

A Case Study of Five Korean University Students' English Language Anxiety in English Classroom

Eun-Soo Park
Silla University

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This study investigates the perceived levels of anxiety experienced by five English language students in a regular university setting. The results indicate that some levels of anxiety were present in the participants' classes. This study found out that there are three major sources of anxiety in English classrooms. These are: the individual student's self-perceived English proficiency, their fear of negative evaluation, and fear of speaking activities. Further, to reduce their anxiety in the classroom, the students provided two suggestions: helpful teachers and good relationship with classmates. The implications of this study include encouraging teachers to enrich their awareness of English language anxiety, carefully dealing with anxiety-provoking situations, encouraging teachers' use of various teaching strategies, and encouraging students' interaction in the classroom.

[language anxiety/sources of language anxiety/언어불안/언어불안근원]

I. INTRODUCTION

Most language teachers have had experience in dealing with students who sit in the back of the classroom, answer questions as little as possible, stay as quiet as possible, and/or show uncertainty when called upon in class. One of the greatest challenges for EFL teachers is to provide students with a learner-centered, low-anxiety, and comfortable classroom environment. In their efforts to create such an environment, the issue of student anxiety and its consequent negative effects on L2 learning and performance seems to pose a challenge to all language teachers, as it can potentially hamper the optimal

learning and teaching from taking place in the classroom.

Anxiety has been regarded as one of the most significant affective factors that influence second/foreign language acquisition. Anxiety could be described as feelings of uneasiness, frustration, nervousness, and worry. A learner's emotional feelings and/or attitudes might affect learning efficacy, motivation, and self-confidence. Most researchers indicate that anxiety has a negative influence on second/foreign language learning, since language anxiety appears to be related to the learners' oral performance and to the components of writing and speaking (Cheng, 1999; Gregersen, 2004). Thus, one of our foremost tasks as English teachers is to have a better understanding of the nature of student anxiety in terms of when, where, how, and why students feel anxious. Armed with this understanding teachers should be able to implement anxiety-reducing methods (Spielmann & Radnofsky, 2001).

Therefore, the present study endeavored to describe and explore the nature of language learning anxiety from the perspective of five Korean university students of English. The present study utilized the qualitative research tradition, the interview with the inclusion of a quantitative component. These components were used to focus attention on their experiences, and feelings in order to generate an enlightening narration of the participants' perspectives on language anxiety in English classrooms. The research questions for the present study are 1) What were the sources of English language anxiety in an introductory-level university English course? and 2) What kinds of factors were perceived to be helpful in reducing English language anxiety among the university students of English?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Anxiety seems difficult to describe in a simple and exhaustive manner, as it arises from many kinds of sources associated with the particular contexts or situations that individuals perceive to be threatening according to their unique frame of reference (Eharman, 1996). Previous anxiety research suggests that there are roughly two types that can be experienced at different psychological levels (Levitt, 1980; Schwarzer, 1986; Spielberger, 1983). At the deepest—or global—level, anxiety is viewed as a permanent trait, as some people are predisposed to be anxious. At a more local or situational level, anxiety can be experienced in response to a particular situation or act (Brown, 2000).

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA), the research target of this paper, is considered to be a situational anxiety experienced in the well-defined realities of the foreign language classroom (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Many students experience anxiety when they are first exposed to the target language. It is hoped that this anxiety is just a transitory state that will diminish over time for students. However, some students come to associate anxiety arousal with the second language. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, (1986) support the supposition that foreign language anxiety does in fact exist. They regard language anxiety as a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors related to a classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process.

Based on this premise, recent studies have focused on anxiety which is specific to language situations. To date, findings by Horwitz et al. (1986) have been the most influential. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), language anxiety, a distinct phenomenon particular to language learning, comprises three componential sources, especially in relation to various kinds of L2 activities that the learners perform in the classroom: 1) communication apprehension, 2) fear of negative evaluation, and 3) test anxiety. Communication apprehension refers to an individual's discomfort in talking in front of others. Fear of negative evaluation is likely to be manifested in a student's overconcern with evaluations of his or her performance and competence in the target language. Test anxiety is a type of performance anxiety derived from a fear of failure and evaluative situations. Although it overlaps with other constructs of foreign language anxiety, researchers find that test anxiety could be significantly higher under an official and unfamiliar condition (Young, 1986).

Anxiety seems to be sometimes facilitating, sometimes debilitating. Facilitating anxiety motivates the learner to adopt an attitude of willingness to confront the new learning task. On the other hand, debilitating anxiety motivates the learner to assume an attitude of avoidance resulting in a tendency to seek escape from the new learning task (Scovel, 1978). Over the past few years, foreign language educators have found that anxiety plays a role in success or failure in the foreign language classroom (Ganschow & Sparks, 1996). In addition, a lot of researchers indicate that high level of anxiety can interfere with foreign language learning

(Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Madsen, Brown, & Jones, 1991).

The majority of studies have been investigated as anxiety correlates to other instructional variables, aiming to find a measurable impact of student affect on achievement or proficiency. For example, in a study involving college students of French, German, and Spanish, Young (1986) found that their levels of anxiety had negative correlation with their levels on the OPI (Oral Proficiency Interview) developed by the ACTFL (American Council on Teaching of Foreign Languages). Similarly, MacIntyre and Gardner (1994), based on a study of 97 college students that learn French, concluded that compared with more relaxed learners, those with anxiety find it more difficult to express their own views and tend to underestimate their own abilities. They also found that anxiety and learning achievement are negatively correlated.

Aida (1994) found that college students of Japanese who were more anxious received significantly lower final grades than less anxious students. Other research suggests that foreign language anxiety negatively correlates with risk-taking, another important affective variable in FL learning (Saito & Samimy, 1996; Samimy & Tabuse, 1992). In their study of beginning Japanese students in an American college, Samimy and Tabuse (1992) found that the less anxious students were in their classes, the more they were willing to take risks in speaking Japanese. More recently, Woodrow (2006) found out that second language speaking anxiety was a significant predictor of oral achievement. The most frequent source of anxiety in her study was interacting with native speakers. Na (2007) investigated 115 high school students' English learning anxiety in Chinese EFL classrooms. The results indicated that students do indeed have comparatively high anxiety in English learning, with males experiencing higher anxiety than females. It was also found that high anxiety plays a somewhat debilitating role in high school students' language learning. The students in this study experienced the most fear in the area of negative evaluation.

In conclusion, the fact that numerous studies have demonstrated significant negative correlations between language anxiety and learning strongly indicates this language anxiety does affect foreign language learning at the output stage. These findings shed some light on the role of anxiety in foreign language learning and gave useful suggestions for creating less anxiety provoking classrooms. However,

qualitative studies on foreign language anxiety, especially those with interviews, are still scarce. In order to gain a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon, experiences of language anxiety need to be explored and described from multiple perspectives and approaches. In particular, since many Korean universities provide English classes taught by native speakers of English as required courses, it is important to understand the students' perspectives of the sources of English language anxiety and anxiety-provoking situations. The present study attempts to identify those factors, as perceived by students, that may contribute to anxiety, and those factors that may reduce anxiety in an attempt to understand more fully the role that anxiety may play in an English classroom.

III. THE STUDY

1. Participants

Two male and three female university students participated in this study. All students were first-year university students at a private university in Busan, Korea. The students were all twenty year old. Three students were majoring in law, communication, and design. Two students were majoring in social welfare. All students were taking second semester university-level introductory English course taught by native English speakers. All participants shared almost the same educational background in terms of the length of learning English. They had all studied English in elementary and secondary school as a compulsory foreign language. Their teachers were all non-native English speakers. None of them had stayed in English speaking countries.

Valuable qualitative data can not be obtained without rapport between the volunteer participants and a researcher (Merriam, 1998). The researcher taught the participants for two semesters in 2007 and spent time getting to know them before the interviews. Informal conversations with them provided valuable information to understand each participant. The students expressed that they were dissatisfied with their English learning experiences through their school days. The participants mentioned that they failed to develop their speaking and listening abilities.

The students perceived that English proficiency is necessary for their future

career and taking English classes taught by native English speakers would help them improve their English. Therefore, the students showed positive attitudes toward learning English and their classes. Only one student (H) expressed that she just didn't like English. However, all students expressed that they wanted to get rid of their fears and anxiety toward meeting and speaking with native speakers while taking English classes. Table 1 shows the profiles of the participants. To assure confidentiality and for descriptive convenience, pseudo-initials for each participant were chosen.

Table 1

The Profiles of The Participants

| | Student H | Student S | Student Y | Student K | Student L |
|---------|-----------|---------------|-----------|----------------|----------------|
| Gender | female | male | male | female | female |
| Major | law | communication | design | social welfare | social welfare |
| Classes | Class A | Class B | Class B | Class C | Class C |

2. Data Collection and Procedures

This study employed two methods to collect data: an adapted version of a Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS, see Appendix A) created by Horwitz and semi-structured interviews (see Appendix B for a list of questions asked in the interviews). Due to the scale's success on construct validation and reliability, FLCAS has been widely adopted by many researchers to explore learners' foreign language anxiety (Aida, 1994; Cheng, 1999). The adapted version of FLCAS is a 20-item, self-report measure, scored on a five-point Likert Scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, and was developed to capture the specific essence of foreign language anxiety in a classroom setting and to provide investigators with a standard measure.

The students completed the adapted version of FLCAS before the interviews. The results were used to assess the degree to which a respondent feels anxious in an English classroom based on the construct of foreign language classroom anxiety being a composite of communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. The response of each participant to every question on the scale was entered into a database, number coded to assure confidentiality, and later compared with the qualitative narrative as a validity check.

Interviews with students were given to explore the possible sources of anxiety

and anxiety-provoking situations. The rationale behind the use of interview as a data source is that it can provide access to things that cannot be directly observed, such as feelings, thoughts, intentions or beliefs (Denzin, 1989; Merriam, 1998). The semi-structured interview techniques were used in the study. The researcher modified the questions and procedures according to the interviewees' responses. The strategy of open-ended response helped capture the complexities of the respondents' individual perceptions and experiences.

Each student was interviewed twice, using a set of 9 questions developed to elicit answers to the research questions. The data from the first interview was used as the basis for further inquiry in the second interview. Therefore, the subsequent interview built upon the first to develop a more integral understanding of the participant's experiences in their classrooms. The participants were asked as to they experienced English language anxiety, in what situations they felt anxious, and how they felt. The researcher interviewed the participants one by one. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. These interviews were audio recorded and transcribed.

3. Data Analysis

The taped interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher. The transcriptions of the interviews were analyzed according to basic categories developed from the research questions: factors believed to cause anxiety and factors believed to reduce anxiety. Under each separate category, portions of each dialogue were detailed according to individual participant response. In this way the source of the quotation was readily identifiable. The factors were then extrapolated from the dialogue portions and listed.

The adapted version of FLCAS was analyzed by summing the participants' ratings of the 20-items. SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solutions) 13.0 was employed to analyze the data. Descriptive analysis was performed to compute the means and standard deviations for each kind of anxiety to see the general situation of the students' anxiety in English classrooms.

IV. FINDINGS

1. The Results of the FLCAS

The overall mean was 2.91 (SD =1.09), which indicated an overall moderate rating of anxiety levels. The results of each student's FLCAS were 2.4 (Student H), 3.15 (Student S), 3.15 (Student Y), 3.3 (Student K), and 2.55 (Student L). Responses to all the FLCAS items are reported in Table 2. The results of the descriptive analyses showed that there were 10 items whose means were above 3.00. By analyzing these items, three main categories of the cause of anxiety emerged: that of general discomfort felt in the English language classroom, students' fear of negative evaluation, and speaking activities. Points directly related to concrete events in the language classroom included the following: the feeling of nervousness in English classroom, the feeling of fear of making mistakes in front of the class, of failing tests and English class, and the feeling of nervousness when speaking with their teachers.

Table 2

The Overall Situation of The Students' Anxiety in the English classroom

| Items | M | SD |
|---|------|------|
| 1. I am nervous when the teacher speaks to me in English class. | 3.20 | 1.30 |
| 2. I am embarrassed when I answer the teacher in English class. | 2.60 | 1.34 |
| 3 I worry about making mistakes in English class. | 3.40 | 1.34 |
| 4. I get nervous when speaking in English in class. | 3.40 | 1.34 |
| 5. My heart pounds when I do something in class. | 2.60 | 0.89 |
| 6. I feel self-conscious when speaking in English with my classmates. | 2.00 | 1.41 |
| 7. I am afraid that others will laugh at me when I speak English. | 2.00 | 1.22 |
| 8. I feel that the other students are better than me at speaking English. | 4.00 | 1.22 |
| 9. I get so nervous in class that I forget everything | 2.40 | 1.14 |
| 10. I get nervous if I haven't prepared for English class. | 1.80 | 0.83 |
| 11. I feel anxious even if I have prepared for English class. | 2.00 | 1.00 |
| 12. I worry if the teacher corrects me in class. | 2.00 | 1.00 |
| 13. The more I study English, the more I get confused. | 3.20 | 1.30 |
| 14. I worry if I can't understand every word the teacher says. | 4.00 | 0.70 |
| 15. In pair-work, I worry if my partner is better than me at English. | 2.00 | 1.41 |
| 16. In pair-work, I worry if my partner is worse than me at English. | 1.60 | 0.54 |
| 17. I worry about English tests. | 4.40 | 0.54 |
| 18. I worry about failing English class. | 3.80 | 1.64 |
| 19. The English class makes me most nervous (more than other classes). | 4.00 | 0.70 |
| 20. I often daydream in English class. | 3.80 | 1.09 |

The anxiety statements, which all had mean values exceeding 4, were: "I feel that other students are better than me at speaking English," "I worry if I can't understand every word the teacher says," "I worry about English tests," and "The

English class makes me most nervous (more than other classes)." The results showed that fear of being less competent, and test anxiety were the main constructs of the students' anxiety. This result was also supported by the qualitative data discussed below. Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation for answers to each statements by the participants.

2. Sources of Language Anxiety in English Learning

The students stated that they felt more anxious in their English classes than any other classes, simply because that they had had little chance of communication with native speakers before. The fact that their teachers are native speakers of English was certainly influential on the students' feelings. However, the students perceived that they felt less nervous about taking an English class taught by native speakers of English than they did last semester. They stated they believed their fear of speaking with native speakers of English would be reduced as they had more experiences. With this sensibility, as shown in the results of foreign language anxiety evaluation from questionnaires, the students expressed their English language anxiety in terms of sources and anxiety-provoking situations during the interviews.

Based on the data collected during the interviews, the students' sources of language anxiety were grouped into three types: their self-perceived low level of proficiency, fear of negative evaluation, and speaking activities. The students' self-perceived low level of proficiency was the major source of their language anxiety. When asked to describe their feelings in their English classrooms, the students stated:

I like my English class. My teacher is fun and kind. But, I feel anxious because I know my English.....my speaking English.....is not correct.
(Students H)

Nervous, sometimes. Cause I can't speak fluently... (Student S)

I don't understand all English, so I feel more nervous in my English class than

other classes. (Student Y)

The teachers says a lot of things at a high speed. I don't have any idea about what she is talking about, sometimes. (Student K)

It is OK. I don't feel nervous in general. But when I ask a question to my teacher during a break time, for example, I feel nervous. Sometimes very simple words can't come out of my mouth. (Student L)

All students in this study expressed a certain amount of anxiety toward their English classes taught by native speakers of English. As shown in their responses, however, the students were more concerned about their English proficiency than the teacher himself/herself. More specifically, their language anxiety happened when they did not know how to answer their teachers' oral questions. Also, they became anxious when they could not understand their teachers. In a word, low proficiency in any one of the four skills made the students anxious and hampered these students' English learning seriously.

The second source of language anxiety was fear of negative evaluation. All students in the study stated that they felt embarrassed when their classmates watched their English performance. The students' responses revealed that most of the students' fear occurred when they were answering questions. They were afraid that they could not respond appropriately or correctly in front of their classmates. Further, they were nervous because they felt that everyone was judging them. The following are the statements about their fear of negative evaluation:

Whenever the teacher called on me and I answered the question in English I felt nervous. I wasn't sure about my answer. (Student H)

To me, answering question is the most anxiety-provoking situation. I do not want to be the focus of attention so that my errors are put on display. (Student S)

When the teacher calls my name. I don't want everybody to look at me. (Student Y)

When the teacher asks me a question, which I don't know the answer, or how to respond to the question, I feel anxious. (Student K)

I don't like when the teacher calls on my name and ask a question. Because I can feel everybody is looking at me, I get easily blushed. (Student L)

The language classroom setting often involves constant evaluations from others as well as from the learner him/herself. In such an environment, these instances of being evaluated might serve as a reminder of the learner's current language competence in comparison to others' or to idealized images of him/herself as a successful language learner. Negative evaluation may come from teachers and/or peers. In this study, negative evaluation derived mainly from peers. The students were showed evidence of low self-esteem about their English proficiency, which probably makes them self-conscious when speaking in front of others. The students even compared their English proficiency to other classmates and perceived themselves as inferior. Such perceptions of others and oneself contributed to the lowering of their self-confidence. The two students stated:

There is one female student who is already really good at speaking English in my class. She is very involved in the class and often unintentionally misleading the instructor. I want to do well like her, but I can't do as well as she does. So, I just don't want to speak in front of the whole class. I don't want to feel stupid. (Student H)

I don't mind if the teacher corrects my errors. And the teacher is a native speaker of English, so it is natural that she can speak fluently. But, I don't feel comfortable if other students speak English very well and their English ability is better than me. I know I have to study. But I just don't want to be compared with others in front of the class. (Student Y)

Such fear of negative evaluation seems closely related to communication apprehension. As expected, since the students were self-conscious about their language ability, many of the anxiety-provoking factors reported by the students appeared to be generated by various speaking activities normally encountered in a language class. It is interesting to note that the students did feel anxious in

classroom because of their language proficiency, but rather they described the source of their fears as stemming from the teaching methods that dominated the lesson. The students reflected on their experiences and stated both favorable and unfavorable reactions to methods and activities found in their English classes. The students explained in detail the points of teaching methods that they felt nervous or felt comfortable in the classroom:

I like my English class this semester. But, I really didn't like the English class last semester. It's not that I didn't feel well, but the atmosphere was so tense and nervous. It was not just me, and my friends didn't like it, either. In class, the teacher usually called on two students' names and had them exchange dialogues from the textbook. The worst part was that we had to come front to do it. Whenever I had the class, I worried about being called and doing this activity. (Student H)

My teacher sometimes asks everyone one by one. That person gets complete silence, and he/she has to answer. And I think this is very stressful. One time, the teacher called my name first and I wasn't ready to answer. I was so nervous and felt embarrassed. (Student S)

My teacher is very friendly and funny. He walks around the class and ask individually and gives some encouraging words to us while we are working with a partner. You, know, it's like more casual and relax, and I don't feel nervous when speaking English. Of course I feel anxious when he asks me a question because sometimes I cannot make sentences. But he helps me to speak more and not all the students look at me. (Student Y)

My teacher from last semester never came to the our desks. She just stood up front and explained a lot. When we spoke, it was only to read answers. I just couldn't understand all by listening. It' just uncomfortable. (Student K)

My teacher tells us some lines from the movies or lyrics from songs, and he acts like an actor or singer. He talks about an interesting issue or story and let us talk about this with a partner. I think this kind of activity is good because I can have more to say. (Student L)

Based on the students' responses, it appears that a relaxed environment or atmosphere is likely related to how the teacher conducted the class. The students' responses suggest that the role of the teacher is paramount in alleviating anxiety. Teachers who provide a supportive and understanding environment, and who employ non-threatening teaching methods seem to enhance the language experience. The students' perception of being evaluated by classmates, which is so commonly connected with feelings of communication apprehension in the classroom context, suggests the importance of giving students opportunities to practice the spoken language in pairs and smaller groups, of introducing activities aimed at creating rapport among learners, or simply of giving them opportunities to prepare well for their speaking activities.

3. Reducing Students' Language Anxiety in English Learning

The students said that they got nervous when they did not understand what their teachers said. They also expressed a concern about communicating in English. The students reported feeling overwhelmed and anxious when speaking with their teachers, due to an immature vocabulary or limited grammatical knowledge. All students in this study want a comfortable learning environment so they can maximize their learning potential. By interviewing the students, it was found that the students perceived that some teacher helped them better and feel more comfortable in class than other teachers.

To reduce their anxiety in the classroom, the students provided two suggestions: helpful teachers and good relationship with classmates. First, the students hoped their teachers are helpful and supportive so that they can study English with less stress in class. The students were quite clear in noting the connection between anxiety and teacher behavior. Based on the students' responses, "helpful" includes the teacher's individual characteristics and teaching strategy.

"Encouraging," "understanding," and "friendly" emerged from the interviews with the students as essential teachers' characteristics that reduced their nervousness. The students expressed the need for instructors who are more interested in them as individuals and who make the classroom experience less

stressful and more enjoyable. Student H gave the following response.

As I talked before, I like my English class this semester. I feel much better than I did last semester. The teacher is nice and kind. The teacher gives us a lot of examples so we can understand better. For example, he draws a picture on a board when we don't understand what he said and paraphrases a sentence using more easier words. Sometimes, he even acts out which I like best. That is fun to watch. And, actually that helps me understand better and enjoy the class.

In addition, the students stated the way that the teachers deal with mistakes contributed to reduce their anxiety. When the students were struggling with getting a correct answer, they hoped the teacher give them encouragement by providing some clues. Although the context of the language classroom itself inevitably involves some elements of evaluation, which might induce anxiety in some students, the students' responses show that the attitudes of the teacher to recognize such a reality can be a basis for creating a non-threatening learning environment in the classroom. The following statements showed that teachers who provide a supportive and understanding environment seem to lower students' anxiety:

I am trying to convince myself that because my English is at the beginning level it is quite natural for me to make mistakes and there is no use complaining about that. But if the teacher makes this clear in the class and let us know it's OK to make mistakes, I will feel less anxious in speaking English and will be more willing to talk in class. (Student Y)

If we make mistakes, I hope the teacher encourages us to try. For example, the teacher may give some clues, or words that we can make sentences, not just staring at us or asking to other students for answers. (Student K)

In terms of helpful teaching strategy, student L provided an example of a helpful teacher who successfully reduced her anxiety. She said her anxiety mounted during the class, as she was simply unable to pay attention to the teacher's questions, and did not understand half of what he was trying to say. By contrast, when doing the picture description on the board, which she felt more

comfortable with, her anxiety "all but disappeared", and she had the impression she understood his reactions completely, and what he was asking, too. During the interviews, the students suggested more specific anxiety-reducing ideas on how a lesson could be made more comprehensible on the part of the instructor. They were speaking slowly, using Korean to clarify key points, and providing clues or paraphrase with more easy words when asking or explaining, and using photographs, drawings, sketches, and cartoons to illustrate and reinforce the meanings of vocabulary words.

All students in this study perceived that the class moved so quickly that they did not have enough time to internalize the rules and vocabulary. They complained that their native teachers spoke too fast, which resulted in students not being able to keep up with the class. It seems that lowering anxiety was connected to how a teacher explained information to students in class. It is reasonable for the students in this study because their main source of anxiety was their perceived linguistic proficiency.

Secondly, the students in the present study considered that good relationships with peers play an important role in reducing language anxiety. The students responded that a sense of community goes a long way in reducing anxiety in students. When students felt that they were among friends, oftentimes anxious feelings were allayed and the fear of making mistakes decreased. In contrast, when students felt alone with no friends, they were more self-conscious. Student H said, "I took the English class alone last semester. I didn't feel comfortable to speak in front of unfamiliar classmates during the whole semester." The other students also mentioned that having a more personal relationship with the classmates would be helpful.

To the students in this study, whether they could have a good relationship with their classmates was important to study English comfortably in classrooms. It seems that a portion of fear of speaking in front of classmates depends on their relationships with those classmates. Getting to know the other students may help the students to feel more relaxed by reducing the fear of being ridiculed and taking away the feeling that the others are all smarter and more confident. In this sense, all students stated that they preferred pair or small group work in their classrooms because they could have opportunities to get to know the classmates and interact with each other, resulting in a less anxiety-provoking atmosphere. In addition, the feeling of community can be promoted through simple measures such as the seating arrangements in class. Suggestions were made by student H and L that students should sit in a semi-circle or oval

because "in a circle you are one of the crowd."

In summary, the students' responses about reducing English language anxiety in classroom indicate that the teacher plays a major role in influencing his/her feelings. This became clear as they elaborated on the importance of the teacher's personality, the way the teacher-student relationship develops, the teaching methodology they employed.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

To reduce language anxiety and foster learning, we have to find out the sources of anxiety first. The present study investigated the perceived causes of the feeling of anxiety in the English classroom and factors that may assist in reducing anxiety. The students in the present study indeed had feelings of anxiety in their English classrooms. The existence of anxiety should firstly be attributed to their English proficiency, which was a stumbling block to the participants being able to communicate with others freely, to express themselves adequately in class and to answer teachers' questions properly. So, in English classrooms where much communication is needed, the students were more anxious than in other classes.

However, the students' anxiety in English classrooms was not simply related to speaking activities, but more specifically to speaking in front of their classmates and teachers. The students felt less competent and more nervous when speaking in front of classmates. These feelings were caused by their beliefs that they were not doing a good job compared to other classmates. It seems that there is an interaction between self-perceived ability and fear of negative evaluation which affects anxiety level. Therefore, the students view English language production as test situation rather than an opportunity to communicate. Further, teacher characteristics such as friendliness and helpfulness crucially influenced the level of anxiety the students felt in their English classrooms. The students in the present study consider the role of the teacher very significant in relation to the amount of anxiety each student experiences in an English class. The students also report that good relationships with peers play an important role in reducing language anxiety.

This case study has revealed several characteristic sources of anxiety as

relevant to Korean learners of English. Although the results cannot be generalized to all the Korean learners of English, several recommendations for reducing anxiety in the classroom can be extrapolated from the voices of the participants. First, the teacher must first acknowledge the existence of language anxiety in the classroom. Unless teachers are sensitized to the issues of classroom anxiety, they may not feel the need to expend the additional time and effort in confronting the problem or may not realize that a problem exists. The teacher's supportive attitude toward anxious students, along with continuous efforts to understand the affective needs each student brings to the classroom, can make a significant contribution not only to creating a comfortable environment, but also to further facilitating the student's learning processes in the long run. Second, in order for learners to understand teachers' meaning, the teachers have to not only control the speed of instruction language but also add visual aids or use extra-linguistic context. Finally, the teachers may need to give the students opportunities to become familiar with others in class. The closer the students feel to each other, the less they will feel nervous about speaking or even making mistakes in front of their peers.

One of the most recurring finding in the literature on language anxiety is that anxious learners do not communicate as often as more relaxed learners. According to Krashen (1981), anxiety contributes to an affective filter, which prevents students from receiving input, and then language acquisition fails to progress. Creating a low-anxiety classroom environment is one of the primary responsibilities of classroom teachers. Further studies are called for to gain deeper insights into English language classroom anxiety. As a follow-up to the interviews, the case study should be extended with observation of a student's behavior in the English classroom. Moreover, future research should investigate whether variables identified in previous studies and this study are actually associated with levels of English language anxiety. It is also necessary to conduct longitudinal studies of English language classroom anxiety in various settings. By looking at changes in levels of anxiety over a period of time, we can gain deeper insights into important issues of foreign language anxiety such as what reduces or increases anxiety as students become more proficient in English.

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APPENDIX A

An Adapted Version of a Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

How do I feel in class?

SD = Strongly disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly agree

SD D N A SA

1. I am nervous when the teacher speaks to me in English class.
2. I am embarrassed when I answer the teacher in English class.
- 3 I worry about making mistakes in English class.
4. I get nervous when speaking in English in class.
5. My heart pounds when I do something in class.
6. I feel self-conscious when speaking in English with my classmates.
7. I am afraid that others will laugh at me when I speak English.
8. I feel that the other students are better than me at speaking English.
9. I get so nervous in class that I forget everything
10. I get nervous if I haven't prepared for English class.
11. I feel anxious even if I have prepared for English class.
12. I worry if the teacher corrects me in class.
13. The more I study English, the more I get confused.
14. I worry if I can't understand every word the teacher says.

15. In pair-work, I worry if my partner is better than me at English.
 16. In pair-work, I worry if my partner is worse than me at English.
 17. I worry about English tests.
 18. I worry about failing English class.
 19. The English class makes me most nervous (more than other classes).
 20. I often daydream in English class.
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APPENDIX B

Interview Guide

1. Please describe your feelings about your English class.
2. Please tell me what you like best about your English class.
3. Please tell me what disturbs you the most in your English class.
4. Are there other things that disturb you about your English class that you can tell me, and how do you react to them?
5. Do you believe that you are good in your language study (that is, are you confident of your ability)?
6. How do you think people in your classroom will react if you make mistakes?
7. When you find yourself in a stressful situation, do you primarily worry, or do you actively seek a solution?
8. Have your instructors played a role in your feelings, either good or bad, about your foreign language classes?
9. Do you have any ideas of ways to make the English class less stressful?

Eun-Soo Park
Department of Liberal Arts, Silla University
San 1-1, Gwaebop-dong, Sasang-gu, Busan 617-736, Korea
Tel: (051) 999-6283/ H.P.: 010-4803-0604
Email: eunsoopark@silla.ac.kr

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