

The Impact of Language Anxiety on EFL Learners' Proficiency: Case Study of University of Jeddah

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Abstract : Foreign language Anxiety has been found to be a key issue in learning English as foreign language in the classroom. This study investigated the impact of foreign language anxiety on Saudi EFL learners' proficiency in the classroom. A total of 197 respondents had participated in the study, comprising of 96 male and 101 female, who enrolled in preparatory year, first year, second year, and fourth year of English language department at the University of Jeddah. Two instruments were used to answer the study questions. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) was used to identify the levels of foreign language (FL) anxiety for Saudi learners. Moreover, an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test was used as an objective measure of the learners' English language proficiency. The data were analyzed using descriptive analyses, t-test, one-way ANOVA, correlation, and regression analysis. The findings revealed that Saudi EFL learners' experience a level of anxiety in the classroom, and there is a significant differences between the course levels in their level of language anxiety. Moreover, it is also found that female students are less anxious in learning English as a foreign language than male students. The results show that foreign language anxiety and English proficiency are negatively related to each other. Furthermore, the study revealed that there were significant differences between Saudi learners in language use anxiety, while there were no significant differences in language class anxiety. The study suggested that teachers should employ a diversity of designed techniques to encourage the environment of the classroom in order to control learners' FLA, which in turns will improve their EFL proficiency.

Keywords : foreign language anxiety, FLA, language use anxiety, language class anxiety, gender, L2 proficiency

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