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RESEARCH PAPER

The Silent Struggle: Exploring the Link between Xenoglossophobia and Adult Self-Esteem, Quality of Life, and Communication Experiences

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ABSTRACT

The latest research delved into the relationship between Xenoglossophobia and self-esteem, quality of life, and communication experiences in adults. Empirical finding is a cross-sectional study based on quantitative approach. Data was collected through the application of three measurement scales "Foreign language classroom anxiety Scale (FLCAS), Rosenberg self-esteem scale (RSE) and quality of life scale (QOLS) along with self-developed demographic sheet. Sample was comprised of 400 participants recruited through convenience sampling technique. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the analysis of the data with the application of SPSS (.22). Results of regression analysis explored that there is a negative correlation between Second language anxiety and self-esteem ($r = -.308$, $P < 0.01$). While a significant positive relationship exists between SLA and quality of life ($r = .417$, $P < 0.01$). Conclusively, it is stated that as three constructs are associated with each other. This research indicates that there is non-significant relationship between Xenoglossophobia and quality of life while there is a significant relationship between Xenoglossophobia and self-esteem.

Keywords: Adults, Quality of Life, Second Language Anxiety, Self-Esteem

Introduction

The Language is a system of conventional spoken, manual (signed), or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture, express themselves. Walija (1996) give the description of language as "the vastly comprehensive and beneficial means to communicate ideas, memos, intentions, feelings, emotions and beliefs to others" Briefly, language is an important feature human lives. Without it, individuals will be unable to interact with each other. Foreign means unknown, weird, from or typically of a country. It refers to a language other than one's own in the context of foreign languages. (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1999). According to Tuerah (2017), "speaking a foreign and second language is increasingly being acknowledged as a valuable educational, personal and professional skill".

There are many terms that are used in literature to describe what public speaking fear is or speaking general anxiety, the most common term used for the fear of public speaking is second language anxiety (Hancock et al., 2010). It has extended effects on a large group of population, Approximately 75% population suffer from Second language anxiety, the fear of learning or speaking foreign language even in front of small group. Previous researchers claim that many people have more fear of public speaking than that of death (Glossophobia, 2001).

Xenoglossophobia is also termed as foreign language anxiety. To comprehend Second language anxiety, one must first define second language anxiety. "It is the suspicion or dislike of something which is regarded as unusual or weird," according to the definition of second language anxiety, dislike or dread of people from other countries that is extreme or unreasonable. It might include a desire to eliminate their presence in order to maintain a sense of purity, as well as a fear of ethnic, losing of national or racial identity" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary 2020).

Xenoglossophobia also named as Speech Anxiety or Foreign language Anxiety is a feeling of fear of speaking in public commonly arises during class room or in a setting where someone's or most probably students face learning. It is also often manifested as nervousness or panic of communication in a public places. This feeling of nervousness, fear or anxiety also exerts various emotional, mental and physical changes. Physical symptoms including shortness of breath, numbness, accelerated heart rate, increase in blood pressure, dilation or contraction of pupils, nausea or vomiting and emotional symptoms including Obsessive Thoughts, Fear of losing control, Fear of fainting, Persistent worrying about upcoming events, worrying about what people will think about me, tensed about forgetting the presentations or word and mental illness includes high level of stress, anxiety, panic attacks or depression. All of these symptoms can lead to sadness, fear, hurt and guilt (Glossophobia, 2020).

Self-esteem is "A person's appraisal of their own value or worth, based on a feeling of "efficacy," a sense of engaging effectively with one's own surroundings," says Richards & Schmidt (2002). Positive achievement does, without a doubt, lead to high self-esteem in most people, but the effect of high self-esteem on achievement is less clear. However, it appears very likely that the self-concept will play a vital role internally in the learning process, as there is evidence of a mediating function of self-concept in learning (Gurney, 1986).

Quality of life is a subjective process that is affected by experiences of individuals largely. The inspection of an individual's subjective understanding of experiences of life must involve some other factors also like activities of community, personal development, relations, physical and mental well-being, and happiness (Schalock, 1996).

Another description of the QOL is capitalized by Revicki et al. (2000) that QOL is an extensive range of experiences of individuals that is related with their complete well-being, a direction that demonstrate those values that are based on the functioning at subjective level in contrary with the personal goals or motives and is identified by individualized understanding, state and personal experiences.

Literature Review

Literature review consists of reviewing the previous studies accompanying Second language anxiety; this is also called as foreign language anxiety among adults. Foreign language anxiety had been a developing focus in the second language learning since many decades. Most of the researchers had demonstrated that an adverse relationship exists between second language learning and anxiety (MacIntyre & Doucette, 2010).

According to "Horwitz and Cope's Theory of Foreign Language Anxiety" (1986) in their prominent investigation, they delimitate second language anxiety as "a distinguish sophisticated construct of self-perceptions, assumptions, feelings, and performances related to second language learning arising from the individuality of language learning process". They state that anxiousness associated with a second language is a situation-specific configuration originating from the distinctiveness of second language learning, not as a comprehensive anxiousness affected to learning a second language. They authenticated their theory by observing adults learning language during the process of teaching and communication in language classes and by taking response from thirty adult learners who

were attending a language class as well. This theory endorses that other academic disciplines of learning do not have the same degree of self-concepts and self-expressions like second language learning, which creates this type of anxiety different from other academic anxieties. Adults who perform well at other disciplines without getting anxious experienced anxiety when learning English as a second language.

One evidence has been found by the study conducted by Mohammed (2017), in which he reported that the anxiety regarding language impacts directly on learning the English language. Similarly, another study conducted by Omer (2015) also agreed with the statement that anxiety creates an impact on the students in both ways, mentally and physically. In a research study by Denovan and Andrew (2013), the findings suggested that anxiety regarding language and stress directly negatively affects the English learners and they begin to avoid situations.

A great deal of research has explored the relationship among language achievement and self-esteem and identified a positive correlation in these two among various contexts. Koosha et al. (2011) completed a research study to test the relationship between self-confidence of English foreign language among adolescent and adults of Iran and their self-esteem with respect to different variables like sex, speaking skills and age. The results of this study have shown a significant relationship among mastery in speaking and self-esteem. The results suggest that individuals with inflated self-esteem usually are more confident to speak in that language whether outside of the classroom or inside it. The quality of life significantly impacts an individual's performance, particularly in educational settings. School performance involves a complex interplay of various factors. Among these, students experiencing second language anxiety are at a higher risk of having reduced self-esteem and a compromised quality of life. Anxiety, in this context, acts as a predictor, leading to diminished self-esteem and a lower overall quality of life for many individuals. Students grappling with second language anxiety often exhibit symptoms such as a lack of confidence, avoidance of social situations, and weakened interpersonal relationships, especially when required to speak in front of an audience. These factors collectively contribute to a decline in their self-esteem and the overall quality of life, particularly for those engaged in second language learning.

The rationale for this research stems from the evolving role of the English language as a global lingua franca. Originally a foreign language, English has transcended international boundaries and has become widely spoken across the globe. While native speakers find it relatively easy to use, non-English speakers often face significant challenges in mastering the language. This phenomenon is particularly prominent in countries like Pakistan, mirroring trends in various Asian nations.

In Pakistan, English has garnered significant attention, particularly among the native population, and more specifically, among students. It has come to be regarded not only as a means of communication but also as a symbol of modernity, a standard of excellence, and an emblem of success and intelligence. This perception has created a unique societal stigma, wherein individuals who struggle with accurate English communication may encounter substantial difficulties. This struggle can result in the manifestation of anxiety and embarrassment when they are required to use English, ultimately leading to lower levels of self-esteem and a compromised quality of life.

The primary aim of this research was to delve into the experiences of adults who grapple with second language anxiety, specifically focusing on their self-esteem and overall quality of life. The significance of this study extends to the pressing need for the development of effective intervention strategies aimed at mitigating the fear associated with public speaking in English. Such interventions hold the potential to impact various facets of life positively. Furthermore, this research contributes valuable insights not only to students and learners but also to individuals from diverse backgrounds who encounter speaking or

language-related anxiety. In sum, the study aims to shed light on an issue of profound societal relevance, offering important findings that can benefit the broader academic community and society as a whole

Material and Methods

Research Design

In the present research, a quantitative research approach was employed, utilizing a cross-sectional study design to investigate the relationship between Xenoglossophobia and adult self-esteem, quality of life, and communication experiences.

Sample and Participants

Information was gathered from a group of 400 participants, including both males and females, falling within the age range of 20 to 40 years. These individuals were selected using the convenience sampling method from various educational institutions in Sialkot.

Measures

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) was used to measure the second language anxiety. It was originally organized by Horwitz et al. (1986). This scale consists of 33 items on a five-point Likert scale, which ranges from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly disagree." In this study a short version of FLCAS consisting of 8 items was used. The scales items were related to the nervousness, physical symptoms of anxiety, and lack of self-confidence. Two items of FLCAS indicate lower levels of anxiety and six of them reflect high levels of anxiety.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE)

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) was used to measure Self-esteem. This was proposed by sociologist Morris Rosenberg (1979). RSE is a Guttmann scale which contains ten items. This scale based on four-point Likert scale which ranges from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree).

Quality of Life Scale (QOLs)

The Quality of Life Scale (QOLs), which was originally developed by John Flanagan, an American psychologist, in the 1970's. It consists of 15 items that measure physical well-being relationship with others, material well-being, personal development and recreation. This scale based on seven- point Likert scale which ranges from 1 (terrible) to 7 (delighted).

Procedure

Prior to commencing the research, necessary approvals were obtained from the authors of the measurement tools and the relevant institutions. Data was then collected from both government and private educational institutions located in Sialkot, and subsequently subjected to statistical analysis procedures. The sample was gathered in the form of assessments provided by the participants using three different measurement instruments. The entire research process was successfully concluded within a span of five months.

Ethical Considerations

Murphy's Ethical guidelines were practiced throughout the research. Oral and written informed consent was taken from the sample/participants of their willingness to participate in the study. Information regarding objectives and procedures of the study was provided to participants. Scales were administered and data was analyzed by using SPSS

(.21). All results have been accurately calculated and reported. Information provided by the participant has been kept confidential.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Correlation among xenoglossophobia, self-esteem and quality of life

Variables	1	2	3
Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale	1		
Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale	-.309	1	
Quality of life scale	.001	.417	1

Table 2
Linear Regression Analysis of Foreign Language Anxiety as predictors of Self -Esteem and Quality of Life among adults

Variables	B	SE	B	P(Sig)
Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale	.374	.077	.269	.000
Quality Of Life	.047	.020	.128	.021

**p<0.01

The table shows the impact of Xenoglossophobia on self-esteem and quality of life. The value of R^2 value of .056 revealed that the predictors explained 56% variance in the outcome variable with F (11.767), P<.001.

Table 3
Mean, Standard deviation and t-test of persons with (female, n=200) and (male, n=200) on all models of variables

Variables	M	SD	t	MD	Sig
1. FLCAS					
Males	23.9798	5.40817			
			-4.585	-2.41129	.000
Females	26.3911	5.10784			
2. RSES					
Males	22.2172	3.83390			
			-3.378	-1.29273	.001
Females	23.5099	5.81951			
3. QOL					
Males	80.0202	15.87929			
			-.090	-.13326	.928
Females	80.1535	13.57424			

**p<0.01

df= 398, N=200 (male), N=200 (female)

The table shows that there is statistically significant difference among adults on the variable of second language anxiety (t= -4.585, **p<0.01), whereas no significant difference was found among male and female adults on the variables of self-esteem (t= -3.378, p>0.05) and quality of life (t= -.090, p>0.05). Further mean scores indicated that the female adults shows more second language anxiety (M=26.3911) than male adults (M= 23.9798) and more lack of self-esteem among female adults (M= 23.5099) than male adults (M=22.2172) whereas the quality of life among female adults (M= 80.1535) and male adults (M= 80.0202) is almost equal. The comprehensive scores obtained from the regression analysis

demonstrate a negative correlation between second language anxiety and self-esteem. Additionally, the analysis reveals a significant and positive association between second language anxiety and quality of life.

Discussion

Second language anxiety is a significant and growing issue in several Asian countries, including Pakistan, as highlighted in this current study focused on adults. The research findings indicate that a majority of adults experiencing anxiety tend to have lower levels of self-esteem. Self-esteem is a personal assessment of one's own value and worth. This study suggests that not all aspects of an individual's life are negatively impacted by second language anxiety. In today's modern society, people often equate a better quality of life with factors such as good health, organized living, material possessions, dietary habits, clothing choices, and, in general, financial well-being, which serves as a prominent indicator of an improved quality of life (Kovac, 2004). The latest research reveals a negative correlation between second language anxiety and self-esteem in adults. This implies that higher levels of anxiety related to second language proficiency in adults are associated with lower self-esteem, indicating a clear negative relationship between these two variables. Conversely, the analysis of correlations indicates that there is no significant relationship between second language anxiety and an individual's quality of life

Conclusion

In summary, the findings of this study demonstrate interconnectedness among three key factors. The research reveals that there is no significant correlation between Xenoglossophobia and quality of life, but a noteworthy relationship exists between Xenoglossophobia and self-esteem. Consequently, it can be inferred that second language anxiety serves as a predictor, exerting either a direct or indirect influence on the self-esteem and quality of life of adults.

Recommendations

More studies should be conducted on the related topic. The studies may include some other factors such as personality factors, life satisfaction, learning motivation, learning styles etc. and may address these issues in other areas except Sialkot to get more information about second language anxiety in Pakistani context. The futures studies may explore the second language anxiety among professionals also. Moreover , it is recommended that awareness about the Xenoglossophobia , self-esteem and life satisfaction needs to be promoted by incorporating them into the curriculum of school education in Pakistan.

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