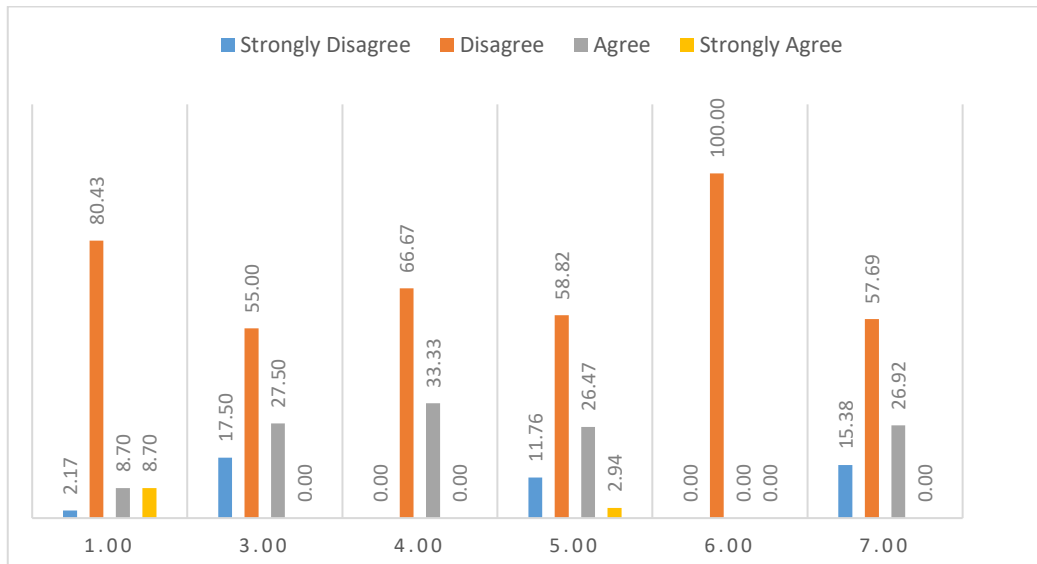


Figure 1: I tremble when I know I am going to be called on in English language class

Figure 1, states the anxiety levels of the participants about English language. The students of semester 1st mostly disagreed with the statement which is 80.43% of the total. In the case of 3rd semester, the tendency of the participants towards agree and disagree is quite different which is 55% and 27% respectively. The major reason behind this difference can be the minimum practice of English language as compared to Urdu and their mother tongues. The low percentage

i.e.0.0 % indicates the students' confidence and satisfaction about English language. However, the results of the 4th and 6th semester are very similar to one another. These values appear to be different from the percentages in the second column, suggesting that this column represents a distinct variable. Moreover, the responses of the students of semester 5th and 7th contains another set of percentages. These percentages likely correspond same results such as 57% and 58% about the agreement regarding the statement. Likewise, percentages are shown about other Likert Scales (see figure 1). As a whole, the students of this semester have shown their agreement about the statement. It displays their confidence and content in accordance with speaking and practicing English language within the class and outside the class.

Table2: During English language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with course

Semester	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Chi-Square	Sig
1.00	19.57	36.96	32.61	10.87	100.00		
3.00	7.50	52.50	30.00	10.00	100.00		
4.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00		
5.00	8.82	41.18	32.35	17.65	100.00	11.319	0.73
6.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	100.00		
7.00	7.69	53.85	30.77	7.69	100.00		

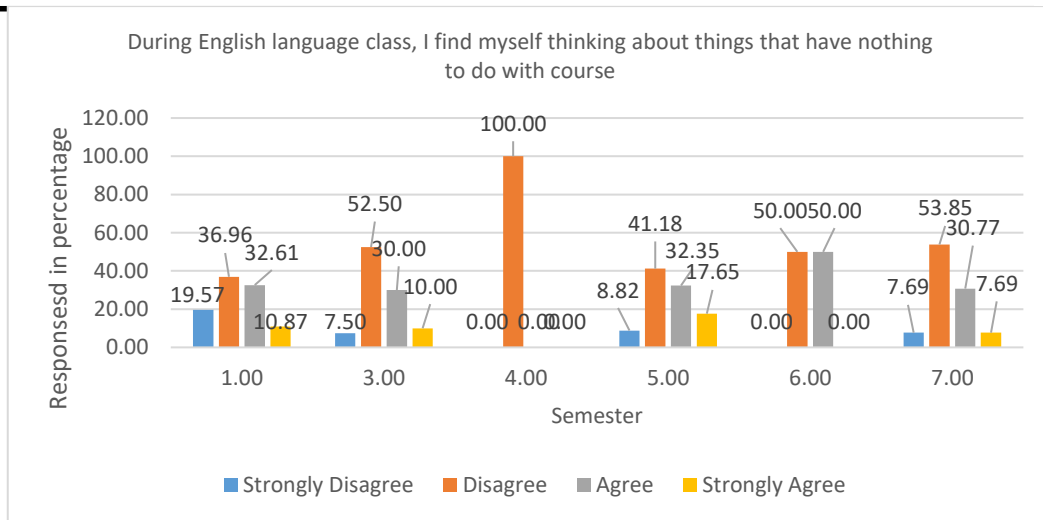


Figure2: During English language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with course.

The results about this statements are stimulating and noteworthy such as the students of first semester have shown their agreement and disagreement in the following percentages strongly agree 1.00%, agree 19.57%, while disagree 36.96%, and strongly disagree are 32.61% respectively. The participants of this case shown apprehensive about the use of English in the class. Moreover, the majority of respondents of semester one chose either disagree or strongly disagree. The response of agree is relatively low, while "strongly agree" has the lowest response (see figure 2). The presented information also clears the idea that if the participants get something valuable in their lives they never tend to lose that thing. This is similar in this case as they want to regard the use of English language. This study reveals that the higher the education level is, the greater the chances acquiring modern education. Similar to semester 1, the majority of respondents chose either disagree or strongly disagree. However, the response for strongly disagree is higher as compared to Semester one. Likewise, majority of respondents chose either disagree or strongly disagree. The agree

and strongly agree options had lower responses, while the no response percentage is noticeable.

In conclusion, the analysis of the Likert scale responses reveals varying opinions across different semesters. Semesters 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 show a mixed distribution of responses, with a significant portion leaning towards disagreement. Semester 3 stands out as unanimous in selecting disagree.

Table3: I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class

Semester	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Chi-Square	Sig
1.00	17.39	52.17	21.74	8.70	100.00		
3.00	30.00	42.50	22.50	5.00	100.00		
4.00	66.67	0.00	33.33	0.00	100.00	14.082	0.519
5.00	23.53	47.06	17.65	11.76	100.00		
6.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	100.00		
7.00	15.38	61.54	23.08	0.00	100.00		

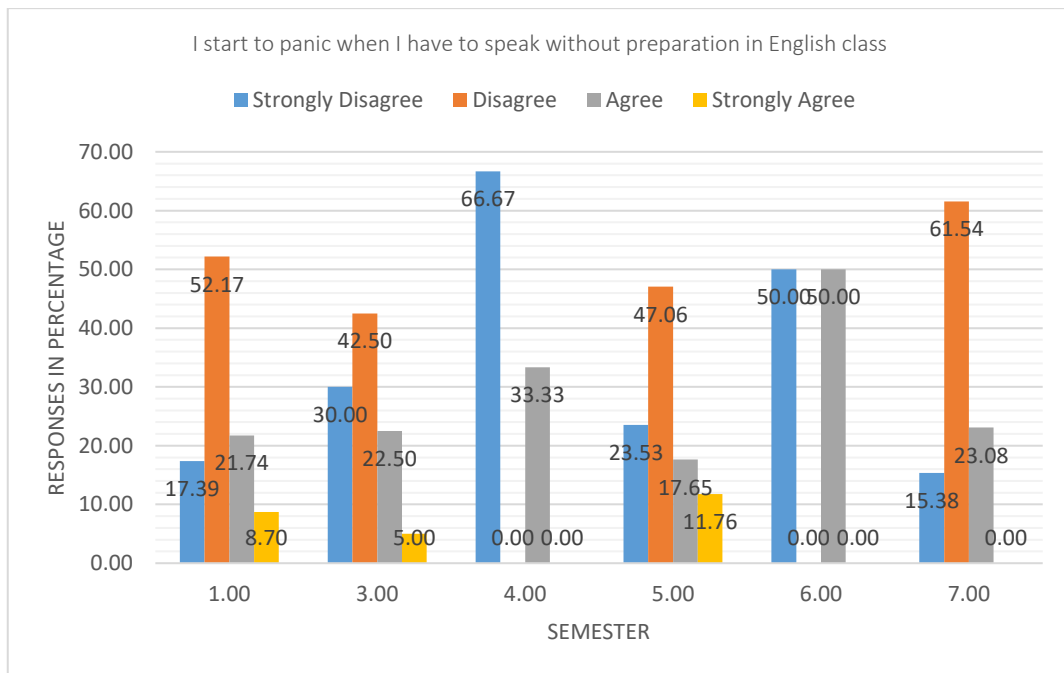


Figure3: I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class

Based on the outcomes shown by the figure about the given statement shows varying level about each semester for instance strongly disagree 17.39%, disagree 52.17%, on the other hand, agree 21.74%, and strongly agree 8.70% have shown a similar type of percentages. The ration of strongly agree, and strongly disagree is almost similar. It reveals that the background of the students of this semester is quite different from one another.

The result of 4th semester is quite different from other semesters for example the students have strongly disagree that is 66.67% and those who agreed ratio is 33.33%. Contrary to this, they do not bother to show any response about the disagreement and strong agreement, which is 0.00% respectively. It became obvious from the above results that the students of this semesters are confused and unclear about their performance of English in class regarding this statement. Moreover, the 0.00 %, shows the disinterest and lack of competency and unattached to the host language. As we move ahead the proportion of the semesters 5, 6 and 7 have similar kind of results about the aforementioned statement see (table and figure 3).

Table4: I am afraid that my English language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.

Semester	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Chi-Square Sig
1.00	19.57	32.61	45.65	2.17	100.00	0.152
3.00	20.00	52.50	20.00	7.50	100.00	—
4.00	33.33	33.33	0.00	33.33	100.00	—
5.00	17.65	52.94	20.59	8.82	100.00	20.535
6.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	
7.00	23.08	46.15	30.77	0.00	100.00	

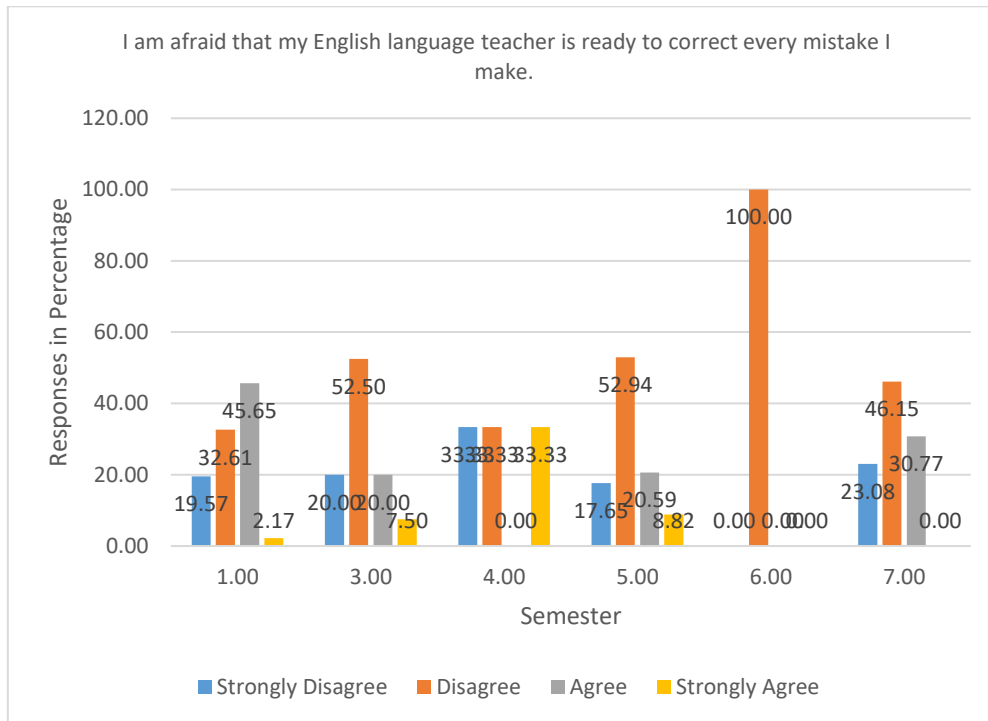


Figure4: I am afraid that my English language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.

This figure reveals the acquired data regarding the six semesters. Each bar shows various variations of the opinion of the students about the statement “I am afraid that my English language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.” If we look into the responses of the semester 1,3 and 4 they have assimilations with one another for example the majority of respondents of the semester one which is 45.65% agreed with the given statement, while a significant portion disagreed 32.61%. A small percentage strongly disagreed 19.57%, and a very small percentage strongly agreed 2.17%.

The responses of the 3rd semester is the highest percentage of respondents expressed disagreement 52.50%, while 20.00% agreed and 7.50% strongly agreed. A smaller portion strongly disagreed which is 20.00%. Again, this shows different variations regarding the response of the participants. From

this we can tell that the understanding level and command over English language is varying from student to students.

The results of semester 4 are amazingly were lightly divided, with 33.33% strongly disagreeing, while, 33.33% disagreeing, and 33.33% strongly agreeing. No respondents expressed agreement about this statement. In semester 5, the highest percentage of respondents disagreed which is 52.94%, followed by those who agreed is 20.59%. A smaller percentage strongly disagreed 17.65%, and an even smaller percentage strongly agreed 8.82% are shown by semesters. We found a very surprising opinion of the respondents of semester 6th that all respondents 100.00% expressed disagreement, with no one selecting any other option. On the contrary, semester 7 students, the majority of respondents 46.15% disagreed, while 30.77% agreed. A smaller percentage strongly disagreed 23.08%, and no one strongly agreed. In a nutshell, the reactions of the participant of this semester are surprisingly different from other semesters. The case of semester 6th students shows their full confidence and commend over English, while the responses of other semesters are similar to one another.

Table5: I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English language class.

Semester	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Chi-Square	Sig
1.00	19.57	28.26	36.96	15.22	100.00		
3.00	17.50	40.00	32.50	10.00	100.00		
4.00	0.00	66.67	0.00	33.33	100.00		
5.00	17.65	44.12	32.35	5.88	100.00	18.41	0.241
6.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	100.00		
7.00	11.54	61.54	26.92	0.00	100.00		

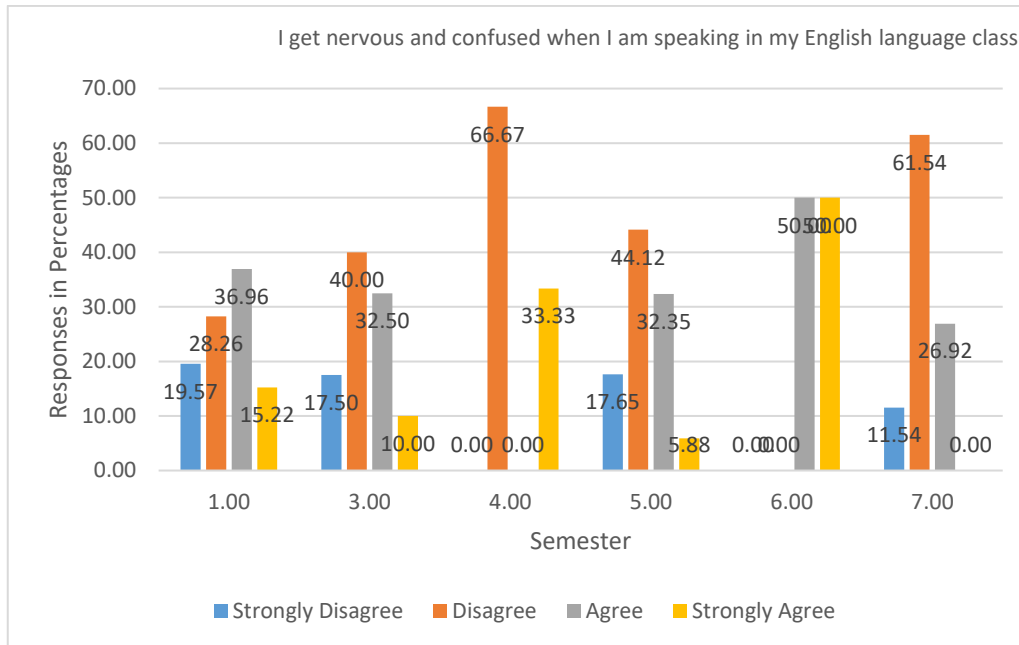


Figure5: I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English language class.

Figure 5, and table 5, show the reactions of the respondents regarding the given statement “I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English language class.” The responses of the students conflicting from semester to semester, such as semester 4.00 stands out as having a higher percentage of strong disagreement 66.67% compared to other semesters. While semester 6.00 has the highest percentage of strong agreement 50.00%, indicating a more optimistic reaction compared to other semesters. On the other side, semester 7.00 has a higher percentage of disagreement 61.54% and, a lower percentage of agreement 26.92% compared to other semesters (see figure and table 5).

The number of students’ agreement was higher than other factors of anxiety of speaking English as a second language. When we look into semester 4 and 7 we find some interesting results about the asked statement. For instance, the students of semester 4 and 7 both have solely exhibited their agreement. From

this, we can disclose that students are fairly confident about their performance of speaking English as a second language in class.

Discussion

In this part, an overall discussion is made on the basis of the results and analysis done for this study. An important finding from the study indicates that senior students display more assertiveness and comfort compared to students in their 1st and 2nd semesters. Likewise, (Latif 2004), indicates that the students, who study English as a second language feel comfortable in speaking English as a second language in most of the activities of life. This comfort is due to their attachment and learning motivation regarding English. (Putra, 2018), identifies two factors that significantly affect the speaking anxiety. The first factor is that most learners feel shy while practicing it, because they mostly practice in their own mother tongue languages. The second factor is the fear of embarrassment when making mistakes in the English language. Similar type of anxieties expresses by the participants of this study for example most of the students do possess the basic language knowledge, but they cannot talk with others, because of shyness and fear of making mistakes (Cheng, 1998). The current study also discovers, that the participants reflect their background knowledge and lack of practice major causes of English language anxiety within and outside the classroom. Although, they prefer to read and write over speaking English. The findings are supported by (Alwis,2020), who discuss that the foreign language learners love to write, read, and listen and they love the aforementioned skills of English over speaking skill.

Moreover, (Krashen, 1982) of the view that the exposure to target language helps to get competence in target language. From the above discussion we can make a point that the anxiety of foreign language like English can be lessened through interaction with the speakers of that very language. Likewise, the findings of the study also discovered that the respondents who got maximum

acquaintance of the English language setting they have good facility over speaking English within the class and outside the class. The results also divulge that senior students are more confident as compare to those students, who currently enrolled in different semesters at Karakoram International University, Hunza Campus. As the students advance in their semesters their performance achievements in academics became better and they overcome language anxiety sluggishly. The very idea is supported by (Campbell & Shaw 1994), that the anxiety affects English speakers, both beginners and advanced level learners. It is indicated that university level students, who study English as a second language approximately half of the students' experience language anxiety, which they overawed with the passage of time.

Conclusion

As per results drawn and analysis carried out for this study, we ascertain that the anxiety level of the students varying from semester to semester. The results reveal that adult students currently enrolled in different semesters at Karakoram International University, Hunza Campus, experience a moderate level of anxiety. This could be attributed to the value, that adult learners are highly motivated and possess a strong belief in their ability to speak English as a second language. They exhibit the capability to independently address learning-related challenges and effectively manage feelings of nervousness. From the novelties of the study, it can also be affirming that anxiety can be overawed, when learners of English as a second language practice it in all realms of life (see tables and figures 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7). Moreover, practicing it goes beyond the knowledge and rules of the subject, as the study has suggested that students who actively practice speaking English appear more confident in overcoming the anxiety compared to those who possess subject knowledge without practice. Also, the students of Karakoram International University, Hunza campus did not show too much anxiety that will distress their academic

performance. Most of the students feel moderate and they are willing to be sound in English language.

Furthermore, the respondents of this study have shown diverse level of agreement and disagreement differs from semester to semester. For example, in some cases, the percentage of agreement about the asked statements is high, while in others, the percentage of disagreement is high. Moreover, the students of Karakoram International University, Hunza Campus, have shown lifelike satisfaction about speaking English as a second language in class (see tables and figures 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7). In other words, the findings do indicate that the number of years spent learning English is a significant factor.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, we can propose several recommendations to support policy makers, teachers, or lecturers in creating a positive learning environment and reducing anxiety levels among students learning English as a second language. To address anxiety, it is crucial for English language instructors to identify effective methods that enhance motivation and boost self-confidence, especially for students struggling with English due to anxiety. Creating a comfortable and supportive environment in the language classroom plays a significant role in achieving this goal. Therefore, careful consideration of the teaching techniques and methods employed is essential. The study indicated that while most respondents experienced moderate levels of anxiety, a few students reported high levels of anxiety during English classes. Consequently, instructors should be mindful of students' emotions during evaluations, whether formal or informal. Learning a second language differs from learning the first, as many students lack confidence and feel insecure in the second language classroom. Hence, instructors could consider adopting more indirect evaluation approaches to alleviate students' anxiety about

learning English. This approach might help students feel less pressure and enhance their overall language learning experience.

Limitations of the Study

The study has various limitations which need to be considered while interpreting the results. Firstly, it was carried out with a limited number of students from a specific university and restricted departments, which may not offer a comprehensive perspective on the level and sources of English-speaking anxiety. Therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to other universities or educational settings. However, specific aspects of the findings can still serve as a point of reference for addressing students' anxiety regarding foreign language (FL) speaking. Despite these limitations, it is recommended that future research be conducted to explore the causes of English-speaking anxiety among students across various age groups, levels of study, achievements, degrees of motivation, and encompassing all academic sectors in Pakistani universities.

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