

Linguistic Anxiety in Foreign Language Learning Process Preuniversity Level Dominican Students



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ABSTRACT: Learning a second language has become a necessity for human beings, because in daily life they face globalization, which requires knowing or mastering other languages or languages apart from the native one. This has become a challenge for the inhabitants of a country or nation, generating in them an anxious feeling that prevents them from learning easily. Linguistic anxiety is the apprehension experienced in front of a situation that requires the use of a second foreign language with which the individual does not have all his communicative potential [...] which causes the propensity of individuals to react nervously when they speak, listen, read or write in this other idiom For these reasons, through this study we will try to explain briefly and simply about anxiety, its intervention in learning a foreign language, the causes that generate it and the role of the teacher when this factor occurs.

KEYWORDS: Anxiety, types of anxiety, cognitive load, language learning.

INTRODUCTION

The study stems from personal experiences and observations of the various students who are studying in the various educational institutions of the Dominican Republic, who present certain tensions, nervousness, worries, anguish, among others, when carrying out activities related to the foreign language to be taught.

In today's world and through globalization, social, economic and political demands have been leading humanity to multilingualism in all social strata.

In today's societies, dealing with two or more languages has become a differentiated and essential medium in training and job opportunities for the youth population, whose main objective in the Dominican educational system is to promote comprehensive education in young people at the national.

Despite the implementation of new educational methodologies within the context of language teaching in the Dominican nation, there is still a latent deficit in the command of foreign languages by students and, at present, linguistic anxiety has become one of the biggest obstacles to language learning.

These feelings can be present in all four language skills, being more common in the development of oral skills. For these reasons, it is intended to know what anxiety consists of. Also, we will comment on the possible causes that generate it and how it affects students.

Anxiety is an affective factor that positively or negatively influences the personality of students and their education. This kind of feeling is called foreign language anxiety. Because, for some students, learning another language is complex, since they face the formation of a grammar different from the one they have achieved innately.

This is one of the cases faced by the students of the Dominican nation, who have faced certain obstacles in learning a foreign language, due to the coexistence of environments far from this type of language and by not having the necessary skills and knowledge. Show behaviors of nervousness and apathy towards language.

Anxiety has made students fearful and nervous, generating poor linguistic skills, as it is related to the wisdom and memory of the human being. In other words, they are the ones who are most often inferior to others, they are shy and easily embarrassed. On the other hand, they suffer from various transformations such as: accelerated heart rate, abundant perspiration, and desire to go to the bathroom, among others. To this situation is added the inability to order or structure the ideas well and therefore they cannot give an answer to the questions that the teacher asks.

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The problem of anxiety in students may have arisen from having been ridiculed by other people when making mistakes in the response or activities in the classroom called "Archaic Anxiety", that is, repressed anguish from the past. Also, it is perceived due to the scolding and negative thoughts that some teachers have created in them.

The study that is presented corresponds to the investigations that have been carried out in the different educational centers of the Dominican Republic in which levels of linguistic anxiety in the students have been explored. The presence of this construct in language classrooms shed light on this reality. A second language or language has received little research in the country.

On the other hand, language teachers are interested in delving into the knowledge in the process of learning a language and what interferes with said learning, since the better the problem is understood, the better pedagogical orientations will emerge for the teaching of languages. That they want to impart.

In other words, language anxiety is central to understanding how learners approach language learning, their expectations of success or failure, and ultimately why they continue or stop studying.

ANXIETY IN THE ACQUISITION OF SECOND LANGUAGES

Conceptualization

Merino-Crespo (2019) defines anxiety as "an alert signal that warns of imminent danger and allows the person to take the necessary measures to face a threat" (p.19). The detriment in student performance is associated with anxiety and stress problems, causing long-term mental and physical health problems.

Cáceres-Caballero & Meza-Aranda (2021) argue that anxiety in learning a foreign language is a unique type of anxiety that has a broad theoretical study not only addressed by theorists who expose results in fields of anxiety, but, as part of the reality experienced by many foreign language learners. This type of anxiety accompanies the process of learning a new language, affecting all productive skills (written and speaking skills) as well as receptive skills (reading and listening skills) typical of the language.

Also, "anxiety always occurs as a result of difficulties in adapting to the changes that are taking place in our lives." It is considered as an emotional response or pattern (triple response system) encompassing cognitive, physiological and motor aspects. In addition, it supports some of the repercussions associated with cognitive procedures: worry, fear, fear, insecurity, apprehension or negative thoughts (Merino-Crespo, 2019:19).

Anxiety is defined in the learning of a foreign language "as a complex psychological phenomenon and typical of the language while in a more specific way" (Cáceres-Caballero & Meza-Aranda, 2021:42). On the other hand, it is conceptualized as "that feeling of tension and apprehension associated with learning contexts of a foreign language in relation to the development of a negative feeling present when learning and using that target language orally or in writing" (p.42).

Anxiety in the context of learning a foreign language is one of the main impediments to the acquisition and future fluent production of the new language. On the other hand, it is typified as that language anxiety related to negative feelings produced within the context of learning a foreign language. Put another way, it is the apprehension experienced when a situation requires the use of language or language in which the learner is not fully competent.

In other words, various researchers and authors recognize the distinction between anxiety in learning a foreign language and any other type of anxiety based on the fact that the learning experience is a unique and specific process (Cáceres-Caballero & Meza-Aranda, 2021:41-42).

ANXIETY CLASSIFICATION

There are two types of anxiety: the positive one experienced as a consequence of real dangers and the negative one, which responds to the fears present in people's imagination. Others comment that it is a subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness and worry, associated with an activation of the parasympathetic nervous system. In addition, two categories associated with this concept are considered: state-anxiety and trait-anxiety.

To this is added a third, called situational anxiety. It is related to aspects of personality and may be a hereditary component, anxiety as a state is temporary. That is to say, it details a momentary period and a resistance against specific situations. This third category (situational anxiety) is considered a form of state-anxiety that appears in certain contexts and is characterized by a feeling of incapacity on the part of the individual. (Merino-Crespo, 2019: 19)

Anxiety and Learning a Second Language – Foreign

España-Reyes (2019), comments that one of the factors that affects students in the learning process is anxiety in subjects that they consider difficult, among which is learning other languages. For these reasons, various studies have been carried out focused on the investigation of anxiety (p.7).

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Anxiety is defined as "a threat to security and/or self-esteem perceived by students" (España-Reyes, 2019:8). In accordance with this definition, it can be seen that this threat can be direct, such as a decrease in a grade in a test. Also, a degree of intense anxiety can obstruct the ability to use specific skills necessary for learning the foreign language. For this reason, it has been identified as one of the factors that affects the learning of foreign languages.

The degree of anxiety can interfere with the unavoidable skills for learning the foreign language. Also, it is related to interaction with others, such as students who consider themselves disabled by their actions (when speaking in class) when they feel judged by others or insecure (España-Reyes, 2019:8).

CAUSES OF ANXIETY

For España-Reyes (2019), anxiety about learning foreign languages is attributed to various factors: "oral expression, fear of being negatively evaluated and anxiety before exams". Difficulty levels of foreign language classes, personal perception of language aptitude, certain personality variables (for example, perfectionism and fear of public speaking), and stressful classroom experiences are all possible causes of concern.

Six random sources of anxiety stemming from these aspects have been identified: the student, the teacher, and the instructional practice. It is caused by personal and interpersonal issues, student statements about language learning, teacher opinions about language teaching, teacher-student interaction, classroom methods, and exams (España-Reyes, 2019:9).

Other causes for which anxiety is generated

Fear of speaking: sometimes students speculate that they are going to make a mistake and feel fear, refraining from speaking, perhaps because of the ridicule of their classmates and the teacher's call for attention, making them unable to express themselves in another language. The student must risk talking regardless of the mistakes he may make when expressing himself, as this will help him improve and meet his goal.

Low self-esteem: students who have limited success in learning a foreign language often have low self-esteem, considering themselves incapable of carrying out activities that are related to the oral production of the language they are learning. Some consider that they must speak fluently, with a good accent that language learning must be done in a short time (López, 2019).

ANXIETY AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

One of the important causes of anxiety is the nervousness caused by grammatical errors, pronunciation and the inability to talk spontaneously, to talk in front of others in the second language. For such purposes, it is suggested that the classroom environment should be encouraging, motivating and that teachers should deal with anxiety-provoking situations.

Negative emotions continue to appear in the classroom that teaches foreign languages, because the act of writing in another language is not attractive to students. Also, the situations that cause anxiety in students is not understanding what the teacher transmits to them.

and when they make mistakes when expressing themselves in the foreign language (España-Reyes, 2019:11).

Anxiety and Learning

Regarding the relationship between anxiety and learning, the lack of desire to communicate and the anxiety of the students, since most of them want to participate in interpersonal dialogues, because they do not like to risk talking in another language in the classroom. On the other hand, students of both sexes were facing anxiety in learning foreign languages, however, the female gender presents greater concerns than the male (España-Reyes, 2019:12).

Anxiety and Exams

España-Reyes (2019) argues that one of the important aspects in the growth of students is anxiety when facing exams, focusing on three dimensions: concern, emotionality and facilitation. This type of deduction has identified the relationship between test anxiety and the use of information acquisition, encoding and retrieval strategies in these students (p.12-13).

TYPES OF ANXIETY

Social anxiety: this includes shyness, embarrassment, a state of fear and apprehension in communication. They avoid social settings where they have to participate for fear of ridicule and rejection by others.

Evaluative anxiety: it is perceived as part of social anxiety, especially in situations in which the student must communicate in the language that she is learning. Therefore, when presenting this type of anxiety, he tends to be restless and worried about the results of his expression (López, 2019).

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Foreign Language Learning Anxiety

According to Merino-Crespo (2019), anxiety in the foreign language can be seen as an individual discernment or in any context in which a second or foreign language is used. This varies according to environmental conditions, perceptions of the level of threat in a given situation, and variations in the individual's level of stress. Three components were identified: apprehension in the act of communication, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation.

The apprehension in the act of communication is related to the concern presented by the students when they have to communicate with others, being shy when speaking in public, experiencing difficulties when they have to speak in the foreign language, since they are observed by the teacher and is not in control of the situation. These learners are often involved in strategies to avoid the language learning process. In addition, the belief they have about the difficulty of understanding and being understood by others when they use non-native language, experiencing a feeling of fear and becoming silent in certain situations. Exam anxiety arises from the fear of failure, because students experience nervousness before obtaining an exam or evaluation test, giving them a feeling of discomfort that leads them to make certain mistakes that would not occur in a more relaxed environment.

The fear of negative evaluation is related to the fear of being evaluated, but in this case it goes beyond the context of the test or exam, because the student generates a feeling of fear when being evaluated by others in any social situation, such as speak in class using a language other than their mother tongue and tend to avoid such situations (Merino-Crespo, 2019:19-20).

On the other hand, there are six potential sources that produce anxiety in foreign language students, since they can be related to the student, the teacher or the educational practice. The first is due to the personal and interpersonal anxieties associated with the self-esteem of individuals and their concern about how others perceive them. Students have an incorrect concept of their abilities.

The second source is related to students' beliefs about language learning. In this sense, students with unrealistic beliefs about language learning are considered to experience anxiety when they are unable to meet expectations.

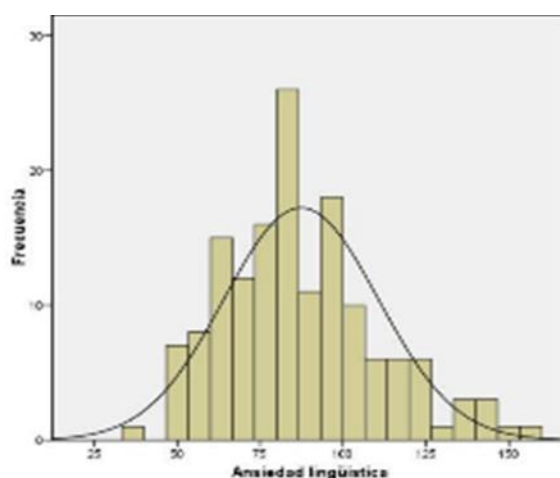
Third, it is supported that the misconceptions that teachers have about language teaching can be a source of linguistic anxiety in students, thinking that they have to constantly correct all mistakes, creating a tense atmosphere in the classroom.

The fourth source is the interaction between the teacher and the student, as well as the correction techniques used. In this part the corrective feedback is revealed, since the problem seems to be linked to the way of correcting the errors, not the correction of errors.

The fifth source of anxiety arises when students have to deal with speaking or interacting using the foreign language, especially frequently.

Talk to the teacher or the rest of the students.

Finally, the sixth and in relation to exams, it can cause anxiety. This is because students may worry when the teacher places too much importance on grammatical correctness in exams or other assessment activities, with the result that students may not pass exams even though they have good proficiency in the subject. Foreign language (Merino-Crespo, 2019: 21-22)



Histogram of language anxiety

Anxiety in Learning Foreign Languages

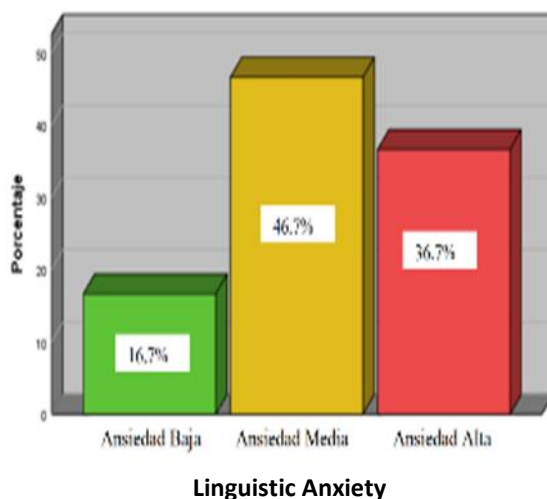
Adriánzén-Segovia (2021), comments that studies have been carried out in order to understand the levels of anxiety of developed

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people in relation to learning a foreign language since it affects it effectively or inefficiently. This is a feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with contexts that occur in the acquisition of second languages including oral production, listening comprehension and learning (p.61).

Anxiety can have a number of effects: academically, cognitively, socially, and personally. At the academic level, where high levels of anxiety are shown in learning the non-native language associated with low levels of performance in the language course. Cognitive, occurs in three stages: input, processing and output of information. Finally, in the social aspect, it is about the availability that students have to communicate during the class where this ability is usually compared between them.

As for the personal, each person faces anxiety since, for some, learning a foreign language can be an unpleasant experience.



However, a scale is presented to measure the level of linguistic anxiety of students in the process of learning a foreign language, using the components of anxiety in said learning, producing a negative effect on it:

Communicative apprehension: associated with the student's shyness in contexts where she has to communicate. That is, he is frustrated by not understanding another person or when he cannot communicate efficiently. In this there are three situations: speaking in public, with another person or in a group listening to a spoken message.

The fear of negative evaluation by peers: it depends on the appreciations that students have of their peers and these about them. This component can negatively affect the student both cognitively and emotionally. In the first case by hindering your ability to pay attention and understand new information. Second by generating feelings such as anxiety.

Exam anxiety: this is the expectations of students to get high grades and be successful in the foreign language class in which a series of exams and evaluations are constantly carried out in order to check the progress of the students. This process can raise stress and pressure levels in students who feel more anxious (Adrianzén-Segovia, 2021:61-62).

There are different studies focused on the relationship between anxiety and the skills that are developed as part of learning a foreign language: written and oral comprehension (reading & listening); written and oral production (writing & speaking). The perceptions of students in relation to anxiety have been investigated Influence of anxiety in learning English as a non-native language in higher education students and when speaking during language class resulting in high levels of anxiety when communicating with their peers. (Adrianzén-Segovia, 2021:62)

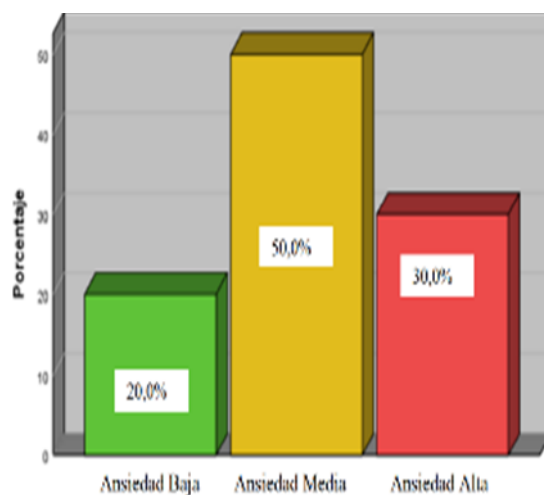
Cáceres-Caballero & Meza-Aranda (2021) believe that anxiety in learning a second language is a field that has been studied around the 1970s. However, until 1990, when a formal theory calling this class of anxiety as a syndrome related to three other types of anxiety: fear of negative evaluation, communicative apprehension, and evaluation anxiety.

Fear of negative evaluation: it manifests itself as excessive and disproportionate fear of self- and co-evaluation by the teacher or peers of the apprentice where not only the development of the person during the task but also to what extent they develop are objectively analyzed and valued. The various language skills. In other words, making mistakes in the process of learning a foreign language is allowed and develops naturally. However, these errors make the student find himself in constant fear of making mistakes, seeking to minimize any opportunity for participation to avoid any negative evaluation. (Cáceres-Caballero & Meza-Aranda, 2021:40-41)

Communicative apprehension: it is defined as the uncomfortable feeling mode and negative that is present when having to express thoughts, emotions or facts in public within a learning context. If the lack of command of this new language is added to this situation, both factors contribute to the unconscious development of anxiety. That is, the lack of ability to understand and be understood within this context causes frustration and the constant apprehension to communicate.

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Anxiety before the evaluation: it is based on the fear and suspicion of failing or not demonstrating sufficient ability to master the target language. This happens as a result of the unrealistic demands made by the learner where the only result that must be achieved is perfection, because they see evaluation (exams) as the only intelligent tool that can cause them to make mistakes (Cáceres- Caballero & Meza-Aranda, 2021:41-42).



Anxiety in learning situations and processes

Virtual Environments to reduce anxiety in foreign language students

Sánchez-Muñoz (2021), believes that the advantages of a second language is a theoretical construction to solve certain problems regarding cognitive and affective factors in the teaching and learning of foreign languages. It has been possible to appreciate that certain studies have found similarities between the learning of the non-native language and diversified aspects such as personality, motivation, attitude or anxiety. The purpose of the research regarding anxiety in learning a foreign language can be controlled with the implementation of virtual worlds (VM) for the teaching of a foreign language (p.1).

Anxiety in the foreign language plays an essential role in language teaching, where teachers must create environments that reduce anxiety in students. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and technological instruments offer these possibilities, since their purpose is to facilitate the learning and teaching of foreign languages.

Various investigations have been investigating how anxiety in the foreign language can be reduced through electronic teaching environments, smartphones or mobile phones, communication environments measured by computers, among other means.

The studies carried out have been able to show that virtual worlds could reduce anxiety, due to the possibilities they offer in the teaching of the foreign language. These studies analyzed the evolution of anxiety levels due to a foreign language.

Virtual worlds favor the reduction of anxiety levels for the foreign language in language students. In that same order, there are certain methodological obstacles for the development of activities in the teaching of the second language (Sánchez-Muñoz, 2021:6).

The use of technological tools in virtual environments for the development of the foreign language

Mendoza-Navas & Martos-Eliche (2021) are of the opinion that Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) offer the possibility of communicating in real time with any part of the world, as well as data access that increases every day. Knowledge of a foreign language offers communicative possibilities using it, creating real and functional communicative content.

The use of ICT in the foreign language classroom is a methodology that motivates students, because it stimulates them to feel attracted to them, which can be used in various ways. All teaching methods, the use of new technologies have advantages and disadvantages. The use of ICT in the foreign language classroom is an effort of teachers, because they must be constantly updated, receiving training for the use of these resources when teaching. Teaching methods are constantly changing and today the use of new technologies is inevitable in teaching.

The use of technology in the teaching of foreign languages responds to the following reasons: it is motivating, the interactivity offered by the linguistic exercises, the type of feedback offered by the interactive materials, which are perceived as useful by the students. On the other hand, the use of technology in the classroom allows students to be more autonomous.

The discussion about the benefits of technology, including investigations of technological applications to a specific area of language teaching and learning, considers that the role of technology is useful in differentiating linguistic abilities (reading,

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listening, writing and speaking), facilitating the practice of each of these skills such as the integration of skills and the incorporation of authentic cultural contexts important for language learning (Mendoza-Navas & Martos-Eliche, 2021).

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