



## **A Study on the Anxiety of Secondary School Students for Learning of English in Himachal Pradesh (With the Special Reference of Mandi District)**

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(Received 02 April, 2016, Accepted 10 May, 2016)

(Published by Research Trend, Website: [www.researchtrend.net](http://www.researchtrend.net))

**ABSTRACT:** English has an important place in Himachal Pradesh curriculum as it is taught and learned as a compulsory subject from the primary level to graduation level. The present study highlights the level of anxiety of secondary school students in learning English as foreign language. The issues of learners' anxiety have not been sufficiently discussed with regard to students of Himachal Pradesh. No study has been conducted to explore the types of anxiety that secondary school students in the Himachal Pradesh might have toward learning the English language. Therefore, this study would help understand these important issues with regard to Secondary School students in the Himachal Pradesh context.

**Keywords:** Anxiety, environment, implications, foreign language.

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

A few years have passed in English language teaching and the outcome is not up to satisfaction in Himachal Pradesh. The learners, at the end, crosses the secondary level getting pass marks and not fulfilling the aims and objectives that they will be able to communicate naturally, unexpectedly in real life. Learning includes so many factors for its successful fulfillment. We do not know where the actual problems of the learners are and why they are failing to learn. The present study highlights the level of anxiety of secondary school students in learning English as foreign language and how it is correlated with the attitude of the students as well as with the learning environment of the classroom.

### **II. NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

This study might be of vital significance in the field of classroom environment with reference to students' anxiety towards teaching and learning of English in Himachal Pradesh. The study might have practical significance for policy-makers, teacher-trainers, teachers, head-masters and students in the fields of anxiety in English at secondary level in Himachal Pradesh.

### **III. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY**

The objectives of the study are as following:

1. To measure secondary school students anxiety for learning English.
2. To compare the anxiety level gender wise and location-wise.

### **IV. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

In the light of the above objectives the following research hypotheses have been formulated:

1. The level of achievement in English of the students is medium.
2. There is a significant difference in the achievement in English of the male and female students.
3. There is a significant difference in the achievement in English of the rural and urban students.
4. There is a significant difference in the achievement in English of the private and govt. school students.

## V. LITERATURE REVIEW

Anxiety and language learning is a very complicated phenomenon. In the past, many studies were conducted on this phenomenon and different results were reported. Early studies reported negative correlation between test anxiety and performance. Many other studies reported positive correlation between anxiety and language acquisition. However, later in 1990s, anxiety in language learning became an interesting field for language teacher. Then studies focused on and reported that debilitating anxiety affected language acquisition (Thang *et al.*, 2011, MacIntyre & Gardner 1991a, Hundal & Kour 1974). The greater work was done in this regard by Horwitz *et al.* 2000. Their studies reported that language anxiety is due to the negative emotional reactions of the students towards language learning (Horwitz *et al.*, 2000).

The term anxiety presents various connotations in different context. According to Darwin (1872), it is an arousal of emotions due to fear or threat. Emotions serve the purpose of existing of or elimination of danger or threat in one's inner self. Some psychological and physiological reactions are associated with anxiety and; fear and anxiety warn about the threat and danger that is reflected in emotions (Weeks *et al.*, 2009, Wood *et al.*, 2006). In the beginning of Twentieth century, anxiety was associated with fear as Freud mentioned it in his writings. Pooja Chatterjee, Calcutta University, 2010 conducted a study on "Anxiety among high school students in India: Comparisons across gender, school type, social strata and perceptions of quality time with parents". The broad objective of the study was to understand better anxiety among adolescents in Kolkata city, India. Chandrashekhar Vazalwar, November 2011, Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, conducted a study on "Effect of Anxiety On Reading Comprehension In English". He found Learning an additional language is both cognitively and emotionally demanding. Anxiety, a complicated phenomenon, is a kind of emotion so the issue of anxiety in second language (L2) learning has concerned researcher. Dr. Mohan Joshi, Dr. R. Gumashta, Dr. N.B. Kasturwar and Dr. A.V. Deshpande, Nagpur, India, 2012 conducted a study on "Academic anxiety a growing concern among urban mid adolescent school children". Adolescence, being the developmental phase with enormous challenges of life situations coupled with pressure for fulfillment of parental expectations, is marked by definite noticeable anxieties.

## VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method of research opted for the research is quantitative. Both questionnaire and test will be used as research tool. Survey method will be used to collect data from the participants of this study. The nature of the study will be descriptive and correlation which aimed at looking into the relationship of classroom environment with anxiety of the students. The quantitative research method and analysis will be used for investigating possible relationships, differences and associations among various variables.

**1. Population of the Study.** The population of this study comprised all the 10th grade students studying in secondary schools of the Mandi district. Thus the secondary schools of Sarkaghat, Sadar Mandi, Jogindarnagar Tehsils and sub Tehsil Dharampur were included in the population.

**2. Sample of the Study.** The sample of the study will be 640 students from 32 schools of the Mandi district. Stratified random sampling technique will be used to get the sample of the study.

**Table 1. Sample of the Study.**

S. No.	Aspects schools	Secondary	Population	Sampling	Students from each selected school
1	Urban		320	16	16
	Male		160	10	16 × 10 = 160
	Female		160	10	16 × 10 = 160
2	Rural		320	16	16
	Male		160	10	16 × 10 = 160
	Female		160	10	16 × 10 = 160
Grant Total					640

Among these 640 students, 320 will be urban who will further bifurcate into 160 males and 160 females. Similarly 320 will be rural students divided into 160 males and 160 females. From each selected 16 urban and 16 rural schools were selected among these 32 schools. From each selected school, 20 students, 10 males and 10 females will be selected randomly. The sampling frame is given above in Table 1 to illustrate further details of the sample. Stratified sampling offers several advantages over simple random sampling.

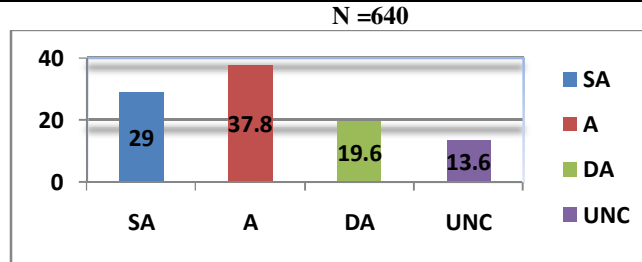
## VI. ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF DATA

### Item-Wise Analysis of English Language Anxiety Scale (Through Frequencies, Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation)

The Table 2 reflects that 66.8% respondents agreed with the statement. Only 13.6% were uncertain in their responses, while 19.6% of the respondents disagreed. The mean score is 3.35; SD= 1.281.

**Table 2: Speaking in my foreign language class.**

S. No.	Statement	Level	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.	SA	186	29	3.35	1.281
		A	242	37.8		
		DA	125	19.6		
		UNC	87	13.6		

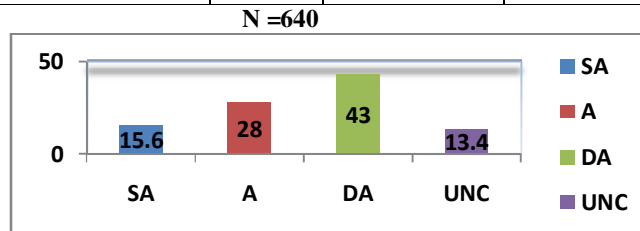


**Chart 1.** Speaking in my foreign language class.

The Table 3 reflects that 43.6% respondents agreed with the statement. Only 13.4% were uncertain in their responses, while 43% of the respondents disagreed. The mean score is 2.99; SD = 1.348.

**Table 3: Making mistakes in language class.**

S. No.	Statement	Level	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
2	I do not worry about making mistakes in language class.	SA	100	15.6	2.99	1.348
		A	179	28		
		DA	275	43		
		UNC	86	13.4		

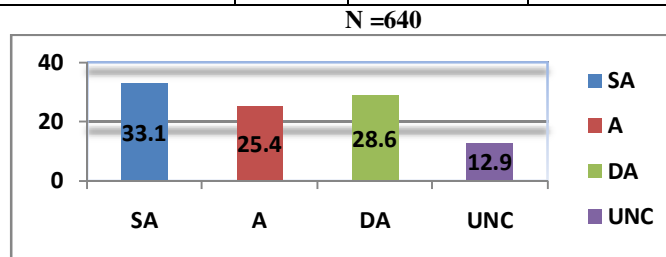


**Chart 2.** Making mistakes in language class.

The Table 4 reflects that 58.5% respondents agreed with the statement. Only 12.9% were uncertain in their responses, while 28.6% of the respondents disagreed. The mean score is 3.44; SD= 1.332.

**Table 4: Thinking other students better.**

S. No.	Statement	Level	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
3	I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.	SA	212	33.1	3.44	1.332
		A	162	25.4		
		DA	183	28.6		
		UNC	83	12.9		



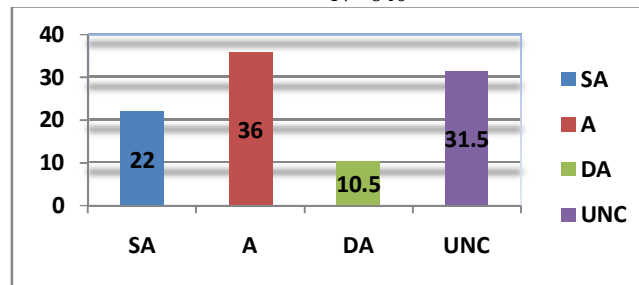
**Chart 3.** Thinking other students better.

The Table 5 reflects that 58% respondents agreed with the statement. Only 31.5% were uncertain in their responses, while 10.5% of the respondents disagreed. The mean score is 3.40; SD= 1.285.

**Table 5: Start to panic to speak.**

S. No.	Statement	Level	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
4	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.	SA	141	22	3.40	1.285
		A	230	36		
		DA	67	10.5		
		UNC	202	31.5		

N =640



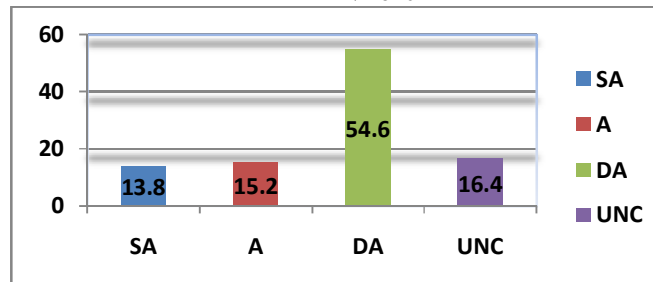
**Chart 4.** Start to panic to speak.

The Table 6 reflects that 29% respondents agreed with the statement. Only 16.4% were uncertain in their responses, while 54.6% of the respondents disagreed. The mean score is 2.67; SD= 1.367.

**Table 6: Nervousness in English class.**

S. No.	Statement	Level	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
5	In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	SA	86	13.8	2.67	1.367
		A	102	15.2		
		DA	349	54.6		
		UNC	103	16.4		

N =640



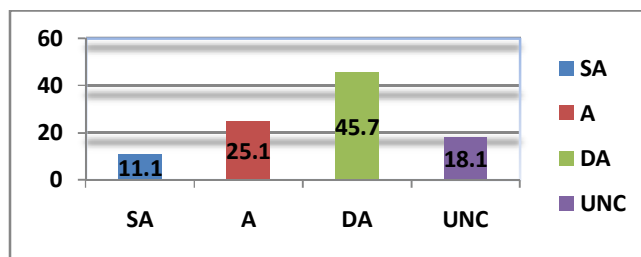
**Chart 5.** Nervousness in English class.

The Table 7 reflects that 36.2% respondents agreed with the statement. Only 18.1% were uncertain in their responses, while 45.7% of the respondents disagreed. The mean score is 2.78; SD= 1.328.

**Table 7: Speaking English language with native speakers.**

S. No.	Statement	Level	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
6	I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.	SA	71	11.1	2.78	1.328
		A	161	25.1		
		DA	292	45.7		
		UNC	116	18.1		

N =640



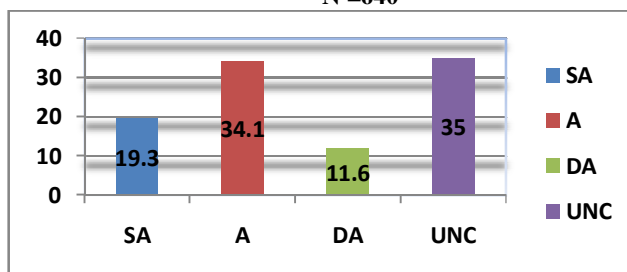
**Chart 6.** Speaking English language with native speakers.

The Table 8 reflects that 53.4% respondents agreed with the statement. Only 35% were uncertain in their responses, while 11.6% of the respondents disagreed. The mean score is 3.25; SD= 1.328.

**Table 8: Same encouragement from the teacher.**

S. No.	Statement	Level	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
7	Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.	SA	134	19.3	3.25	1.328
		A	218	34.1		
		DA	74	11.6		
		UNC	224	35		

N =640



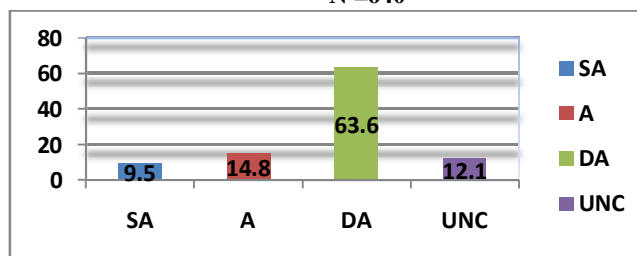
**Chart 7.** Same encouragement from the teacher.

The Table 9 reflects that 24.3% respondents agreed with the statement. Only 12.1% were uncertain in their responses, while 63.6% of the respondents disagreed. The mean score is 2.38; SD= 1.351.

**Table 9: Feeling anxious in English language class.**

S. No.	Statement	Level	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
8	I often feel like not going to my language class.	SA	61	9.5	2.38	1.351
		A	95	14.8		
		DA	407	63.6		
		UNC	77	12.1		

N =640



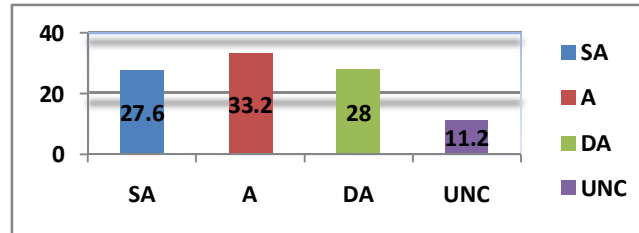
**Chart 8.** Feeling anxious in English language class.

The Table 10 reflects that 60.8% respondents agreed with the statement. Only 11.2% were uncertain in their responses, while 28% of the respondents disagreed. The mean score is 3.52; SD= 1.316.

**Table 10: Confidence in speaking English.**

S. No.	Statement	Level	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
9	I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.	SA	177	27.6	3.52	1.316
		A	212	33.2		
		DA	179	28		
		UNC	72	11.2		

N =640



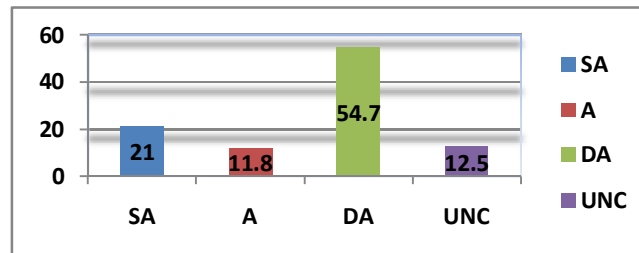
**Chart 9.** Confidence in speaking English.

The Table 11 reflects that 32.8% respondents agreed with the statement. Only 12.5% were uncertain in their responses, while 54.7% of the respondents disagreed. The mean score is 2.67; SD= 1.347.

**Table 11: Confusion in language test.**

S. No.	Statement	Level	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
10	The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.	SA	134	21	2.67	1.347
		A	76	11.8		
		DA	350	54.7		
		UNC	80	12.5		

N =640



**Chart 10.** Confusion in language test.

## VIII. ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM ANXIETY SCALE

**1. Gender wise.** Referring to Table 12 it is proved that there is statistically significant difference between males and females in respect of foreign language classroom anxiety scale.

**Table 12: Difference between males and females on overall English language classroom anxiety scale through Mean, Standard Deviation and t-Test.**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Male	320	102.91	24.815	2.878
Female	320	97.97	24.095	

df = 718;  $p < .01$

The significant difference was found through the calculation of t-test which indicated that the calculated value of  $t = 2.878$  at .01 level is greater than the tabulated value = 2.577 at .01 level that led to the conclusion that males and females had high difference level of foreign language anxiety in their classroom. Therefore, the null hypothesis that “there is statistically significant difference in respect of foreign language anxiety of males and females” is supported. The analysis of mean scores further illustrates that the male students mean = 102.91 have higher level of foreign language anxiety in their classroom than the female students mean = 97.97.

**2. Location-wise.** Referring to Table 13 it explains that there is statistically significant difference between urban and rural students in respect of test anxiety in English class. The significant difference was exhibited through the calculation of t-test which stated that the calculated value of  $t = 2.417$  at .05 level is greater than the tabulated value= 1.960 at .05 level that led to the conclusion that urban and rural students had significant difference in respect of test anxiety in English class.

**Table 13: Difference between urban and rural students on Test anxiety through Mean, Standard Deviation and t-Test.**

Location	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Urban	320	30.11	9.417	2.417
Rural	320	31.89	9.522	

df = 718;  $p < .01$

Therefore the null hypothesis that “there is statistically significant difference about anxiety in English class of urban and rural students” is supported. The analysis of mean scores and standard deviation further illustrates that the rural students mean= 31.89; SD 9.522 have higher level of test anxiety in English class than the urban students mean= 30.11 and SD= 9.408.

**3. School Wise (Private & Public).** Referring to Table 14 it is proved that there is statistically significant difference between private and public school students in respect of test anxiety in English class. The significant difference was found through the calculation of t-test which indicated that the calculated value of  $t=2.479$  at .05 level is greater than the tabulated value= 1.960 at .05 level that led to the conclusion that urban and rural students had different level of foreign language anxiety in their classroom.

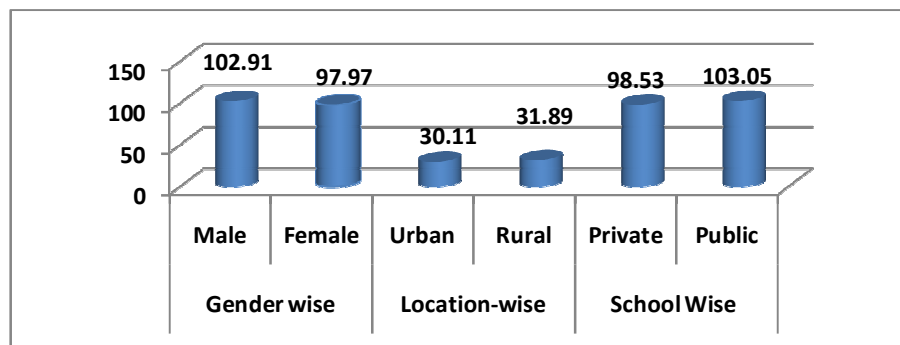
Therefore, the null hypothesis that “there is statistically significant difference in respect of foreign language anxiety of private and public school students” is supported. The analysis of mean scores further illustrates that the private school students mean= 98.53 are less anxious have in foreign language classroom than the rural students mean= 103.05.

**Table 14: Difference between private and public school students on overall Attitude towards test anxiety in English class through Mean, Standard Deviation and t-Test.**

School Wise	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Private	320	98.53	24.171	2.479
Public	320	103.05	24.808	

df = 718;  $p < .01$

Therefore, the null hypothesis that “there is statistically significant difference in respect of foreign language anxiety of private and public school students” is supported. The analysis of mean scores further illustrates that the private school students mean= 98.53 are less anxious have in foreign language classroom than the rural students mean= 103.05. The chart 11 showed the analysis of English language classroom anxiety scale gender wise location wise and school wise(Private or Public).



**Chart 11.** Analysis of English Language Classroom Anxiety Scale.

## IX. FINDINGS

Findings on this area with reference to the objectives of the study are presented one by one:

1. Most of the respondents, 66.8% were agreed that they never feel quite sure of themselves when they are speaking in their foreign language class. 13.6% were uncertain in their responses while 19.6% were disagreed to the statement. The mean score was 3.35 (Table 2).

2. A significant majority 43.6% were agreed that they do not worry about making mistakes in language class. 13.4% were uncertain in their responses while 43% were disagreed to the statement. The mean score was 2.99. (Table 3).
3. Most of the respondents 58.5% concurred that they keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than they are. 12.9% were uncertain in their responses, while 28.6% of the respondents disagreed. The mean score was 3.44 (Table 4).
4. Majority of the respondents 58% were of the opinion that they start to panic when they have to speak without preparation in language class. 31.5% were uncertain in their responses, while 10.5% of the respondents disagreed. The mean score was 3.40 (Table 5).
5. Only 29% respondents opined that in language class, they can get so nervous that they forget things they know. 16.4% were uncertain in their responses, 54.6% of the respondents disagreed. The mean score was 2.67 (Table 6).
6. Most of the respondents 36.2% agreed that Even if they are well prepared for language class, they feel anxious about it. 18.1% were uncertain in their responses, while 45.7% of the respondents disagreed. The mean score was 2.78 (Table 7).
7. Most of the respondents 53.4% agreed that Even if they are well prepared for language class, they feel anxious about it. 35% were uncertain in their responses, while 11.6% of the respondents disagreed. The mean score was 3.25 (Table 8).
8. Only 24.3% of the respondents opined that they often feel like not going to their language class. While 63.6% were disagreed to the statement. The mean score was 2.38 (Table 9).
9. Quite a good number of the respondents 60.8% concurred that they feel confident when they speak in foreign language class. 11.2% were uncertain in their responses, while 28% of the respondents disagreed. The mean score was 3.52 (Table 10).
10. Only 32.8% of the respondents considered that the more they study for a language test, the more confused they get. 12.5% were uncertain in their responses, while 54.7% of the respondents disagreed. The mean score was 2.67 (Table 11).
11. Findings on Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Gender wise, Location-wise & School Wise -Private & Public)
  - (a). **Gender wise.** The male students mean= 102.91 have higher level of foreign language anxiety in their classroom than the female students mean= 97.97 (Table 12).
  - (b). **Location-wise.** The rural students mean= 31.89 have higher level of test anxiety in English class than the urban students mean= 30.11 (Table 13).
  - (c). **School Wise (Private & Public).** The private school students mean= 98.53 are less anxious have in foreign language classroom than the rural students mean= 103.05 (Table 14).

## X. CONCLUSION

The rural students show more anxious feelings in English class than the urban students. Thus girls and urban students enjoy English lessons more than boys and rural students respectively. Girls are less anxious in their English class and have less communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation than boys. The poor performance of the students should not be punished but they should be motivated to investigate and involve in classroom activities. The fear of negative evaluation might be removed by giving encouraging comments on their work and making them confident in the classroom.

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