

Literature study on Using Web-Based English Learning to Reduce the Level of Anxiety Among Language Learners

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Abstract :

Anxiety is one of the six personality traits that affect how well people learn English. Anxiety is a condition that is linked to feelings like annoyance, hesitance, pessimism, and unease when speaking English; it is not a persistent state, though. However, this might prevent the learner from mastering English proficiency. To lower anxiety among language learners, language teachers must be able to use effective language teaching methods. Selecting the appropriate model of language learning is one of the skills needed to use the technique in language instruction. A literature review was used in this study to describe the benefits of using online English learning to lessen anxiety. The study's findings suggest that web-based English instruction can be utilized as an information technology literacy tool to promote the development of superior human resources who are educated in the digital era in the study of the English language.

Key words: computer-assisted language learning (CALL), anxiety, and web-based English learning

0.Introduction

People all over the world speak English, which is one of the most widely spoken languages. English is taught as a foreign language in Iraq from the primary through the university levels. Students who wish to learn English must master the fundamentals of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Speaking is one of the four skills that students should focus on studying and mastering the most. Because speaking calls for a lot of interaction, it is currently a skill that many students or learners find difficult to master.

The other three language skills can be practiced independently, but speaking is a skill that students cannot practice independently, so they must make every effort to find someone

or someone to speak to. According to Abuhussein et al. (2023), one of the most important parts of learning a second or foreign language is speaking. He added that the ability to have a conversation in the target language is how the effectiveness of language learning is determined.

Speaking fluently is regarded as crucial to language learning because it allows for communication both inside and outside of the classroom. One of the emotional factors that has an impact on learning a foreign language, particularly speaking, is anxiety.

Because it impairs students' verbal performance, anxiety seems to be a significant factor in the development of language learning. Tang (2023) emphasized that learners' anxiety when learning or using the foreign language is related to things like anxiety, nervousness, and anxiety. Additionally, they noted that while students might not have any trouble picking up other language skills, learning to speak in public might present a "mental block" for them. When speaking the language they are learning in public, foreign language learners typically exhibit feelings of anxiety, worry, and nervousness, according to Bozkurt and Aydin (2023). When language learners communicate in their target language, these emotions are viewed as potentially negative and have negative consequences. Furthermore, speaking anxiety prevents language learners from using the target language, according to Rizkiya and Pratolo (2023). Anxious and nervous students exhibit poor performance and achievement for the language proficiency level they wish to master because they appear to have trouble focusing and mastering the target language.

According to Hulaifah and Sibuea (2023), language anxiety is a multifaceted, complex phenomenon. Additionally, according to Bashori et al. (2022), anxiety is a personal experience of tension and worry that is specifically connected to speaking, listening, and learning the target language. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), foreign language anxiety is the complexity of one's own perceptions, emotions, and various language-learning behaviours that result from the particularities of the learning process itself. Three

interconnected parts make up Horwitz et al.'s theory about language learning anxiety. First, communicative apprehension, which is referred to as a form of shyness marked by fear or apprehension when communicating with others, The second is the fear of criticism (negative criticism), which is the worry about how others will perceive the learner. The third condition is test anxiety, which is characterised as a form of learner's performance anxiety coupled with a fear of failing.

Many researchers have looked into the fear of speaking a foreign language, particularly students' English. The first researchers to develop the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale as a research tool that focuses on anxiety feelings experienced by foreign language learners in the classroom were Horwitz et al. (1986). Horwitz et al. (1986) distinguished between three aspects of foreign language anxiety: communication anxiety, fear of criticism, and general feelings of anxiety. In the past two decades, there has been a significant increase in the amount of research on language anxiety in general and English speaking in particular. For instance, Latif (2015), Na (2007), and Rafek (2009) investigated the relationship between gender and English anxiety. Despite the fact that boys received slightly higher average scores than girls, research on this topic showed that there was no discernible difference between male and female students.

Additionally, Latif (2015) and Karatas et al. (2016) investigated whether there was a relationship between the length of time that speaking English learners studied the foreign language and their level of anxiety. Three types of anxiety that are most frequently discussed are communicative apprehension, negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Irawan et al. (2018) and Indrianty (2016) searched for the dominant causative factors of English learners' anxiety levels related to these three types of anxiety. The results of the aforementioned study show a positive correlation between the duration of foreign language study and students' level of anxiety. They feel less anxious the longer they study

a foreign language. According to the status of the language being studied, whether it is a second language or a foreign language, each study offers varying results regarding the three contributing factors, but not absolutes for some cases of English learners.

Numerous studies in Iraq have looked into the stress that students experience in English classes. According to Krebt (2017), many students experienced anxiety during speaking exercises, and this condition was a result of the stress of the speaking task itself. In the meantime, Rabia and Hazza (2017) found that the anxiety associated with speaking in front of an audience has resulted in uncontrollable trembling and a lack of clarity in speech. Students try their hardest to avoid speaking English as a result of this anxiety. More specifically, the main causes of students' anxiety in speaking English classes are a lack of vocabulary, a lack of preparation, a fear of making mistakes, and a fear of peer ridicule.

Websites can be helpful for learning foreign languages (Son, 2008; Blake, 2011), and students have a positive opinion of web-based learning (Tan, 2013; Ngampornchai & Adams, 2016) when it comes to facilitating the learning of English using technology. Language anxiety can be reduced for learners by learning and teaching foreign languages online (Dewaele, 2017; Pino, 2008). There is very little research in Iraq on online English courses that can help people feel less anxious when speaking English. Only Bashori et al. (2020) conducted the most recent study specifically addressing web-based English learning and students' speaking anxiety. Other researchers, including Mukminin et al. (2015) and Sirait (2015), looked at English anxiety in their research but did not specifically address the use of technology in it. Therefore, it will be crucial to investigate how web-based English learning impacts Iraqi EFL learners' anxiety, as discussed in this study.

1.Methodology

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with a library research approach (Zed, 2008). Through library research, according to Zed, researchers limit their activities to reviewing library references to answer problems. The problem studied in this study is what factors trigger the anxiety of English learners and hinder their proficiency in speaking skills. In addition, the researcher will specifically present several studies related to learning English that adopt web-based technology to overcome anxiety about learning English. The benefits of this research can contribute to computer-assisted language learning (CALL) technology by improving spoken English proficiency by offering English teachers insight into how students can achieve their communicative speech without worrying about the other person while speaking in the target language. In addition, by trying to implement web-based language learning, students may have virtual partners to replace native speakers who are not accessible to learners and can get used to it without triggering their anxiety when speaking.

2.Results and Discussion

In the following discussion section, the results of the study are presented regarding the factors of student anxiety that can hinder their proficiency while speaking English. In addition, the benefits of web-based foreign language learning are to reduce the level of learner anxiety and improve proficiency.

2.1. Affective Factors

Affective factors are the main factors that contribute to learner anxiety when speaking English. Factor affective is related to the problem of interest, feelings, emotions, and personality of the learner (Brown, 2004).

In relation to the anxiety. The lack of interest of English learners in the topics they want to learn can lead to high levels of anxiety when learners are asked to speak the language. England (Kasbi and Shirvan, 2017). Another affective factor is the feeling of students

who are afraid of failing to speak English to their teacher because they are worried about the teacher's negative reaction (Tang, 2023). In addition to negative teacher reactions, peer ratings can also be another important source of foreign language learner anxiety. Additionally, when they believe their other friends are viewing them negatively, students frequently experience anxiety when speaking in English (Rahman, 2017). This is in line with Hanifa (2018)'s observation that responses from people around them who are not good can make students anxious and hesitant to speak; for example, fear of being laughed at, ridiculed, or judged superior to others when they try to communicate in English with their friends or teachers. Based on some of the studies above, affective factors can affect students' abilities to develop their communication skills.

2.2 Cognitive Factors

Although affective factors are not the only factors that trigger learner anxiety, other factors, such as cognitive factors, are also very influential in creating a stressful environment for language learners. foreign. Cognitive factors are related to certain parts that include topics, ideas, or content, and these parts can trigger students' anxiety when they speak English. There are many studies that reveal that anxiety about speaking English is related to this cognitive factor.

To mention a few, Kasbi and Shirvan (2017), for example, found that a lack of knowledge about the topic is a cause of high speaking anxiety. In situations like these, students may speak very little, or not at all, because they cannot think of anything to say and become unwilling to participate in forum talk. Furthermore, Mouhoubi-Messadh (2017) found that students are very likely to be anxious when they are afraid of not understanding the content they want to talk about. This is similar to what was stated by Anandari (2015), who stated that the main cause of anxiety originating from cognitive factors is mostly experienced by learners of English as a foreign language because of their inability to master content or topics comprehensively. Still, in terms of cognitive factors, the interlocutor also has an important role in determining speech anxiety. A study

from Melouah (2013) highlighted that the interlocutor's reaction to learner mistakes and how to correct mistakes were also very influential in creating an atmosphere full of psychological pressure on foreign language learners.

2.3. Linguistic Factors

In addition to affective and cognitive factors, linguistic factors also contribute to the anxiety level of foreign language learners. Linguistic ability, according to Brown (2004), is related to the knowledge and competence of the learner in mastering the components of the language he is learning, such as grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and pronunciation. This is in line with the results of Tanvier's research (2007), which found that researchers of second language acquisition have often found learners complaining about English pronunciation, which is too difficult to adopt, in addition to the very complicated and very irregular English pronunciation system, which contains so many exceptions in spelling and meaning for each vocabulary. Here are some language components that can be a barrier for English learners, thereby triggering a level of anxiety when speaking in public or to an interlocutor.

A. Grammar (grammar)

With regard to linguistic difficulties, grammar is the most important aspect that makes foreign language and second language learners find it difficult to learn to speak. Tanvier (2007) used a sample of English teachers with Mandarin and Taiwanese as their first languages in his research to demonstrate this. The results of the study showed that their students' most important difficulties when speaking were in terms of constructing grammar. When they speak, they are not sure which verb form to use, so they have to think about what to say first. This is caused by the existence of suffixes to mark the tenses of verbs that are not owned by the linguistic system of their mother tongue. Difficulties related to problems like this, according to MacIntyre and Gardner (1991: 296), can lead to the impression that students who are anxious are not able to

communicate in the target language because it has hindered the learner's fluency in conveying the messages he wants to say.

B. Vocabulary: A lot of prior research has demonstrated the challenges that learners face when trying to recall and remember vocabulary words they want to pronounce. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991), for example, found that respondents in their research always felt nervous or anxious when speaking English because they did not have sufficient vocabulary to express the ideas to be conveyed. This implies that English learners' anxiety when speaking is shown by the difficulties and limited vocabulary they have.

The findings of this study have implications for Lightbown and Spada's research (2006: 39), which found that many vocabulary words are unutterable by students when speaking because they can only process a limited amount of information at once. So this is where the learner's speaking anxiety arises and is triggered to impede their fluency in speaking.

C. How to pronounce the word (pronunciation)

Previous studies have revealed that pronunciation is a source of high stress for both second- and foreign-language learners. Tanvier (2007), in his research, found that the issue of anxiety related to pronunciation among foreign language learners has the highest rate of triggering anxiety when speaking English. Tanvier (2007: 47) further emphasizes the results of his research that "pronunciation is an important issue in all elements of language because of its direct impact on interaction. When the learner feels that the other person does not understand him, he also needs to correct his pronunciation in an instant. This is often difficult for the learner to do, which makes it so stressful. In addition, Krashen (1985: 46) states that the learners in contexts where English is not the first language only listen to the words spoken by the teacher or classmates, and the

pronunciation of their English is also not good. This is also what causes anxiety when speaking because the learner's pronunciation is not good.

The benefits of web-based language learning to overcome anxiety El Sazly (2020) examines the effect of using artificial intelligence on students' anxiety about speaking English and proficiency during speaking. He explores the role of applications in speech practice to manage foreign language anxiety levels. He uses chatbot in interactive activities to facilitate increased interaction and verbal communication to improve students' English-speaking skills. Her research findings support the integration of technology as an effective tool in English language education as it provides flexible, interactive, and learner-centered learning and minimizes speech anxiety. The results of this study confirm the research Tafazoli and Gómez-Parra (2017) argue that using AI applications can improve student-centered learning approaches, in addition to showing that anxiety can be minimized when AI offers sufficient individualization for learners to interact.

Meanwhile, Ataiefar and Sadighi (2017), in their research on overcoming foreign language anxiety through technology with the name of the Voice Thread application, an audio conferencing medium with an asynchronous model, found that the reduced level of anxiety in students who use Voice Thread may be due to the relaxed atmosphere created by this tool, where the use of this application can make learning relaxing and fun. The facts from this research implicitly inform us that web-based computer applications can enable teachers to provide a learning atmosphere that is relatively free from pressure and is more relaxed when interacting with students. The results of this study support research conducted by McIntosh et al. (2003), which found that text-based computer-mediated communication has reduced the level of learner anxiety because there is less pressure to respond without any time limit. In addition, according to Mak (2011), foreign language classes are often a trigger for students' increased anxiety, especially when they are asked to produce spoken language in front of their own teachers and friends.

Furthermore, the most recent research related to web-based English learning being able to reduce learner anxiety levels is the finding of Bashori et al. (2020), which states that web-based language learning can reduce learner anxiety when speaking. In addition, research conducted on high school students in Iraq in the case of speaking English revealed that learners feel less anxious when speaking in front of a website based on automatic speech recognition (ASR) than when talking with peers or other interlocutors. The results of this study contributed to what was stated by Crookall and Oxford (1991): that technological tools can help teachers provide a learning environment that can reduce anxiety levels, which are thought to hinder students' speaking skills. Based on several studies related to learning English using web-based technology, there is no doubt that learning through a website platform can reduce the anxiety level of learners speaking English without any pressure from those around them.

4.Conclusion

This literature study has provided a brief description of the importance of web-based technology to support English learning in Iraq. Apart from what we know, typical Iraqi English learners have a high level of apprehension when speaking, such as fear of being wrong, being nervous, and lacking in self-confidence, so to get used to them avoiding this feeling of anxiety, it is very important for English teachers to get their students used to learning through web-based applications. This is proven to minimise students' anxiety levels when they want to start and are speaking English. It is acknowledged that this research is still insufficient and comprehensive to reveal the shortcomings of web-based English learning for speaking skills. There is still a need for in-depth theoretical studies or even more specific research related to the benefits and effects of learning English through web platforms to reduce learner anxiety levels.

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