

Anxiety Factors in the Saudi EFL Learners

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Abstract : The Saudi EFL learners face a number of problems in EFL learning, anxiety is the most potent one among those. It means that its resolution can lead to better language skills in Saudi students. That's why, the study is carried out and is considered to be of interest to the Saudi language learners, educators and the policy makers because of the potentially negative impact that anxiety has on English language learning. The purpose of the study is to explore the factors that cause language anxiety in the Saudi EFL learners while learning speaking skills and the influence it casts on communication in the target language. The investigation of the anxiety-producing factors that arise while learning to communicate in the target language will hopefully broaden the insight into the issue of language anxiety and will help language teachers in making the classroom environment less stressful. The study seeks to answer the questions such as what are the psycholinguistic factors that cause language anxiety among ESL/EFL learners in learning and speaking English Language, especially in the context of the Saudi students. What are the socio-cultural factors that cause language anxiety among Saudi EFL learners in learning and speaking English Language? How is anxiety manifested in the language learning of the Saudi EFL learners? And which strategies can be used to successfully cope with language anxiety? The scope of the study is limited to the college and university English Teachers and subject specialists (males and females) in public sectors colleges and universities in Saudi Arabia. Some of the key findings of the study are:, Anxiety plays an important role in English as foreign language learning for the Saudi EFL learners. Some teachers believe that anxiety bears negatives effects for the learners, while some others think that anxiety serves a positive outcome for the learners by giving them an extra bit of motivation to do their best in English language learning. Language teachers seem to have consensus that L1 interference is one of the major factors that cause anxiety among the Saudi EFL learners. Most of the Saudi EFL learners are found to have fear of making mistakes. They don't take initiative and opt to keep quiet and don't respond fearing that they would make mistakes and this would ruin their image in front of their peers. Discouraging classroom environment is also counted as one of the major anxiety causing factors. The teachers, who don't encourage learners positively, make them anxious and they start avoiding class participation. It is also found that English language teachers have their important role to minimize the negative effects of anxiety in the classes. The teachers' positive encouragement can do wonders in this regard. A positive, motivating and encouraging class environment is essential to produce desired results in English language learning for the Saudi EFL learners.

Keywords : factors, psychology, speaking, EFL

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