

Predicting of English language anxiety based on social learning strategy and language motivational self system in students

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to determine the correlation between social learning strategy and language motivational self system with English language anxiety in students. Research methods was descriptive and correlational. 259 high school students were selected to respond to Horwitz et al ELCA scale, Oxford's LLS Questionnaire, and Taguchi et al's LMSS questionnaire. Data was analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficient and regression analysis. Findings showed that there is a negative and significance correlation between social learning strategy and language motivational self system and English language anxiety at the 0.01 and 0.05 level. Also regression analysis showed language motivational self system can significantly predict English language anxiety, but social learning strategy cannot.

Keywords: Social learning strategy, Language motivational self system, English language anxiety, Students.

1. Introduction

Language is one of the characteristics of human societies and the use of language is a very important part of any kind of human culture and is a powerful social tool that we learn from childhood (KheiriGolsfidi, Ghahari & Nazarian, 2016). Language as the most developed intellectual tool that is used

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to communicate between humans and human societies, allows the transfer of complex mental concepts in the simplest and most complete way possible (Bayat, Hashemi & Naghsh, 2015). Mostly, in variationist sociolinguistics and sociology of language norms are considered as the consensus or the shared perspective present in a speech community on what counts as normal, attractive or desirable language use, and they are usually seen as implanted during early socialization (Hudson, 1996, Milroy, 1980 cited Hornberger, & McKay, 2010). Learners' emotions in learning a foreign language are claimed to shape complicated dynamic associations contributing to their motivational and linguistic outcomes (Fathi & Mohammaddockht, 2021).

Students, as one of the social groups that play an important role in building the future of society, are more exposed to stress and especially anxiety than other groups because adolescence is considered a critical period due to major physiological, cognitive and psychological changes (Ni, Lau & Liau, 2011). Therefore, paying attention to students' psychological states is very important and anxiety is one of these issues. Anxiety is an integral part of human experience and nature. Anxiety is an integrated part of the experience and human nature. Anxiety is an ambiguous sense of discomfort combined with apprehension created in response to internal and external stimulations; and, it may result in cognitive, emotional, physical, and behavioral symptoms (Bagiani Moghadam, Falasiry & Dehghan, 2016).

One of the educational anxieties is related to learning second language and effect of anxiety on learning the second language has been studied by researchers. These studies have led to some complicated results which may be caused by the interfering role of other variables with second language learning anxiety (Akhtari, 2006). As suggested by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986), foreign language anxiety results from the quality of self-perception, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to foreign language class which is caused by the uniqueness of language learning process, the anxiety is divided to three categories: fear of communication, fear of exam, and fear of negative evaluation. One of the main principles of learning is motivation. Motivation is dependent on enthusiasm to gain success and participate in those activities success of which depends on efforts made by learners (Vakilifard &

Khalegizadeh, 2013). The mental image of individuals about themselves helps them to become motivated for language learning, and to be directed towards learning language through higher motivation (quoted from Chen, 2012). Model of language motivational self system developed by Zoltan Dornyei (2005) with three aspects of self as "ideal self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience" has been based on previous patterns and empirical evidence from psychological studies, on motivation and second language motivation. This is important because, in some language learners, the initial motivation for language learning is not stemmed from internal or external images; instead, it is more resulted from successful involvement with the real process of language learning (Papi, & Abdollahzadeh, 2012). In studies performed by Taguchi, Magid, and Papi (2009), and Ryan (2009) in China, Japan, and Iran, it was shown that not only the variable has a significant correlation with language motivation; but also, it shows higher variance in target efforts made by learners, and learning the language. Another important variable is learning strategies. Learning strategies are principally explained by the information processing approach; this approach considers human learning as constant information processing by which humans acquire knowledge (Babaeishirvani et al, 2015).

Oxford (1990) categorized second language learning strategies into six major groups (cited by Sharifighoortani & Nady, 2016): Memory, Cognitive, Compensation, Metacognitive, Affective, and Social strategies. One of the important strategies in learning a foreign language is social strategy. This includes asking questions, working with others, and empathizing with others. Asking questions is a valuable solution that can help you learn in two ways: asking questions to find out more or clarify things, and asking questions to correct your mistakes. Collaborating with others is a very important strategy that, if done without anxiety and tension, leads to independence and mutual support, more self-confidence, self-esteem, high motivation, and more learning. Empathy with others means putting oneself in the place of others and empathizing with them. Research of Hariri et al (2021) showed that student motivation and learning strategies were positively and significantly correlated. Oxford believed that this strategy is essential for connecting with others. This

is based on the two foundations of awareness of the thoughts and feelings of others and awareness of culture (Oxford, 1990). Mastering language learning strategies will enable the learner to have more control and sense of responsibility over their own learning process and to excel other language learners in terms of linguistic potential. Willingness to communicate in a second or foreign language is an important individual difference variable that influences the target language learning process (Chen, Dewaele & Zhang, 2022). Findings showed that in general, Persian learners from different nationalities use social strategies more than any other learning strategies (Khaleghizade & Vakilifard, 2014). Also, Sahra'i and Khaleqzadeh (2012) proved that Persian learners use this language's learning strategy.

2.Review of Literature

Perspectives on Psychology and Language Learning What is certain is that children have a tremendous ability to learn a language; With the onset of the first signs of communication (such as grunting and crying), they can convey many different messages, and at the age of one, imitate the words that surround them, and at least say the first words. At about eighteen months, a number of these words combine dramatically. In such a way that their language will contain a combination of two- or three-word sentences. At the age of three, with increasing understanding of the language, the child can participate in everyday conversations with others, ask questions and answer. There are various theories about growth, each of which deals with the subject from a specific perspective, in which some of the most important theories are expressed (Wood, 2002).

2. 1. Sociology of language

Sociology of language is the study of the relations between language and society (Fishman, 1979). The sociology of language studies society in relation to language, whereas sociolinguistics studies language in relation to society. For the former, society is the object of study, whereas, for the latter, language is the object of study. In other words, sociolinguistics studies language and how it varies based on the user's sociological background, such as gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic

class. On the other hand, sociology of language (also known as macrosociolinguistics) studies society and how it is impacted by language (Fishman, 1985). Sociology of language seeks to understand the way that social dynamics are affected by individual and group language use. Language is considered to be a social value within this field, which researches social groups for phenomena like multilingualism and lingual conflict (Su-Chiao (2012)). It has to do with who is 'authorized' to use what language, with whom and under what conditions. It has to do with how an individual or group identity is established by the language that they have available for them to use. It seeks to understand individual expression, which the investment in the linguistic tools that one has access to in order to bring oneself to other people.

2. 2. Vygotsky's social-cultural theory

Vygotsky believed that the development of thought and language are not parallel. Language and thought development curves intersect, distance themselves at times, reunite, and may even merge. Thought and language have different genetic origins and are independent of each other, but they intersect in childhood. At this stage, thinking is non-verbal and based on mental images. In the first year of development, the child's language has a social role and there is no sign of intellectual development. At the age of two, the developmental curves of thought and language, which have hitherto been separated, intersect and a new form of behavior emerges. At this time, the child begins to use language in his thoughts and his speech reflects his thoughts. That is, language serves thought, and thought is manifested in words. Vygotsky's ideas about language learning, which emphasize the meaning and social origin of growth, became particularly important, and although the impact of his theories has been slow, it has highlighted the work of a generation of linguists and psychologists (Vygotsky, 1962, quoted in John Steiner, 2007).

2. 3. Noam Chomsky's innate theory

Researchers in the field of language learning today agree that learning the first language is more complex than can be interpreted with the principles of this theory. The American linguist Noam Chomsky proposed the theory of principles and parameters in 1959, claiming that all languages are similar in

principle and that they differ in parameters. In the context of universal grammar, the theory can be explained by the fact that the basic principles and laws of grammar of all languages of human societies have common features. In other words, the main features of language that are common to all languages are so abstract in nature that they are not transferable through the child's environment and the linguistic data received by adults and others. This means that the child can not learn all the rules of the language just by imitating and communicating with adults and the social environment. Chomsky believed that this theory reduces the complexity of language and makes the learning process easier for children. In this way, children do not learn the principles that are common and unchangeable among all languages, but they are part of the child's inherited talent. The child must learn the set of parameters that are different in different languages (Radford, 1990; Smidh, 2013).

2. 4. Krashen Cognitive Process Theory

Krashen (2002), quoting Krashen (2011), argues that multilingual speakers have more than one language; whether it is a first language or a second language, it deals with learning a language from a cognitive point of view. If language learning is a cognitive process instead of a language learning device, there will be only relative rather than definite differences between the two different types of language learning.

Given the importance of learning a foreign language in today's challenging world and the concerns about learning a foreign language, especially English, the researcher examines the question of whether there is a relationship between social learning strategies and language motivational self system with English language anxiety in students.

3. Methodology

The present research was descriptive-correlational design. In correlation studies, the researcher does not manipulate any of the independent variables, but only measures two or more variables, then determines whether there is a correlation between them. if a relationship is found between two or more variables, then the variables are correlated. This means that when one variable

increases, the other variable also increases, and vice versa. The statistical population included all female students in the third year of high school. In this study, to determine the sample size according to the table of Krejcie and Morgan and taking into account the possibility of incomplete questionnaires 259 students were selected using available sampling and answered to the questionnaires. Data analysis was performed using Pearson correlation method and linear regression analysis with SPSS 18 software.

English Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

The questionnaire is the developed model of anxiety of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al, 1986). It contains 33 items to measure anxiety levels of students to learn English language. Retest coefficient of its primary version on students of Texas University was 0.93, and after eight weeks, it was calculated 0.83. To examine justifiability related with the criterion, there were implemented the test and Cattell Anxiety Test on the students that its correlation coefficient was 0.45. The test reliability was 0.86 by diving approach (Shams Sfantabad & Emamipoor, 2001).

Oxford Language Learning Strategies Questionnaire

This questionnaire includes six learning strategies construct that for this research social learning strategies was used (Oxford, 1995). Participants have to answer Likert's five-point questions. In previous studies, the reliability of the questionnaire was high when English was intended as a second language or foreign language. Watanabe (1990), who administered the Japanese version of this questionnaire among 255 student sample, achieved Cronbach's alpha of 0.91. In the research of Borzabadifarahani and Najati (2008), the questionnaire questions were translated into Persian and then, it was given to 560 students; the obtained Cronbach's alpha was 0.90.

Language motivational self-system questionnaire:

The questionnaire developed by Taguchi, Magid, and Papi (2009) based on theory provided by Zoltan Dornyei (2003) and (2005) and has 24 questions. Reliability of initial version of the test obtained through Cronbach's alpha has been obtained as higher than 0.76 (Japan) and higher than 0.75 (China and Iran) for all subscales (Taguchi et al., 2009). The revised version of the questionnaire including 24 questions has been studied by Papi and Abdollahzadeh (2012). Four sections of the questionnaire each with 6

questions (totally 24) are as mentioned below: ought-to self, ideal self and learning experience of English language and target effort. Test validities obtained through Cronbach's alpha have been 0.67, 0.86, 0.87, and 0.90 respectively for the above mentioned four sections in a research performed by Azarnoush and Birjandi (2012). In a research performed by Homayooni (2015), validities obtained for ought-to self, ideal self, and learning experience of the English language as well as target effort have been 0.82, 0.76, 0.80, and 0.74.

4. Findings

Table 1: Mean, Std. Deviation and Matrix of correlation between social learning strategy and language motivational self system with English language anxiety

	Mean	Std. D	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
social learning strategy	17.35	4.56	1	.38**	.47**	.36**	.45**	.46**	-.12*	-.15**	-.11*	-.15**
ought to self	17.07	5.02	.38**	1	.69**	.86**	.79**	.93**	-.09	-.12*	-.04	-.11*
ideal self	15.25	4.84	.47**	.69**	1	.70**	.77**	.87**	-.22**	-.21**	-.19**	-.25**
purposive effort	16.46	5.35	.36**	.86**	.70**	1	.64**	.89**	-.14*	-.18**	-.04	-.16**
learn experience	16.99	5.07	.45**	.79**	.77**	.64**	1	.89**	-.09	-.11*	-.01	-.10
self motivational systems	65.79	18.28	.46**	.93**	.87**	.89**	.89**	1	-.15**	-.17**	-.08	-.17**
communication anxiety	36.91	5.58	-.12*	-.09	-.22**	-.14*	-.09	-.15**	1	.63**	.62**	.86**
exam anxiety	50.20	7.80	-.15**	-.12*	-.21**	-.18**	-.11*	-.17**	.63**	1	.59**	.90**
fear of assessment	22.93	3.96	-.11*	-.04	-.19**	-.04	-.01	-.08	.62**	.59**	1	.80**
English language anxiety	110.10	15.10	-.15**	-.11*	-.25**	-.16**	-.10	-.17**	.86**	.90**	.80**	1

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level. **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

The table above shows that there is a negative and significance correlation between social learning strategy and language motivational self system and English language anxiety at the 0.01 and 0.05 level respectively.

Table 2: Regression analysis to predict social learning strategy and language motivational self system and English language anxiety

Model	Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics				Durbin-Watson
	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF	F	Sig. R Square	
social learning strategy	-.0912	-1.40	.16	.79	1.25	4.89	.008	.037
self motivational systems	-.12	-1.78	.07					

The table shows the predictability of social learning strategy and language motivational self system on English language anxiety. According to this table, language motivational self system can significantly predict English language anxiety, but social learning strategy e cannot.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this research was to investigate correlation between social learning strategy and language motivational self system with English language anxiety in students. The finding showed that there is a negative and significance correlation between social learning strategy and language motivational self system with English language anxiety. Findings of the result are consistent with the obtained results by Liao et al (2018), Aktari (2006), Baghianimoghadam et al (2016), Homayouni, et al (2020), Sharifighoortani et al. (2016). The social learning strategy of language affects the reduction of anxiety, the level of participation and relationships with the school and academic achievement. On the other hand, this feeling of tension, embarrassment, fear, apprehension, and worry about the negative evaluation of others, which sometimes deprives the learner of the ability to take risks in various learning situations, including making contact and direct communication and face-to-face, by disturbing concentration, and the pervasive attention to the second language weakens the power of learning and reduces the possibility of individuals achieving academic progress and achieving scientific success.

The results of Phillips (1992) indicated that there is an inverse relationship between anxiety and academic performance of language lessons. Explaining these results, it can be said that a functional goal structure describes an environment in which the student is taught that success means receiving external rewards, showing high ability, and performing better than others has an impact on language learning and performance (Liao and Wang, 2018). It is believed that the individual's thoughts are the source of his motivation in the cognitive approach to motivation. The Second Language Self-Motivational System Model proposed by Zoltan Dorney (2005) based on previous models and empirical evidence from the studies of second language motivation and motivation psychology, proposed the second language self-motivational system as a model with three aspects, which are: the ideal self, ought to self, purposive effort and language learning experience. The importance of this dimension is that for some language learners, the initial motivation to learn a language does not come from any internal or external image, but rather comes from a

successful engagement with the real process of language learning (Papi, & Abdollahzadeh, 2012)). Language as the most developed intellectual tool that is used to communicate between humans and human societies, allows the transfer of complex mental concepts in the simplest and most complete way possible (Bayat et al., 2015).

Students, as one of the social groups that play an important role in building the future of society, are more exposed to psychological stress than other groups because adolescence is considered a critical period due to major physiological, cognitive and psychological changes (Ni et al, 2011). Poor motivational systems and inappropriate strategies can increase language anxiety. The teachers should try to show the effect of educational evaluation on the growth of creativity, increasing students' academic motivation and improving the quality of education that affect on learning language. Attention to psychological level of anxiety experienced, educational plans of language, importance of learning language in communication and social interactions, improving the language knowledge and the structures of language can improve motivational systems and also applying social learning strategy result to better learning of language and reducing the language anxiety in students.

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