

## **Relation between English Language Anxiety and Achievement in English of Higher Secondary Students in the District of Bankura, West Bengal**

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**Abstract:** In India, almost 99% of the English speakers speak English as their second language or as foreign language. And same the percentage is in case of English language learners. Different studies in abroad during 1980s and 1990s found that Anxiety works as an affective variable in foreign or second language learning. In India, some studies have been performed on the same issue. But extensive studies should be made to find out the relation between English Language Anxiety and Achievement in English. There is the popular phrase “English language anxiety”, coined by Horwitz (1986). The present study is a quantitative descriptive study in survey method to find out the relation between English Language Anxiety and Achievement in English of the Higher secondary students in the district of Bankura in West Bengal, India. The study has been made with four objectives and four hypotheses. The data has been collected from the samples with standardized scales and analysed with IBM SPSS Version 23. The study has found that the mean of English Language Anxiety and the mean of the Achievement in English of the Higher Secondary students in Bankura district differs from each group in reference to the demographic variables. And the relationship between English Language Anxiety and Achievement in English is significant.

**Key Words:** Anxiety, Achievement, Correlation, significant, language, etc.

### **1. Introduction:**

India is a multi-lingual country. So, there is certainly the necessity of a particular language with which people from various parts of the nation can communicate uniformly. Thereby, the importance of English can be assumed. Kachru (1986) observed, there are two purposes behind using English in India. On the one hand, it is used as a linguistic tool for cohesive administration of the multi-lingual country, and on the other, it is used as a language for wider communication among people inside and outside the country.

The world is becoming a single part as a result of globalization. And to be a proper and effective member of this global village, one needs to learn English properly. In our country almost 99% English users uses English as second language. But the English language learners generally face a number of difficulties while having a grasp of the four skills—listening, speaking, reading and writing—of the language. This difficulty may have a relation with the

attitudinal variables like attitude, self-esteem, anxiety, etc. There is the popular phrase “English language anxiety”, coined by Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. A. (1986). Anxiety is a general term for several disorders that cause nervousness, fear, apprehension, and worrying. These disorders affect how we feel and behave, and they can manifest real physical symptoms.

It is said that anxiety can hamper the regular activities of a human being. A child learns the first language generally not through formal education, but as a part of the process of growing up. In our country, English is generally learnt by the learners as the second language during formal education days. It is also evident in our experience that a plenty of learners achieves better in all the other subjects in schools except English. “English fever” is also a popular phrase used to describe the fear of English. But, does anxiety really have relation with achievement in English. The present study will investigate the relation between English Language Anxiety and Achievement in English of higher secondary students in the district of Bankura in West Bengal, India.

## **2. Review of Related Literature:**

The term “English language anxiety” was coined by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) as a specific anxiety affecting the learning of English language. Horwitz et al. (1986) sketched parallels between language anxiety and three related performance anxieties: (1) communication apprehension; (2) test anxiety; and (3) fear of negative evaluation. Macintyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1991) examined perspectives from which foreign language anxiety has been conducted just to identify three approaches to the study of anxiety as trait, state, and situation specific perspective.

F.L. Siregar’s study (2010) recommended that contribution of language attitude in learning the foreign language is significantly important in understanding the sociolinguistic phenomenon and language learners’ feelings, stereotypes, expectations, and prejudices of the target language. On the other hand, Khan and Zafar (2010) reported a significant increase in state anxiety in the students when the video camera was introduced, and concomitant deficits in vocabulary acquisition were observed.

The study of Xu, S., & Yang, X. (2011) showed that Chinese students' foreign language classroom anxieties were above average; students' anxiety of Japanese was higher than English; there were significant differences on anxiety intense but consistent on five anxiety contents between Japanese and English. The impact of second language writing anxiety in a Chinese-to-English translation class was investigated by Van, J. X., & Wang, H. H. (2012).

Ivana Maturanec’s study (2015) has proven that the phenomenon of English Language Anxiety should be explored, even within university level education as it has significant relationship with achievement in English and proficiency. Saranraj.L. and Meenakshi.K. (2016) in their study with 190 students in a district of Tamil Nadu has found that English Language Classroom anxiety is different on the basis of demographic variables and it has significant correlation with English language use anxiety and achievement in English.

## **3. Significance of the Study:**

Language anxiety or more specifically second language anxiety has been an interesting area of research for the last few decades throughout the world. Fewer opinions are there that

language anxiety is a poor predictor in context of acquisition of language proficiency. But a larger body of research has indicated that language anxiety is closely related to English as foreign or second language acquisition (Horwitz et al. 1986, McIntyre & Gardner, 1989). And the relation between language anxiety and second language proficiency has emerged as debilitating or negative in most of the research.

In India, whenever the researchers select any study of English as their research problem, most of the choices run behind English literature or literary theory. Research on English language has still remained a neglected area. And so the research on second language anxiety also has been a neglected area. There is a vast gap in the research of English language anxiety in relation to the achievement. Therefore, the present study is on the expectation that this research work will be able to throw some light upon certain issues related to the correlation of English (Second) Language Anxiety and Achievement in English of Higher Secondary students.

#### **4. Methodology of the Study:**

This is a quantitative study. Descriptive research has been performed by following survey method for conducting the study.

##### **4.1. Variables of the Study:**

The main variables of the study are:

- i. English Language Anxiety (EngAnx)
- ii. Achievement in English (EngAch).

The demographic variables included in the study are:

- i. Gender
- ii. Locality.

##### **4.2. Objectives of the study:**

The following objectives were formed on the basis the literature and previous studies:

- i. To measure English Language Anxiety of higher secondary students in Bankura district.
- ii. To collect Achievement in English of higher secondary students in Bankura district.
- iii. To find out whether there is any difference in English language Anxiety and Achievement in English of higher secondary students among the demographic variables.
- iv. To find out whether there is any significant relation between English Language Anxiety and Achievement in English of higher secondary students in reference to the demographic variables in the district of Bankura.

##### **4.3. Hypotheses of the Study:**

On the basis of the objectives, the following Null Hypotheses were formed for this present study:

- H<sub>0.1</sub>:** There is no mean difference in English Language Anxiety of higher Secondary students in reference to the demographic variables.
- H<sub>0.2</sub>:** There is no mean difference in Achievement in English of higher Secondary students in reference to the demographic variables.
- H<sub>0.3</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between English Language Anxiety and Achievement in English of higher Secondary students in Bankura.
- H<sub>0.4</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between English Language Anxiety and Achievement in English of higher Secondary students in reference to the demographic variables in the district of Bankura.

#### 4.4. Sample of the Study:

Because of the limitation of the space and time, the researcher has considered only one district Bankura in West Bengal. He took two urban schools and two rural schools from the blocks and municipalities in Bankura. The schools are all affiliated to the West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education, and the medium of instruction of the schools is Bengali. The higher secondary students, more specifically the students of Class Twelve who studies English as second language were taken as sample. 50 students from each school were taken. And the total sample is 200.

The distribution of samples is as follows:

Count		Locality		Total
		Urban	Rural	
Gender	Male	52	22	74
	Female	48	78	126
Total		100	100	200

Table 1: Sampling: Gender\*Locality Cross-tabulation

#### 4.5: Tools used in the Study:

Measuring English language anxiety and achievement in English is the prime way of data collection for the purpose of this study. So the following tools were also used as per requirement of the study:

##### 4.5.1. Multidimensional English Language Anxiety Scale:

A Multidimensional English Language Anxiety Scale was used in the study. The scale was constructed and duly standardized by Saha.R. (2016) who did it so for his Ph.D. research work. The scale contains 55 items (43 positive items and 12 negative items). The response format was 5 point Likert scale format (Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree). Though the scale is a multidimensional scale, in the present study, different dimensions are not taken into considerations, only total score is taken into considerations.

##### 4.5.2: Achievement Test Score Sheet:

The achievement score in English was collected from the schools of the samples. The achievement in English of the students in the board examination was collected by the

researcher from the school result register. The score they obtained in their board examination was taken as their Achievement score in English in a previously designed sheet containing the detail of the samples.

#### 4.6: Data collection and Scoring:

Data was collected from all the 200 samples with ultimate sincerity by administering the Multidimensional English Language Anxiety Scale upon the students in the classroom, and the achievement score was collected from the office of the schools with the help of the headmasters and the clerical persons. Anxiety scale data was scored manually by attributing 1,2,3,4,5 to the negative items and 5,4,3,2,1 to the positive items.

### 5. Analysis and Interpretation of Data:

For the analysis of the scored data the researcher used IBM SPSS Version 23 and MS Office Excel 2010 version.

#### 5.1.Hypothesis Testing:

The first and the second Null Hypothesis state that there is no mean difference in case of English Language Anxiety and in case of Achievement in English of higher Secondary students in the district of Bankura in reference to the demographic variables. To test these two Null Hypotheses the following descriptive statistics has been drawn from the scored data.

Mean Comparison				
Gender			EngAch	EngAnx
Male	Urban	Mean	59.5962	164.7308
		N	52	52
		Std.	18.53588	44.42845
		Minimum	27.00	85.00
	Rural	Mean	50.6818	154.5000
		N	22	22
		Std.	13.06171	30.94504
		Maximum	84.00	185.00
Female	Urban	Mean	51.5000	170.9375
		N	48	48
		Std.	16.19693	38.44167
		Maximum	90.00	259.00
	Rural	Mean	42.7692	169.3333
		N	78	78
		Std.	11.46528	25.80731
		Maximum	81.00	223.00

Table 2: Comparison of Means (Variable-wise) of English Language Anxiety and Achievement in English.

From Table 2, it is found that the means of English language Anxiety differ from each other in respect of demographic variables—gender and locality. Whereas the mean of Urban Male students is 164.7308 and the mean of Rural Male students is 154.5000, the mean of Urban Female is 170.9375 and the mean of Rural Female students is 169.3333. So, it is found that the each group contains different mean in comparison to the other group whether it is in respect of Gender or in respect of Locality or Gender Vs Locality. On the other hand, in case of Achievement in English also, each group contain different mean from the other group. Whereas the mean of Urban Male is 50.6818 and the mean of Rural Male is 50.6818, the mean of Urban Female is 51.5000 and the mean of Rural Female is 42.7692. The minimum and maximum scores also differ from each other in all the cases. So from this analysis, it can be affirmed that the there is mean difference in difference in case of English Language Anxiety and in case of Achievement in English of higher Secondary students in the district of Bankura in reference to the demographic variables. The Null Hypotheses is thereby rejected.

Third Null Hypothesis says that there is no significant relationship between English Language Anxiety and Achievement in English of higher Secondary students in Bankura.

**Correlations**

		EngAch	EngAnx
<b>EngAch</b>	<b>Pearson Correlation</b>	1	<b>-0.554**</b>
	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>		.000
	<b>N</b>	200	200
<b>EngAnx</b>	<b>Pearson Correlation</b>	<b>-0.554**</b>	1
	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	.000	
	<b>N</b>	200	200

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3: Overall Correlation Table

The analysis cited above clearly shows that there is significant negative ( $r = -0.554$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) correlation between English Language Anxiety and Achievement in English. And the significance level is moderate. So the null hypothesis is rejected here too.

Fourth null hypothesis says that there is no significant relationship between English Language Anxiety and Achievement in English of higher Secondary students in reference to the demographic variables in the district of Bankura. The demographic variables considered in the study are, as stated earlier, Gender (Male and Female) and Locality (Urban and Rural).

### Correlations

Gender				EngAch	EngAnx	
Male	Urban	EngAch	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 52	-.530** .000 52	
		EngAnx	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.530** .000 52	1 52	
	Rural	EngAch	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 22	-.689** .000 22	
		EngAnx	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.689** .000 22	1 22	
	Female	Urban	EngAch	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 48	-.408** .004 48
			EngAnx	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.408** .004 48	1 48
Rural		EngAch	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 78	-.408** .000 78	
		EngAnx	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.408** .000 78	1 78	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4: Correlation Table (Demographic Variable-wise)

The correlation table (Table 4) shows that in all the groups of the demographic variables English Language Anxiety and Achievement in English has significant negative correlation. So the fourth Null Hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between English Language Anxiety and Achievement in English of higher Secondary students in reference to the demographic variables in the district of Bankura is rejected. From the analysis it is found that in case of Urban Male, there is a strong negative correlation ( $r = -.530$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) between English Language Anxiety and Achievement in English. So far Rural Male are considered, there is strong negative correlation ( $r = -.689$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) between English Language Anxiety and Achievement in English. The analysis also shows that there is moderately significant negative correlation ( $r = -.408$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) between English Language Anxiety and Achievement in English in Urban and Rural Female students.

#### Main Findings:

- i. There is mean difference in English Language Anxiety of higher Secondary students of Bankura district in reference to the demographic variables—Gender and Locality.
- ii. There is mean difference in Achievement in English of higher Secondary students of Bankura district in reference to the demographic variables—Gender and Locality.

- iii. There is significant relationship between English Language Anxiety and Achievement in English of Higher Secondary students in Bankura.
- iv. There is significant relationship between English Language Anxiety and Achievement in English of Higher Secondary students in reference to the demographic variables in the district of Bankura.

## 6. Discussion:

From the descriptive and the inferential statistics it is found that not only English Language Anxiety has significant correlation with Achievement in English, the demographic variables also play important role in this factor. The state of learning of English language differs from Male students to Female students and from Urban students to Rural students. Even Urban Male and Rural Male also differ, and so the Urban Female and the Rural Female.

Table 2 shows that the mean of the achievement of Urban Male in English is highest in comparison to the other groups, and the mean of the achievement of the Rural Female is lowest in comparison to the other groups. The achievement score almost decides the hierarchy as Urban Male at top, then the Urban Female, then the Rural Male and at the bottom, the Rural Female. It is also evident from the society that the urban students are more proficient in English in comparison to the Rural students because of their socio-economic status, their exposure and communication to the English speaking community, their family support in the form of parental education, parental profession, etc. the other factor of this table is that it shows that the achievement of Male students from each locality is higher than the Female students. It may be because of the fact that even in 21<sup>st</sup> century the Male students receives more attention and more care from parents as well as from society, though changes of attitude in this respect is in progress.

In case of English Language Anxiety the mean of each group is interesting enough. The maximum mean comes from Urban Female group. And the Rural Female students are very close to them or almost similar. The mean of the Male students are lower than that of the Female. And the mean of Urban Male is higher than the mean of Rural Male. This comparison needs close and complex discussion. Female students' mean in English Language Anxiety are higher than that of Male students—it may be because of the fact that even today, Female students get less exposure to the English speaking world in comparison to Male students, and whenever it is in the district of Bankura, census says that the female education is far behind than male education. The mean of the Urban male is higher than the rural male—probably the reason is that the urban male students are much more in pursuit to learn English language as they are more aware of the fact that English may work as the key for higher education and future success.

So far the correlation between English Language Anxiety and Achievement in English are concerned, the result shows that the relationship is significant as a whole, and in reference to demographic variables. A lot of studies in abroad and in India have found that English Language Anxiety and Achievement are significantly correlated. The present study also gives the same findings, though the level of significance is different from others. The result in respect of demographic variables are also puts almost same as previous studies except in case of Urban and Rural Female. The negative correlation means that English language anxiety has debilitating effect on achievement in English. As the English Language Anxiety increases, the achievement in English decreases.



The study refers that the English Language learners should be careful that anxiety may not engulf them while trying to learn English as second language, and the teachers of English Language should also be cautious about the affective variable anxiety in English Language learning class. Moreover, teachers of English Language should be trained enough so that they may control excessive anxiety of the learners which may affect their learning.

### 7. Limitations of the Study:

- i. Only two demographic variables are put into consideration in the study. Other demographic variables like caste, religion, might be considered.
- ii. The various dimensions of the English Language Anxiety Scale are not taken into considerations while analyzing the data.
- iii. The demographic variables are not considered in respect of finding significance of relationship between the dimensions of Anxiety scale and Achievement in English.
- iv. The socio-economic status has not been considered in the study.

### 8. Suggestion for Further Study:

- i. Further study may be done on the same issue.
- ii. Further variables may be included in the study.
- iii. Sample group may be taken larger on the same issue.
- iv. The study may be done on a broader locality.
- v. Dimensions of English Language Anxiety may be taken into consideration.
- vi. Students' overall Academic Achievement may be included in the further research.
- vii. Several dimensions of English Achievement may be included in further research.

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