THE INFLUENCE OF ENGLISH PROFICEINCY ON SOCIAL ANXIETY IN MULTICULTURAL SETTINGS

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ABSTRACT: *In today's modern English language, proficiency on social anxiety is considered as one of the most important aspects of it. This article explores the causes of this phenomenon and its various effects on learners in recent years. And social anxiety should be prevent as in early age as possible therefore, teachers ought to use more creative ways of teaching this language and this can make the learning process easy and interactive. The research concludes with a list of recommendations on how to lesson speaking anxiety in English language classroom to ELS (English as a second language) learners.*

Key words: *lingua franca, miscommunication, confusion, participants, beginners, non-native speakers, negative evaluation, long-term effects, linguistic competence.*

Introduction. In an increasingly globalized world, the English language is emerging as a lingua franca in multicultural environments. This is particularly true in countries where English is either the dominant language or a widely spoken second language. For learners and non-native speakers, having a good command of English can significantly impact social success and well-being. One of the psychological effects related to language proficiency in multicultural environments is social anxiety. Social anxiety refers to the fear of negative evaluation, embarrassment, or rejection in social interactions, and poor English proficiency can exacerbate this condition.

Social anxiety in multicultural settings can be heightened when individuals feel they cannot express themselves adequately, often due to language barriers. Several reasons can cause to this issue of *Social Anxiety Due to Poor English Proficiency.* First and foremost, discuss how learners may fear mispronunciations, incorrect grammar, or using inappropriate words, which can lead to anxiety. One of the primary causes of social anxiety among non-native English speakers is the fear of miscommunication. If a person does not have sufficient command of the language or a wide enough vocabulary, they may worry about misunderstanding others or failing to express themselves clearly. This fear intensifies in group settings such as classrooms, workplaces, or social gatherings, where effective communication is key to participation and success. Moreover, individuals who have faced negative interactions or criticism due to their English language ability in educational or social settings may fear repeating such situations. Harsh corrections, mockery, or being singled out for language mistakes can leave a psychological mark, leading to avoidance of future English interactions and heightened social anxiety. In addition, language is deeply tied to culture, and communication involves more than just words—it involves shared norms, expressions, and behaviors. If a person is not proficient enough in English, they may also struggle to understand the cultural context behind certain phrases, gestures, or jokes. These cultural differences can lead to confusion and intensify feelings of "not fitting in," further increasing social anxiety. The next reason of this problem is pressure in academic and professional settings. Multicultural environments, especially in academic or professional contexts, often demand a high level of English proficiency. Learners and workers, particularly when English is the primary medium for education or business, may feel immense pressure to perform at a certain level. The constant need to meet expected outcomes and the fear of making mistakes contributes to anxiety.

Literal review and methadology. Many studies suggest that improving English proficiency through structured learning environments, immersion, and social interactions can significantly reduce social anxiety among learners. Research

indicates that language proficiency also influences cultural identity. Individuals who are better speakers of a dominant language, such as English, often feel more integrated into the society they live in. For example, **Dr. Jean-Marc Dewaele**[1] has published widely on how multilingual experience different emotions across their languages and how language proficiency, particularly English, can influence one's ability to socialize and function in diverse settings. His works often emphasize the role of proficiency in reducing anxiety, as individuals with better command of a language tend to express themselves more confidently**. Dr. Elaine Horwitz's** [2] Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) has been instrumental in researching anxiety in language learners. Her research touches on how lack of proficiency in a second language, such as English, can lead to heightened levels of social anxiety, especially when learners face multicultural settings where communication is essential. She recommends gradually increasing speaking tasks, which helps learners build confidence without overwhelming them. Furthermore, She emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive, non- judgmental classroom atmosphere to minimize anxiety. **Peter MacIntyre**,[3] has also addressed social anxiety in his research. MacIntyre's studies on second- language acquisition and communication anxiety are crucial in understanding how language proficiency affects social anxiety. His research often explores how social contexts and language skills interact and contribute to stress and discomfort in social interactions. Another researcher in this field, **Louis A Schmidt** [4], has studied the Social anxiety disorder (SAD) of learning second language .SAD places individuals, both children and adults, at risk for chronic distress and impairment and differs from shyness and performance anxiety by its greater severity and persuasiveness (Beidel et al 1999; Schneier 2006). Often people diagnosed with SAD will avoid important activities, including school and work, or if they attend, they will not participate. This withdrawal results in lower achievements in vital parts of their daily lives that end in decreased occupational, academic and family function.

Stephen Krashen [5] explores that emotional factors like anxiety can block language acquisition Krashen suggests low-stress environments where students feel relaxed and less self-conscious to help lower their "affective filter," which otherwise acts as a barrier to language learning. He recommends providing learners with input they can understand slightly above their current level, which allows gradual improvement without overwhelming them.

These authors have made substantial contributions to understanding social anxiety, particularly in relation to language use and multicultural settings. Their findings underscore the necessity of addressing social anxiety through enhanced language proficiency and supportive educational environments.

Analysis and result. The data collected from the survey participants were analyzed to study the relationship between English proficiency and social anxiety in multicultural environments. Participants were categorized into three levels of English proficiency:

1. Beginner,
2. Intermediate
3. Advanced.

The average social anxiety scores for each level were calculated and compared.

The analysis showed that as English proficiency increased, the average social anxiety scores decreased. Beginner-level participants exhibited the highest levels of social anxiety, while those at the advanced level had the lowest. This inverse relationship indicates that higher English proficiency may be associated with lower social anxiety in multicultural environments.

Cultural factors also emerged as significant contributors to social anxiety across all proficiency levels. Participants indicated that a lack of understanding of cultural norms and expressions heightened their anxiety, making it challenging to engage in social interactions. This was particularly evident among beginner learners, who felt less

integrated and often avoided social situations.

Finally, the findings corroborated previous research by Dr. Jean-Marc Dewaele and Dr. Elaine Horwitz, emphasizing that improved language proficiency can lead to increased confidence and reduced anxiety. As participants improved their English skills, they reported feeling more comfortable in multicultural environments, supporting the notion that language training is essential for social integration and well-being.

Conclusion/recommendations. This study highlights the significant relationship between English proficiency and social anxiety among learners in multicultural environments. The findings indicate that lower levels of English proficiency are associated with higher social anxiety, particularly in situations requiring effective communication. Beginners face unique challenges, including fear of miscommunication and a lack of cultural understanding, which exacerbate their anxiety.

As highlighted by previous research, enhancing English proficiency through structured learning environments and immersive experiences can play a crucial role in reducing social anxiety. This suggests that educators should prioritize innovative teaching methods that not only improve language skills but also foster a supportive atmosphere for learners.

Furthermore, the research underscores the importance of addressing social anxiety early in language education. By equipping learners with the necessary linguistic and social skills, we can enhance their confidence and integration into multicultural settings. Future research should explore the long-term effects of language proficiency on social anxiety and investigate strategies to support learners at various proficiency levels. Additionally, examining the role of cultural training alongside language instruction may provide valuable insights into reducing anxiety and promoting successful social interactions. Addressing social anxiety in English language learners is essential for their overall well-being and success in multicultural environments. By recognizing the impact of language proficiency, educators and policymakers can develop more effective

approaches to language education that promote both linguistic competence and social confidence.

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