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## **An Analysis of Cause of English Language Anxiety amongst Hotel Management Students and Its Impact on Their Academic Performance**

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**Abstract:**

*English language learning has been an issue raised by most of the students for whom it is a second language. The incompatibility about speaking English could be not only because of the lack of technical knowledge, but also due to the fear of speaking. The fear thus keeps on accumulating in student's mind and they further hesitate to speak English. The insecurity that my friends will laugh at me, or the Professor will mark my mistakes in front of everyone always pulls them back and thus hampers their performance.*

*This study has gathered information on English language anxiety from the student's perspective. Students have shared their views on causes of English language anxiety, observed behavior amongst the students having English language anxiety and its effect on their academic performance. The study has shown relationship between English language anxiety and students' academic performance.*

**Keywords:** English language anxiety

**Key terms and definitions**

*For the purpose of ease of understanding of this study, certain terms are defined as follows:*

**Def:** *Anxiety is the collective feeling of tension, nervousness and worry associated with an arousal of autonomic nervous system.*

### **1. Introduction**

#### *1.1. English as a Hospitality Language*

The Hotel Industry is acquiring a significant position in global economy. When millions of people travel, they need to stay in hotels. The hotels have to interact with the traveler for providing services. To fulfil the ever increasing demands of today's traveler, communication acts as a powerful marketing tool. The Hospitality Industry entails a specific language that is Hospitality language. In hotels most of the communication between the staff and the guest takes place in English. Hence it is very obvious that students pursuing Hotel Management should possess English language skills

#### *1.2. Causes of Foreign Language Anxiety*

Any language has four skills to learn about. They are listening, reading, writing and speaking. Although all the skills can be a cause of language anxiety, speaking for that matter is considered as a prime one. This is because listening does not demand many efforts on the part of the listener. Anything that soothes the ears can be a part of listening. While writing the writer gets sufficient time to think and do the activity without having the pressure of being evaluated all the time. Reading also can be learnt slowly by developing the language vocabulary. However, when it comes to speaking in front of others, who has better language knowledge, becomes more difficult. English language learning is no exception to this. It is not the language at that time, but the anxiety or fear of being judge causes the barrier of speaking the English language. In addition to this, English language anxiety can be broadly classified into communication anxiety, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation as the cause of anxiety. Communication anxiety is experienced while speaking to other individual. Test anxiety is a form of fear of either failing in the exam or a poor performance in it. While fear of negative evaluation occurs when learners think that the teachers, classmates or any other person criticizes their language ability. There is advancement in English language learning in all streams of education in India. In spite of gaining popularity, most of the institutes today complain about the poor communication skills of their students. It is one common factor required for gaining employment which any student ultimately aims for. Learning a mother tongue has never been a stressful task for anyone. But learning a second language definitely is a concern for most of the students. It has been observed that fear/anxiety acts as a major barrier in the communication of this language.

In the education scenario, currently increased attention is given to language learners, their perspective, their motivation, and their beliefs about language learning and language anxiety. Here the learners are the students who need to communicate in English. But, why do some students seek, while others avoid, English language communication? Some common statements that we hear from the students are “When I am in my class, where a subject is taught in English, I just don’t know what my professor is talking? I just go blank in my communication class, or my mind goes blank.” Many people claim to have a mental block against learning foreign language. however others are highly motivated. What then prevents them from achieving their desired goal? In many cases they may have an anxiety reaction coming in the way. This research paper presents:

- Causes of English language anxiety.
- General behavior of the students possessing English language anxiety.
- Effects of English language anxiety on students’ academic performance.

## 2. Literature Review

Tran Thi Thu Trang, Karen Moni and Richard B. Baldauf, Jr. (2012) investigated about foreign language anxiety and its effects on students’ determination to study English.

Mei-Ling Lee and Pin-Hsiang Natalie Wu (2011), studied for the purpose of exploring the status of English speaking anxiety from students’ point view and the factors that influence their English speaking ability. The analysis gave them an understanding between the differences of students’ self-awareness of English speaking abilities, English communication anxiety, and the strategies used for improving the English speaking ability, and the fear of negative-recognition anxiety among EFL and Non-EFL students.

Rochelle Irene Lucas, Edna Miraflores and Dianne Go (2011) did study Philippines learners about their English Language Learning Anxiety among Foreign languages.

Ryan Zgutowicz (2009) mentioned in his study that, what effects language anxiety has on ESL students and about decisions to speak English in a middle school classroom.

Bernaus, Gardner et al ,(2008) in their study investigated about language teaching strategies, and their effects on students' motivation and English achievement. The study revealed that the motivational and traditional strategies was not related to the students' English achievement or language anxiety, but the students' perceptions of these strategies tended to be related to their attitudes and motivation at both the individual and class levels

Jennifer Conway and Dr. Huang (2007) researched about causes and solutions of anxiety in second language learning. They realized that second language anxiety causes a mental block for new information

Thomas Scovel, (2006) attempted to define anxiety as an affective variable by examining it and showing that the issue of anxiety can be resolved if the difference between facilitating and deliberating anxiety can be drawn.

MacIntyre P. D. and Gardner R. C. ( 2006) researched on anxiety and second language learning and learned that language environment would be associated with language learning. They also mentioned that anxiety is a factor responsible for acquisition as well as production of foreign language.

Gregersen, T. and Horwitz, E. K. (2002), Language Learning and Perfectionism: Anxious and Non-Anxious Language Learners' Reactions to Their Own Oral Performance. The Modern Language Journal, discussed in their interview study to clarify the relationship between foreign language anxiety and perfectionism.

N. Eleni Pappamihel, (2002) addressed issues of English language anxiety in two settings: English as second language and mainstream classrooms.

## 3. Objectives of the Study

- i. To understand the levels of English language anxiety amongst students of Hotel management.
- ii. To understand forms of English language anxiety.
- iii. To identify various causes of English language anxiety.
- iv. To identify various effects of English language anxiety on academic performance of the students.

## 4. Research Methodology

In order to collect data, sample was identified as the students of AISSMS College of Hotel Management who have enrolled for special communication classes due to lack of English speaking skills.

### 4.1. Primary Data

The primary data was collected with the help of questionnaires distributed to 50 students who have enrolled for communication development classes in college. The data collection tool was questionnaire which was distributed to these students. The students were from first to final year of Hotel management.

### 4.2. Secondary Data Collection

- Journal
- Magazines
- Books
- Past data
- Websites etc.

### 5. Data Analysis and Findings

The analysis of data was bifurcated into three parts. The first part was to find out about the causes of English language anxiety. The second was based on the observed behavior of the students facing English language anxiety and the third part was based on the effects of English language anxiety on the academic performance of the students.

#### 5.1. Causes of English Language Anxiety

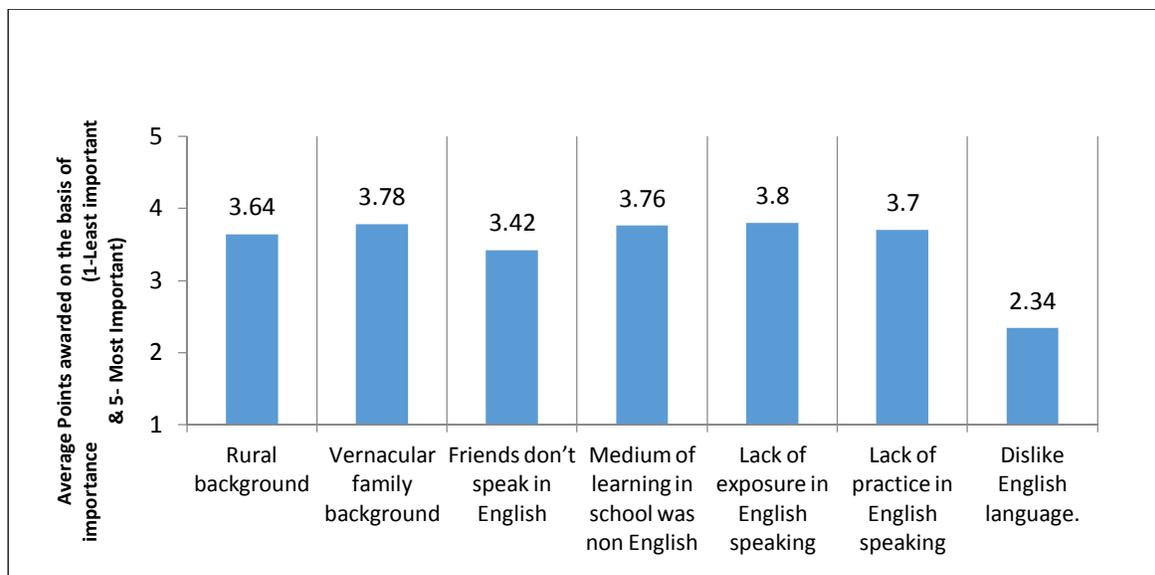


Figure 1: Causes of ELA

- Observation:
  - “Lack of exposure in English language” and “Vernacular family background” were the most important causes of English language anxiety from student’s perspective.
  - “Disliking towards the English language” is least important cause of English language anxiety.

#### 5.2. Behavior Observed due to English Language Anxiety

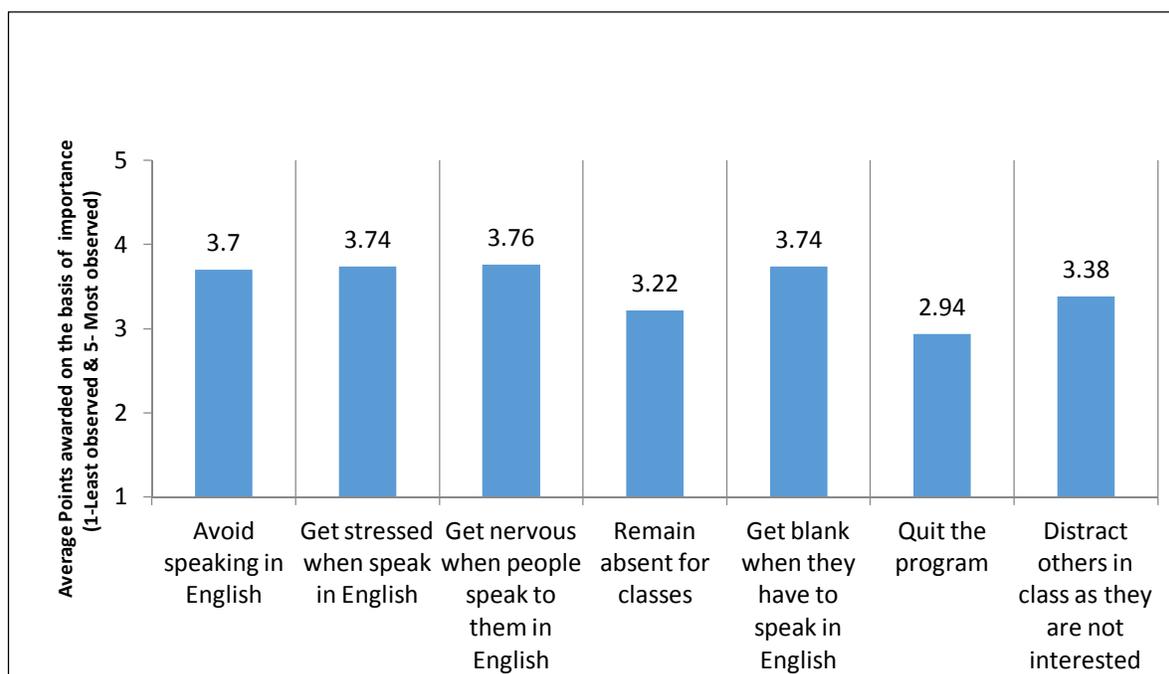


Figure 2: Behaviour observed due to ELA

- Observation:
  - The most common behavior observed amongst the students with English language anxiety was they “get nervous when people speak to them in English”.
  - Another common behavior was that they “get stressed when they have to speak in English” and that they “get blank when they have to speak in English”.
  - However “quitting the program” was the least observed behavior with students having English language anxiety.

### 5.3. Effects of English Language Anxiety

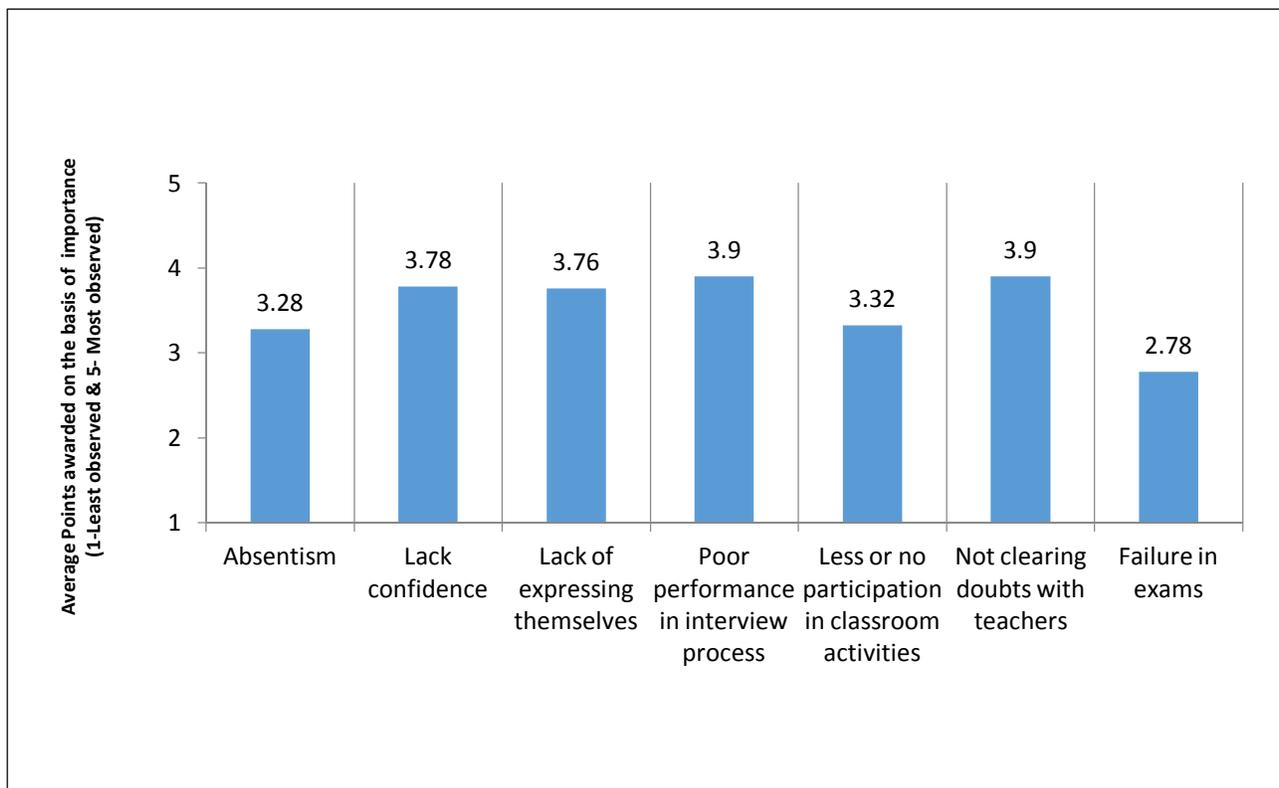


Figure 3: Effects of ELA

- Observation:
  - “Poor performance in interview process.” And “students not clearing the doubts with the teachers” were observed as the most powerful effects of English language anxiety.
  - “Lack of confidence” was also observed as effect of English language anxiety.
  - “Failure in exams” was amongst the least observed effect of English language anxiety.

### 6. Limitations of the study

- The study had some common limitations applicable to the subjective research. First of all the study was based on the English language anxiety faced by the students of Hotel management. However anxiety being intangible cannot be measured. Only its effects can be observed.
- The study is carried out in only one of the Hotel management colleges of Pune city. The views of the students from other colleges were not studied.

### 7. Recommendations

On the basis of the study carried out on, “analysis of cause of English Language Anxiety amongst Hotel Management students and its impact on their academic performance” following recommendations can be made:

- English as a global language is significantly important in the field of Hospitality Industry. Keeping this in mind, it is very essential that the students who enroll for the course of Hotel Management should be aware about the fact and should consciously work to overcome English speaking anxiety.
- The students should find out the various causes of English language anxiety which affects their academic performance.
- It is strongly recommended that the Hotel Management institutes recognize behavior of the students with English language anxiety and help them to control this issue.

## 8. Conclusion

Following conclusions were made based on the observations of this study:

- English language anxiety exists as students from rural background are not exposed to the language.
- Because of lack of exposure in spoken English, they don't get enough practice to speak in English language.
- This lowers the level of confidence in them and its adverse effects are seen during their performance in an interview.
- Due to low confidence level, students with ELA usually get nervous when they have to speak in English.
- English language anxiety also affects the academic performance of the students as they do not clear their doubts with the teachers and not perform well in their examination.

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